



TEACHER BIOGRAPHIES 2021 / 2022

We are so proud of our fantastic teaching team this year! Each Morah is an outstanding professional, dedicated to the craft of early childhood education. Teacher biographies are presented below:

KINDERGARTEN

Liatte Lasher

I've been "Morah Liatte" for over a decade! While I was attending Yeshiva University, I began working 1:1 with elementary age students doing early intervention and taught Hebrew school in Manhattan to older children with special needs. While gaining additional experience in typical classroom settings, I fell in love with the early childhood environment and taught in Manhattan and New Jersey, including the JCC of Manhattan and other Chabad schools. Since moving to Stamford a couple years ago, I've taught preschool and second grade, and consulted for local preschools in revamping their classrooms. I love living in Connecticut, have three hilarious little girls, and love horses and new adventures. I like to mix the best parts of different educational philosophies to create a warm, loving environment where children can explore their individual personalities and independence and still gain the guidance and TLC they need at these young ages. I think that so much of early childhood is not just teaching and exposing children to as many different subjects and the wonders of early literacy, but also modeling, acting, and actively learning about tone, self-regulation, critical thinking, and empathy. This is the time that sets the tone of their future academic careers, and my goal is to make school an exciting, engaging place where your children look forward to soaking up knowledge each day. I dedicate the school year to truly giving the best foundation to these little students so they are good learners, good thinkers, good friends, and good humans.

Chani Wainer

Born and raised in South Africa, I lived in a small resort town called Umhlanga Rocks where my family ran a Chabad House. I grew up involved in our community programs meeting people from all over the world. After graduating university in South Africa, I made the move to the U.S. to expand my educational experiences and I feel so fortunate to be doing this by joining the incredible team at Chabad of Greenwich. Over the past few years I've worked at a variety of Hebrew schools, various community schools, virtual classroom settings, and one-on-one special education support. I feel strongly about extending the classroom from a learning environment to an environment that fosters holistic growth for all children. I believe that foundational classroom experiences leave everlasting imprints on children's lives. Valuing and nurturing children's individuality in the classroom ensures their full unique development. I look forward to partnering with you this year, in the important role of educating your children and I hope to guide them to be caring and responsible, becoming young Jewish citizens who make an everlasting impact on the world around them.

PRE KINDERGARTEN

Sara Perna

I live in Armonk, NY with my husband Michael and two beautiful children - Jared (twelve years old) and Emma (ten years old). I graduated from the University of Delaware with a BA in Psychology and after graduation I worked for many years in the advertising industry. After starting my family, with my children in nursery school, I quickly learned that the preschool years are where all the “magic” happens. I wanted to be a part of it all for my children and to pass the magic on to other families. I went back to school for teaching. I completed additional college level coursework in Early Childhood Education and earned my Child Development Associate in Early Childhood Education. I worked at Bet Torah Nursery school for seven years and taught children in its 2's, 3's, and 4's program. In addition I worked in their enrichment and summer program, Camp Keshet. I love being in the classroom and working with children. I'm so excited to join Gan of Greenwich and to help in any way I can with your child's development. I am looking forward to meeting you all and having a fun, nurturing, and enriched school year together.

Chana Yager

I am so excited to be returning for another wonderful year at Gan of Greenwich. I'm deeply passionate about education and I always knew that I wanted to become an educator! My earliest memories as a little girl involve lining up my dolls, singing to them, and playing school, which is very similar to an average day in preschool. I've continuously dreamed of helping educate and inspire the future generation of thinkers, creators, and leaders. I grew up in the Florida sunshine always helping and volunteering my time in various programs geared for children of all ages. Within my own family, my nieces & nephews are my pride and joy! After graduating high school, I spent one year abroad in Israel furthering my education in a teachers training program in the mountains of Tzfat. When I moved back to the United States, I relocated to New York and graduated with both my Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Special Education with a focus on the early childhood years. Throughout my journey as a teacher, I've worked in various school settings, developed different techniques, and trained in the Montessori Method. I'm a firm believer that a child's early childhood years are the foundational and fundamental time for their development. If I have learned anything from my years of teaching experience, it's that children are individuals and have their own unique strengths and learning styles. My goal is to help children explore the world around them, discover their individual strengths, and create a loving respectful classroom community. I'm committed to creating an environment that celebrates your child's individuality and talents. I'm looking forward to a wonderful year ahead of partnering together in the education of your child.

