



Welcome Back to School: Meet Your 2022-2023 Faculty!

General Studies Faculty

Ms. Carly Benson – *General Studies, Kindergarten*



My name is Carly Benson, and this is my first-year teaching Kindergarten at Hillel Community Day School. I grew up in Camillus, NY and I am a recent graduate of the State University College at Brockport where I received a degree in History and Childhood Inclusive Education. I am currently finishing my Master of Education in Literacy Education (Birth-Grade 12). Professionally, I have been a substitute teacher for the West Irondequoit School District since November of last year. Through this experience, I have gained valuable knowledge and exposure with providing differentiating instruction and maintaining classroom management. When I am not teaching, I work to continue my professional skillset by taking Literacy Education classes remotely through the State University College at Brockport. In my free time, I love to walk my dog or pick up a good book and read! I also like to run, ski, and spend time with family and friends.

Ms. Amelia Borgus - *General Studies, 1st & 2nd Grade*



Hello! My name is Amelia Borgus and I will be this year's 1st and 2nd grade teacher! I obtained my bachelor's in Childhood Education from SUNY Oswego and am currently studying for my masters! Before my time working this past spring at Hillel, I have worked as a substitute teacher, a teacher's assistant, and paraprofessional with students who have multiple and significant disabilities. I am so excited to be joining the wonderful community at Hillel and having the opportunity to work with all of our learners. In my free time I enjoy reading, camping, hiking, and spending time with friends and families. I look forward to learning with every student and faculty member this year!

Jordan Wisset – General Studies, 3rd & 4th Grade



Hi! My name is Jordan Wisset, and I am so excited to be returning to Hillel to teach third and fourth-grade general studies. This will be my second year teaching at Hillel. In 2020, I graduated from SUNY Geneseo with my bachelor's degree in Childhood Education and Special Education, with a concentration in Dance. I continued my education at SUNY Geneseo and graduated in the summer of 2021 with my Master's in Reading and Literacy (B-12). When I am not at school, I am either reading, watching movies, taking walks, teaching dance, or spending time with my family and friends. I am so excited for this upcoming school year and can't wait to see all the amazing things it brings!

Rachel Wolfe – General Studies, 5th & 6th Grade, General Studies Dept. Head



Hello! My name is Rachel Wolfe, and I am thrilled to be teaching fifth and sixth grade general studies again this year. Also, I am enthusiastically taking on the role of General Studies Department Head. This will be my fifth year teaching middle school students and my third year at Hillel. In 2018, I graduated from St. John Fisher University, where I received my bachelor's degree in Inclusive Childhood Education and English Literature. Currently, I am receiving my master's degree in Instructional Design from SUNY Brockport. In my free time, I enjoy running, reading, watching movies, baking, and spending quality time with my family, friends, and dogs. I am looking forward to another successful year of learning and growing with my students and colleagues!

Amanda Hammack – General Studies, 7th & 8th Grade and School Librarian



Hello! My name is Amanda Hammack. I am the school Librarian and 7th/8th Grade Humanities teacher. It is my 10th year teaching and my second year here at Hillel. I received my teaching degree from Midwestern State University and collected numerous certifications during my years in the classroom. Outside of school, I love to bake, hike, read and spend time with my cats. I look forward to a fantastic year at Hillel and can't wait to begin.

Natalie Valenti – *General Studies, Math*



Hi there! My name is Natalie Valenti, and I am grateful to be Hillel's math instructor for grades 2nd -7th. This is my second year at Hillel. In 2019, I graduated with my bachelor's degree from St. John Fisher University, where I majored in accounting and minored in finance. Shortly after, I fell in love with teaching while tutoring mathematics. In spring of 2021, I completed my masters of science in Inclusive Childhood Education at St. John Fisher University. In my free time, I enjoy running, hiking, reading, playing guitar, cooking, baking, sculpting, and spending time with loved ones - including my dog! I am looking forward to a new year filled with meaningful learning experiences and growth on the part of the students, staff, and faculty.

Cain Bowman – *General Studies, Middle School Math and Science*



Hello! My name is Cain Bowman, and I am thrilled to be teaching upper school science and math again this year! This will be my third and a half year at Hillel. I graduated from SUNY Brockport, where I received my bachelor's degree in Chemistry and studied adolescent education. In my free time, I enjoy rock climbing, tabletop gaming, camping, and spending quality time with my cats. I am looking forward to another successful year of learning and growing with my students and colleagues!

