



The newsletter for teens from teens

# The Jewish Student Connection

VOL. 1

## Welcome

By: Ariella Brown

ברוכים הבאים. JSC is excited to introduce our first edition of “The Jewish Student Connection”, an immersive and exciting new opportunity to engage as a Denver community. As the Editor in Chief, I am thrilled to be leading this initiative in my final few months of high school. In the coming years, I hope that this paper becomes more than just a news outlet, but a pillar of the JSC community. I encourage you all to participate by communicating with your school’s JSC board members to contribute articles, ideas, and art every month. As you read on, I urge you to keep in mind those who have lost their lives due to Covid and acts of violence this past year. Until we emerge from the darkness that has been 2020 and 2021, we hope that “The Jewish Student Connection” will serve as a beacon of light. Thank you and enjoy!

## Hebrew Word of the Month

By: Aliza Strear

B’yachad (ביחד)

Be • ya • had

B’yachad- Together

*Although this year has separated us physically, we hope the Jewish Student Connection newsletter will bring us closer **b’yachad***

## ADL Spotlight

By: Yoni Manor

Jewish Student Connection and the Anti-Defamation League have had a relationship for over five years. The ADL joins our clubs across the Denver metro area once a semester to have meaningful discussions about how to combat hate speech, bigotry, and discrimination

in our community. As a senior, I have had the privilege of meeting with members of the ADL over the past four years, and I have become a more proactive citizen and Jew because of them.

The ADL and JSC partnership has also had a profound impact on the greater Denver community. This past semester, East High School’s club hosted the ADL and invited all of the other minority clubs at East to join us for a discussion about microaggressions and bigotry in light of the Black Lives Matter protests last

summer and the rising discrimination towards Jews and other minorities.

JSC students have learned a lot over the years from their discussions with the ADL. Aiden Foster, president of JSC at DSST Byers, shares the lessons he’s learned from the ADL: “I have taken away the impact that microaggressions can have on a community. When small aggressions continue to happen, larger and more hurtful instances of hate will occur,” referencing last semester’s club where we focused on the detrimental impacts of microaggressions towards Jews and other minorities.

Sophie Kaplan, a member of JSC at East shares how she’s learned to fight bigotry through ADL workshops. “The best way to combat hate is taking accountability for your own biases, educating yourself, and holding the people around you accountable for their actions,” she said. The ADL has always stood up for those who have been discriminated against, and in response to recent spikes in hate crimes against Jews and Asian Americans, the ADL has continued to devote its resources to resisting hatred of all forms.

When asked why more teens should attend JSC clubs with the ADL, Aiden Foster noted that, “When looking for trusted adults, the ADL can provide this resource for someone.” All ADL representatives encourage JSC students to reach out to them or visit the ADL website to report an antisemitic or discriminatory incident.

In conversation with the Senior Associate Director for the Mountain States Region of the ADL, Sue Parker Gerson, she explained, “There’s nothing more important than equipping the JSC club participants – Jewish students and their non-Jewish allies – to respond to antisemitism and indeed, all forms of bias and bigotry.” The ADL and JSC look forward to continuing their collaboration and making the Denver community a more safe and open space for years to come.



## Mensch of the Month- Serena Barish

By: Ben Ginsberg

Serena Barish, a senior at East High School, is the inaugural JSCer of the month for March.

Serena is the Co-President of East’s JSC Club, which she has been involved in for the past four years. This year, Serena has played a large role in making sure that club runs smoothly during the pandemic. Her favorite programs have been a video that the East club made for Hanukkah, as well as a program about women in

the Hasidic Community which she led with fellow board member, Kendall Ogin.

Outside of JSC, Serena is a very involved community member. She is the Co-President of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate team at East and the Regional Vice President of the Rocky Mountain Region of BBYO. Serena recently finished an internship with The National Vote from Home Institute and is now an intern with the Denver Public Schools Comprehensive Health Team.

At East High School, Serena is also the co-president of the Women of East Club. Her contributions to the club have helped achieve many things, including getting disposable menstrual products in the bathrooms at East, hosting fundraisers and drives for local women’s shelters and bringing in many speakers to talk to the school. Recently, Serena and the club have been involved in the effort to combat the harmful culture of sexual harassment and assault at East and advocate for comprehensive consent education throughout DPS.

When asked about what being Jewish means to her, Serena said, “To me, being Jewish has been critical in shaping the lens through which I view the world and in shaping my values. Much of my Judaism centers around the Jewish communities that I am a part of, which is why I joined JSC. I have chosen to be a leader in the club because I think it is important for everyone who wants to, to be able to have a Jewish community they feel they can be a part of.”