THREE's

Mushky Blizinsky

Ever since I can remember, I have been caring for children. I am the second eldest of 12 children. I have three beautiful children of my own, and I have been teaching preschool for ten years. I also taught the kindergarten class at the Chabad of Greenwich Hebrew School for six years. My first year as a teacher was in a special education program, HASC Preschool. It was a phenomenal experience that has helped shape me as a teacher and a parent every day. Since then, I have worked in preschools in Manhattan and Brooklyn. While teaching, I pursued a BA in Psychology and a Masters in General and Special Education. I love learning about children, learning from them, and helping them to learn their true selves. The preschool years are the most fundamental time in a child's development and I believe in finding what each child needs individually while guiding them to develop interpersonal skills. I am so grateful and honored for the trust you give me with your children's care and education. I am looking forward to meeting you all and having an exciting, FUN, and enriching year together!

Heather Harris

I am thrilled to be joining Gan of Greenwich Preschool as a 3s teacher! I officially began my teaching career in 1999, though my love for working with children began long before that. I started babysitting at age 10, volunteered in kindergarten classes while in high school, worked as a camp counselor for countless years, and substitute taught for six months before deciding to become a teacher. I earned my undergraduate degree in English, Literature and Rhetoric from Binghamton University and went on to earn an MA in Communications from Iona College and an MST in Education from Fordham University. Most recently I taught the 3s for four years at Bet Torah Nursery School in Mt Kisco, NY. Before that I was a kindergarten teacher for many years. Over the years I've had teaching experience with ages nursery through 8th grade and I believe every year of school has its own special and unique traits. I look forward to a wonderful year ahead with the preschool learning community at Gan of Greenwich Preschool!

Mushka Plotkin

Growing up, the eldest of eleven children, in beautiful Glastonbury, CT, my home was filled with love for each child and all our unique qualities. The nurturing care and individual attention we were given as children is something I cherish and feel privileged to give over. I spent many years as a teacher and curriculum developer in multiple Chabad Hebrew Schools and was a counselor of many Camp Gan Israels including Camp Gan of Greenwich, watching and caring for beautiful young children. After graduating high school in Brooklyn, NY I spent a year in Israel highly focused on education and early childhood development. Most recently I taught as a Judaic and assistant Montessori teacher at the Gan Montessori of Silver Spring, Maryland. It is priceless to have the honor to watch a precious child develop skills, discover talents, and let their personality shine from such a young age. I look forward to joining the Gan of Greenwich family as a Three's Class teacher and having a wonderful year together.

Jackie Troy

I currently live in Westchester NY with my two boys. I have been teaching for over 15 years and know teaching is what I was always meant to do. I started my career teaching fitness to special needs children and have evolved from there to preschool, kindergarten, and second grade classrooms. From day one I had that "aha" moment, where connecting with a child keeps me going. I tend to focus on the journey, recognizing that all children learn and acquire skills differently. I look forward to joining the amazing Chabad team and working with you to make this a rewarding and fun year. Thank you for trusting me with your precious children.

Two's

Rivka Huerta

I was born in Venezuela and raised in the United States. I graduated from UPEL University in Venezuela, earning a Bachelor's degree in Education. Through my college internship I worked in classrooms at all levels of education – preschool through college age. During this time gained skills in curriculum development, classroom activities, and methods & techniques for each age group. I worked as a professor for several years at UCLA University in Venezuela, where I was part of the Education department of the School of Medicine and the Foreign Language Department. After a move to Massachusetts I became certified in Early Childhood Education. I have a passion for writing and recently published my first Children's book. I've worked in preschools for six years. First, at a Head Start program, and then I joined an amazing team at Torah Academy in Brookline, MA. I moved to the Greenwich area last year where I joined the wonderful Gan Preschool. I have learned so much this past year from your wonderful children and am thrilled to be part of such an amazing school team and community. I look forward to this coming school year!