Judaic Studies Faculty



Jacqui Lipschitz – *Judaic Studies, Kindergarten*

Hi! My name is Jacqui Lipschitz and I'm thrilled to be returning to the kindergarten classroom as Hillel's Judaic Studies and Hebrew teacher! I was born and raised in beautiful Cape Town, South Africa, where I attended Herzlia Jewish Day School and the University of Cape Town (graduating with a bachelor's degree in Jewish Studies and Psychology). In 2016, I graduated from Hebrew College with a master's degree in Jewish Education - an absolute passion of mine! I'm married to Wayne, and Mom to Gabi and Matt (as well as a variety of cats and a doggy). I'm really looking forward to meeting and getting to know you all!

Lital Zinger – *Judaic Studies, 1st & 2nd Grade*



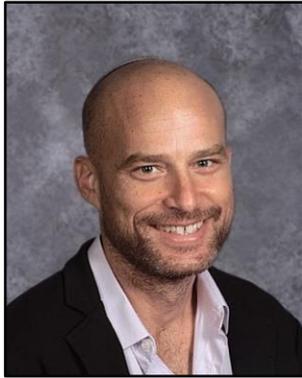
I'm Lital, the 1st and 2nd grade Judaic Studies, Prayer, and Hebrew teacher. I am married to Eldad, and mother to Ofir, Oriya and Itay (who all attend Hillel School). I have a master's degree in Jewish history and a teaching certificate in Hebrew as a second language. I have been a teacher and educator for over 10 years in Israel in elementary and high schools. I taught Hebrew, history, heritage, and the Bible. Teaching for me is a professional mission where I can influence and shape the future generation and impart values and knowledge to our children. In my spare time I like to spend time with my family, travel and play sports

Stephen Papkin – *Judaic Studies, 3rd & 4th Grade, Middle School Judaic Studies, Judaic Studies Department Head*



Shalom! My name is Stephen Papkin and I am the third and fourth grade Judaic Studies teacher and Judaic Studies Department Head here at Hillel Community Day School. This will be my seventh year teaching at HCDS. When I'm not teaching, you can find me spending time with my dog, Ruby, or kayaking on the Finger Lakes. I also love bass fishing, hiking, and camping. I am a Rochester native, and I love seeing our Jewish community grow. It is going to be a fantastic year!

Ami Weisberger – *Judaic Studies, Middle School Judaic Studies*



Shalom! My name is Ami Weisberger and I'm very happy to be teaching our middle school students Ivrit and Judaic studies for the second year here at Hillel. I've been teaching in schools in Israel for about ten years. A year ago, I came with my family to teach at Hillel through the Israeli Agency. In my free time I like to be with my family, run, and hike. I'm looking forward to meeting with our students and helping them grow and find meaning in Judaism and Ivrit.

Tsvia Weisberger – *Judaic Studies, Middle School Judaic Studies*



Shalom! My name is Tsvia Weisberger, and I am excited to start my second year as a Judaic Studies and Ivrit teacher at Hillel. With my partner, Ami, our family arrived as Shlichim from Israel at the beginning of last year. This year I will be teaching Hebrew in 3rd-4th grades and Judaics in 5th-8th grades. I have a Bachelor's, Master's, and a teaching certificate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and 12 years of experience in teaching and education in Israel. My three children will also attend Hillel School this year - Alma will be in 6th grade, Tzuri in 4th grade, and Ma'ayan is very excited to start studying in kindergarten. In addition to my profession, I really like reading (in Hebrew!), cooking and baking. I am excited to meet you all soon!

