

A Graduation to Remember

by Lillian Hellman, Director of Mizel
Jewish Community Day School

OVER THESE PAST 40

years, Mizel has seen many graduations, but what makes this school year special, is that the majority of the upcoming graduates started coming to Mizel as pre-schoolers, the first year that we offered that program. The parents found that the Mizel pre-school was a great beginning for their children. It introduced them to the Hebrew language, Jewish holidays, a positive social environment and an accelerated academic curriculum. But the real gift these parents gave their children was having them continue their education at Mizel for their entire elementary experience.

Jeffrey Lasday, the Executive Director of the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education, writes that there are many reasons parents may give as to why not send their children to a Jewish day school, ranging from tuition costs (though Mizel is by far the least expensive private school in Tulsa), fewer social opportunities, fewer extracurricular activities, and perhaps even fearing that the school is “too Jewish” and may not be in sync with their own family’s religious beliefs. In addition Lasday writes, “Even when their children are very young, many parents are concerned about them



However, the data shows exactly the opposite. Students with six or more years of day school demonstrate high academic achievement. Exposing our students to a dual curriculum, which encompasses general and Judaic studies, stimulates their minds and prepares them for the demands of higher education. By being exposed to an intimate educational setting that allows for individual attention and the development of self-confidence, students performed better in high school and college. In addition, former day school students express a strong sense of responsibility towards addressing the needs of the larger society by influencing social values, helping those in need, volunteering their time and finding careers that allow them to be of service to the larger community. Though Mizel may be small in size, it is big on community. Being part of our Jewish day school means being part of an extended caring family, with nurturing, supportive teachers that promote academic excellence. Mizel is a living laboratory where Jewish values are taught and students are encouraged to become ethical and moral individuals. This year’s graduates are: Lindsay Haake, Francisca Oyarzo, Denise Rosenstein, Joshua Sharpnack, and Hannah Woods. We wish our Class of 2015 a sincere “Mazel Tov” and are confident that their experiences at Mizel will support and define them as they go forward in life. □