Rivka Goldberg

Growing up in Brooklyn, NY I always loved spending time taking care of "little people". As the eldest of nine, the opportunities came on a constant basis! Throughout my high school and post-high school years, I spent my summers working in camps with younger-aged children. I found my passion for teaching Pre-school particularly after working at Camp Gan of Greenwich for the past two summers. Last year I finished Teacher's Seminary, where I was part of the Teacher's Training Program for Early Childhood. I am currently working towards getting my degree in Early Childhood Education. I love seeing children's natural delight in the world around them, their enthusiasm towards learning new ideas and their endless curiosity. I believe that the early childhood years are the most significant in a child's education and am committed to creating the best learning environment for each child. I look forward to an exciting, growth-oriented year together with your child!

Yelena Maymin

I grew up in the Ukraine and moved here with my family when I was a teenager. I ran track and field competitively through high school and college. After earning my Bachelor's in Finance, I went to work in the middle office of a hedge fund, then later became the marketing director of a private equity fund. I went back to school for a Master's in Organizational Behavior from NYU before realizing my true passion was teaching. For the past several years, I've been teaching at Gan of Greenwich, Camp Gan, and Chabad of Bedford. And I love it! To see the smiling faces of my students as they learn Jewish songs or play with each other or listen to a story – is heartwarming. I live in Greenwich with my husband and our three children. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you and your children, and having a really fun year ahead!

Ariel Keiser

I grew up in Greenwich, CT. During my high school years, I quickly discovered that I wanted to be a teacher. I volunteered at the Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich, where I worked with elementary aged children. I graduated from Syracuse University in 2014 with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education. I began my career as a student teacher at the Bernice M. Wright School in Syracuse, New York. The past five summers I worked at Camp Playland. This past summer I worked as a supervisor of the lower camp boys division. I joined the Gan of Greenwich teaching team in April 2016 in the Toddler classroom. The following school year I taught in Kitah Aleph! Working with the 2s class was an incredibly rewarding experience. Last year, I co-taught the 3s class with Morah Yelena. I am so excited to join Morah Yelena for another year, teaching the 2s! I enjoy every aspect of teaching and love watching the children grow! I am so excited to begin the new school year with all of you!

TODDLERS

Denise Broide

I was born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina to a family of seven children and moved to NYC in 2003 with my husband, before relocating to Greenwich in 2011. I am a trained and experienced youth counselor. I earned a Bachelor's in Law from the University of Buenos Aires. I have worked as a substitute teacher at Gan of Greenwich and Camp Gan since first moving to Connecticut, which provided me with varied experience working with children and Morahs in all classes from Toddlers through Pre-k. In 2020 I came on board full time as a teacher in the Toddler class and last year I was a 3's teacher. My two children, Jack and Sophia, both graduated from Chabad Hebrew School. I enjoy helping children develop and learn, and I find watching their transformation from the beginning to the end of the year to be amazing! I believe that each child is unique, and when they feel loved and accepted they shine. I look forward to getting to know you and your children. I'm excited to be part of Gan of Greenwich and look forward to a great, fun and successful year together!

Rikki Phelps

Growing up in a large family with six younger siblings, I have been nurturing children for almost as long as I can remember. After graduating high school I studied in Israel at the renowned Binas Bais Yaakov seminary where I earned my teaching certificate. I am currently attending college with the goal of completing my BA degree this year, and will then start a Masters program. This past summer I was fortunate to work as a Mini Gan Counselor right here in Greenwich. I enjoyed it tremendously. The experience helped me realize that I was truly following my life's passion. I'm excited to learn from each of my students and provide a nourishing and stimulating environment for them to flourish. I look forward to joining Gan of Greenwich this upcoming school year and am excited to meet the community!