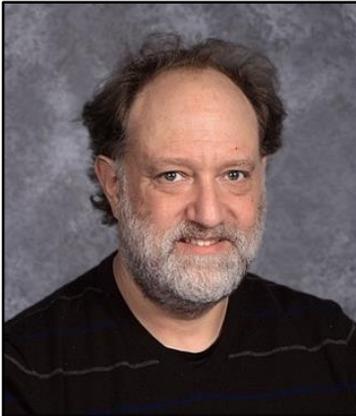
Encore Faculty

Makaily Courtwright – *Music, School Support Specialist/Therapist, and Encore Studies Department Head*



Hi there! My name is Makaily Courtwright and I will be teaching music again this year, along with taking on the new roles of our school's student support specialist/therapist and Encore Department Head. In 2017, I graduated from Nazareth College with a degree in music therapy and worked as a music therapist (MT-BC) for four years before joining the Hillel School teacher team. In my spare time, you can catch me singing around the country with Nik & the Nice Guys and with the Bob Greco Band, writing my own music, playing with my lab Winston, hiking, reading, and cooking/baking. Oh, and Go Bills!!! I am enthusiastically counting down the days until we open the doors for another fun filled, education packed, exciting year of learning.

Dan Irving – *Ecology and Sustainability & STEAM*



My name is Dan Irving and I teach Jewish Ecology & Sustainability, as well as lead Alliance of Jewish Day Schools. I am excited to be returning to continue all the work we started together last year and to build our garden to new heights. I came to Hillel School following a twenty-year career in Jewish camping. I also worked for Hillel International, here in Rochester. I have a bachelor's degree in anthropology from SUNY Geneseo and I conducted independent field research in Cuba. My career has also allowed me to travel to Israel many times. I remain fascinated by cultures, politics and the interaction between people and their environments. In my free time I enjoy spending time with my children, playing music, following politics, hiking, and camping. I cannot wait to welcome everyone back to the garden and to dig into all the amazing things we get to do and study.

Chantal King – *Visual Arts*



Hello! My name is Chantal King, and I am so excited to be joining the Hillel Community this year as the Visual Arts Instructor! I have recently moved to Rochester from Houston, Texas where I taught Art from elementary to high school. In 2014, I graduated from University of Houston where I received my bachelor's degree in Art and then received my Texas state teaching certification. In my free time, I enjoy walking by the lake, watching TV, cooking, spending time with my family, making new friends, and curling up with our cats. I am looking forward to getting to know my new students and their families as well as my colleagues at Hillel!

Cody Conte - *Physical Education*



Hi everyone, my name is Cody Conte. I am super excited to be coming on this year as the Physical Education teacher at Hillel. I graduated from Ithaca College in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in Health and Physical Education. I was on the varsity swim team at Ithaca, and love to spend time in the water. I am currently getting my master's degree in Adapted Physical Education at SUNY Brockport, where I am currently working as a graduate assistant on the Levelle Grant for children with multiple disabilities including visually impairment. In my free time I enjoy biking, kayaking, and drawing. I can't wait for a great year together!

Laurie Weidert –*Special Education Faculty Member from the Brighton Central Schools District*



Hi! My name is Laurie Weidert. I am very excited to be returning to Hillel this coming school year. It will be my third year working at this amazing school, and my 20th year teaching. I am a special education teacher from Brighton, and I have the opportunity to work with all grades, K-8. I primarily work with students who have Individualized Education Plans, but I am often in classrooms during instruction where I get to work with all of Hillel's students and teachers. I graduated from Niagara University with a bachelor's degree in PreK, K-6 Elementary Education and Special Education K-12. I received my master's degree from Roberts Wesleyan in Literacy Education. When I am not at school, I enjoy spending time with my husband and three kids. We love to travel, play sports, horseback ride, and read. I love animals and have two cats, a bearded dragon, an axolotl, and many fish. My favorite part about being a teacher is developing engaging lessons with the interest of each student in mind and celebrating their successes! I am looking forward to a fun and exciting year.

Betsy McGowan – *Pupil Personnel Services Coordinator*



Hello! My name is Betsy McGowan, and I am thrilled to be starting my 5th year at Hillel as the Pupil Personnel Services Coordinator. I spend my days helping students and families with special education needs. I organize our Title 1 tutoring Program and provide direct instruction to students by helping to support teachers throughout the school day. I graduated from Canisius College with a B.A. in Elementary Education and a M.S. in Literacy Instruction. I taught in a K -1 blended classroom, have been a classroom teacher in grades 1 and 2 and have been a literacy specialist grades K-6. My husband and I live in Brighton with our 3 children and our dog, Rosie. In my free time I enjoy going to the beach, traveling with my husband and kids, watching movies and spending time with

my mom and dad. I am very excited for all that this new school year will bring!