

Hillel Yeshiva Celebrates New ELC Outdoor Playground

Sammy Saka

Recently, Hillel Yeshiva celebrated a truly monumental day in the history of our yeshiva. Our new (Early Learning Center) ELC outdoor playground was finally here!

As I think back to last year, I am reminded of three things that led to this dream. First, Sally Tawil was invited to a Board of Directors meeting to discuss a proposed alumni event. She shared her thoughts about earmarking the funds toward the building of a new playground. Little did I know that Sally would end up playing a major role in the planning and building of this magnificent new ELC playground.

Next, I remembered Charlotte Cohen calling me with concerns about the safety of the old ELC playground. Little did I know Charlotte would end up volunteering to be the coordinator of the gala event last July that helped raise the funds to build our new ELC playground.

Finally, I remembered when Laurie Mizrahi shared with me her dream to honor the past and present PTA presidents of Hillel. I didn't know then that Laurie would become a co-chair of the gala event, at which the alumni dinner was enhanced with the honoring of 70 PTA presidents.

A very special thank you goes out to the following individuals who helped make the 2007 Alumni Gala Dinner such a huge success: Margaret Ashkenazie, Renna Calvo, Charlotte Cohen, Norman Jemal, Isaac Massry, Laurie Mizrahi, Ralph Tawil, Sally Tawil, Darrin Shabot and David Smouha.

There is one very special couple who really went above and beyond to make this dream a reality—Juliette and Jeffrey Saka. They are the epitome of hesed. There are those who give their money, and there are those who give their time. Juliette and Jeffrey gave



The Saka family at the ELC playground dedication ceremony



Kindergarten presentation

both! They worked long and hard through every detail of the planning and building of the beautiful new playground. They picked out the play structures, coloring, flooring, etc. It is fitting that the magnificent playground be named "The Jeffrey and Juliette Saka and Family ELC Playground."

It is hard to describe the amount of love, energy and excitement at Hillel Yeshiva's Early Learning Center on Friday morning.

We were touched and honored to have our entire kindergarten grade sing to us with overwhelming feeling. As they clapped and chanted the song "We Love You," the parents couldn't hold back their tears of joy. After all, this day was all about our children—our source of pride! I would like to thank all of the individuals who contributed generously to the new ELC playground. They serve as a shining example to our children and our entire community.

With gratitude to Hashem, we are proud to announce many other successful renovations to our school. Six new modern bathrooms for our children

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Grace and Sandy Shalom



Dr. Ruth Katz and Ruchie Czermak

were built with funds raised by the Board of Education and PTA. Sophia and Joey Mizrahi, and Jean and Marshall Mizrahi also donated the new ELC sinks. Adrienne and Steve Shalom dedicated the new high school student activity lounge.

Darrin Shabot and Ron Hopkins deserve a very special thank you for the endless dedication they have put into restoring our facility, along with Mrs. Ruchie Czermak for making the new ELC playground become a reality.

As we look ahead towards September 2009, we plan to build a much-needed new Elementary School playground for our children and grandchildren. With the help of Hashem and the generous support from our community, we hope to have a dedication ceremony one year from now. □

Sammy Saka is the current President of Hillel Yeshiva. He has five children who attend the school.