



## TEACHER BIOGRAPHIES 2022 / 2023

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:

### PRE KINDERGARTEN

#### **Chana Yager**

I am so excited to be returning for my fourth 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.

#### **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. During the past two years I was part of a Teacher's Training Program for Early Childhood in Brooklyn. My passion for teaching Preschool deepened after working in Gan of Greenwich Preschool last year and I'm so excited to be back for another wonderful year! 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!

## 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 eleven 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!

### **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 two years ago and joined the wonderful Gan Preschool. I have learned so much 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!

## TWO's

### **Nicole Hebel**

I grew up and studied in Santiago, Chile, where I graduated from a Theatre and Communications College with a degree in Education. I chose theatre because it combines communication skills, creative expression, and artistic ability. I love using movement to express ideas and tell a story. I believe that this could be a tool for changing lives! I wrote my thesis on "How to Prevent Childhood Obesity," because I also have an interest in fitness and health in children, I researched teaching through active games and have worked in several schools using this approach. Eight years ago I came to the United States to learn English in a Cultural Exchange Program. I became part of the Chabad community and began working as a teacher in the preschool. My passion for teaching and interest in wellness led me to become a health coach, focusing on children's nutrition. I look forward to using these skills as I teach a Cooking Club this year. I find that being a teacher incorporates all my passions, and offers the opportunity to learn from the children and grow every day. As Marshall McLuhan once said, "Anyone who makes a distinction between education and entertainment doesn't know the first thing about either." I look forward to a fun and memorable year!

### **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 another wonderful year working with you and the Chabad team to make this a rewarding and fun year. Thank you for trusting me with your precious children.

### **Ariel Keiser (2A)**

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. Throughout my summers, I worked at Camp Playland, where I supervised 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 is an incredibly rewarding experience. I am so excited 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!

### **Esther Benzaquon (2A)**

I was born in Caracas, Venezuela, and raised in Barcelona, Spain, where I completed my studies in Education and Early Childhood Education. I started working with children at the age of 15 as a volunteer counselor in the Jewish community in Spain. Ever since I can remember, I wanted to become an educator. I love working with kids and seeing how much they grow and little by little become their own person with their own abilities and characteristics. I'm looking forward to a great year of growth and fun with all your children!

## 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!

### **Sara Pruss**

I come from a big family which means growing up with lots of nieces and nephews. From a very young age I've spent many hours watching, babysitting, and taking care of them:) This helped me discover my greatest passion in life - working with children, giving them positive attention, and bringing out the best in them. I feel it is the most meaningful and rewarding job one can do. I have had the opportunity to experience working with children of all ages. I started my own playgroup last year where children of different ages came together for *Sunday Funday* to learn and have fun through music, art, and other creative activities. I also worked as a counselor in many camps and taught in a Chabad school in California, working with children in preschool through high school. I worked with students one on one, tutored them, and lead various programs. I look forward and am grateful for the opportunity to teach at Gan of Greenwich Preschool. May it be a year of success, growth, and joy for staff, students and all.