Pictured: Serena Barish (East ‘21)

## Passover with Compassion

By Lucy Adlen

This past year, more than ever before, I have been consumed by the amount of hatred that our nation has seen. My social media feeds have been filled with daily injustices which have left me feeling powerless. To me, Passover has always been about the celebration of our liberation from Egypt and the way it brings us together. But this year, I find it hard to celebrate our freedom when there are so many people that can't rejoice the way that we do. Even within the Jewish community, there is still so much hatred that is pointed in our direction. So how can we celebrate ancient liberation when so many issues plague us? It reminds me of a quote written by Holocaust survivor and Author, Elie Wiesel in which he wrote, *"I love Passover because for me it is a cry against indifference, a cry for compassion."*

This quote reminded me that when we sit through our Seders, we are actually remembering the struggle we went through years and years ago to combat this indifference and hatred. Through this, we can gain a better perception of what so many of our community members have been facing. With the incredible spikes in bigotry against minorities, the one thing we can do to feel less powerless is show compassion. Listening and learning from the struggles of others allows for everyone to understand each other better. Passover is much more than good food; it is about remembering the hatred we once experienced and acknowledging that it hasn't gone away; it is about striving to end it for all people.

## JSC-ers on the Meyers Leonard Incident

By: Leo Kamin

Claims of anti-Semitism swept the sports world yet again in early March after Miami Heat forward Meyers Leonard used a notorious antisemitic slur. Leonard was playing video games in front of a live audience on the

platform Twitch when he openly yelled the slur. He was quickly banned from Twitch, dropped by sponsors, and fined by the Heat before being traded away. The Anti-Defamation League also quickly responded on its Twitter account, writing, "We are shocked and disappointed to see @MeyersLeonard use this ugly, offensive #antisemitic slur." The group went on to ask both the Heat and the NBA as a whole to apologize.

Perhaps the most high-profile response came from Julian Edelman, wide receiver for the New England Patriots, who is Jewish. In an open letter to Leonard posted on Twitter, Edelman said he wasn't seeking to add to the chorus of criticism, but simply offering "some perspective." "I get the sense that you didn't use that word out of hate, more out of ignorance," he wrote. He offered an invitation: "Let's do a Shabbat dinner with some friends, I'll show you a fun time."

Both Leonard's slur and Edelman's letter had large effects on JSCers. Reflecting how common anti-Semitic comments from celebrities and athletes have become, Daniel Oesterle, Co-President of JSC at Cherry Creek High School, said, "His comments made me feel upset and disappointed, but it didn't surprise me." Aiden Foster, president of JSC at DSST: Byers, expressed similar sentiments: "Leonard's comments made me saddened and discouraged as anti-Semitism is an ever-present threat to me and my Jewish peers."

Both Foster and Oesterle agreed that, generally, the best way to deal with anti-Semitism that comes from a place of ignorance is to work to correct that ignorance. "I fully agree with Julian Edelman," said Foster. "In fact, it is the same response I have proposed when dealing with anti-Semitism at my school." He continued, "By shunning someone, the acts continue and the hatred towards Jewish people persists and even grows stronger. By debunking and welcoming Leonard to the Jewish

community, these stereotypes and hate barriers can be brought down, and a stronger and more inclusive community is built.”

Oesterle mostly agreed, but cautioned that anti-Semitic acts, no matter their motivation, should not go unpunished. “People should be held accountable for their actions even if it was a mistake,” he said, “especially those who have influence like an NBA player.”

Regardless of whether they believed Leonard should be punished or simply educated, JSCers unanimously agreed that stopping the small acts of hatred — slurs, microaggressions — is key to preventing the large ones.

### Recipe of the Month- Matzah Bark

Credits To: Ms. Perlman (Teacher at East HS)



PREP TIME

5 mins



COOK TIME

4 mins

TOTAL TIME

9 mins



COURSE

Dessert

CUISINE

Jewish



SERVINGS

6 -10

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 pieces matzah
- 1 1/2 cups dark chocolate chips
- Toppings: coconut almonds, glitter, etc.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350.
2. Place matzah on a foil lined cookie sheet and sprinkle chocolate chips evenly over matzah.
3. Bake for 3-4 minutes to melt chocolate. Meanwhile, get your toppings ready. I used almonds, coconut, sprinkles and GLITTER.
4. Once chocolate is warm, spread carefully with a knife to cover matzah and sprinkle immediately with toppings.
5. Cool (in the refrigerator to speed things up if you like) and then break into pieces.

## The Jewish Student Connection Student Leadership Team:



Leo Kamin (East '21): Editor, writer



Aliza Strear (South '23): Media designer, writer



Ariella Brown (GW '21): Editor in Chief



Ben Ginsberg (GW '21): Writer



Yoni Manor (East '21): Writer