

ECC Staff Bios



Before joining the ECC family, **Randi Apter** worked in the entertainment industry, but her love of teaching children led her to join the ECC team in 2017. She worked as an Assistant Teacher in the 2s for two years before joining the 4s team. Randi loves seeing the smiling faces of the children when they accomplish a task, whether it's sorting similar objects, painting, or throwing or catching a ball. Randi lives in Briarcliff Manor, NY with her husband Mark and their two children Emily and

Brandon. She volunteers as a Troop Leader for her daughter's Girl Scout group and enjoys spending weekends with her family. Randi graduated from Ithaca College.



Debbie Belowich joined the teaching staff at Temple Shaaray Tefila in August 2022. She holds a dual Master's degree in Elementary and Special Education as well as a professional diploma in School District Administration. Prior to teaching at Shaaray, Debbie taught at Temple Beth El in Chappaqua where she was a head three's teacher, ran enrichment activities, and taught third grade Religious school. Before that, Debbie spent ten years working as a lead teacher and education coordinator for TheraCare, an agency that provides special education services. Debbie enjoys

hiking, reading, and practicing yoga, and loves chocolate. She lives in Chappaqua with her husband, Brian and two daughters, Alexa and Talia.



Bonnie Bromberg has worked in early childhood education for over fourteen years. Eleven years were spent co-teaching and assistant teaching (every age level) in the ECC at the Rosenthal JCC in Pleasantville and, for the last three years, she has been working here at the ECC, in the capacity of Assistant Teacher for Threes to Be, Threes

and Fours. She considers the ECC team her other family and the ECC a place that makes her smile everyday. She loves teaching and learning from inquisitive and happy children. She earned a BA in Speech Pathology from Queens College and a Masters in Speech Pathology from NYU. In her spare time, she enjoys music, cooking, baking and spending time with friends and family, which includes her favorite furry grandson pet.



Cybill Charles is studying to become a child psychologist and loves being at the ECC. Before joining our 2s team, she worked as a Youth Development Professional for Boys & Girls Club of America, assistant coach for New Rochelle's Modified Cheerleading team, and private tutor for children in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade. When not working in school, Cybill loves to take dance classes and enjoys discovering new books to dive into.



Michaela Freitas has been at the ECC since 2017 as an administrative assistant at Temple Shaaray Tefila. Prior to administrative work, she worked as a teaching assistant at a preschool in Westchester for 4 years. On her time off she likes to spend time with her family especially with her niece Charlotte, traveling, going to the beach, and doing seasonal activities.



Jessica Goldberg is a congregant and former board member whose love of Shaaray Tefila led to her subbing in the ECC and ultimately to a position as a 2s Assistant Teacher and then Head 4s Teacher. Having spent years as a temple youth group advisor, religious school teacher and teacher at a Jewish day school, Jewish education has always

been an important focus of Jessica's work. The warm, nurturing environment of the ECC makes it her happy place and she looks forward every day to seeing the little bright, smiling faces that greet her at the door! When not at the ECC, Jessica is greeted by the smiling faces of her husband Lee, children Emily and Ethan and dog Poppie!



Patty Goldstick has a Master's Degree in Early Childhood and Special Education from the Bank Street College of Education. Before coming to Shaaray Tefila, she was Director of the Temple Israel Center Nursery School in White Plains. She also ran Kulanu, a supplemental Hebrew High School in Stamford, CT and has worked as a Special Educator in dozens of early childhood centers throughout Westchester and the Bronx, helping children with special needs reach their goals. She is a founding member and former Executive Director of Congregation Tehillah in Riverdale, NY. She was also instrumental in the revitalization of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Manhattan where she served as the Director of Family & Youth Activities and then as Director of Programming & Volunteers. Patty has three children, Caleb, Isabela, and Max, and a sweet labradoodle named Ziggy. When not at Shaaray, Patty loves to hike, dance, read and play scrabble.



Kenny Green has been one of the most well-known and highly respected teachers and performers in the field of family and Jewish music in the NYC tri state area since the mid-1980s. An accomplished performer on guitar, banjo, mandola, ukulele and electric bass, he has performed at many schools, synagogues, summer camps and public libraries as well as headlining family shows on multiple occasions at the famed 92 Street Y. Kenny has been the Music Director of the Westchester Klezmer Program since 2001 as well as the producer of the Westchester Jewish Music & Arts Festival for the past decade. He has been a music teacher here at Shaaray since 1995. In addition to working in the ECC, Kenny teaches at the Religious School, accompanies the Rabbi at Shabbat and holiday services and leads the TST house band. He lives in northern Westchester with his wife and daughter.



Linda Greenberg has been teaching at the ECC for over fifteen years. After heading the Toddler & Me program, she served as Head Teacher for two and three year olds. Five years ago, Linda developed the Studio Art curriculum for the ECC. She feels fortunate to be able to spend time with each one of the children at the school while sharing open-ended, immersive art experiences. Linda received her degree from the State University of New York,

Fashion Institute of Technology. Her background in art and design inform her teaching philosophy. She loves the end of the year Art Exhibit where she has the opportunity to see young artists and their families admire all the works of art!



Tami Kassel was a professor at New York University in the dental hygiene department. She previously also worked as a hygienist in a pediatric dental office with all ages. She substituted in the Bedford Central School District before joining the ECC staff, first as a 3s teacher and now joining our 4s team. Tami was brought up in a Conservative home and continues to follow the Jewish traditions with her own family. She lives in Chappaqua with her husband, two children, and dog Keeko.



Jane Kendes has a Master's degree in early childhood education. For the past 30 years she has been a nursery school teacher working with toddlers, 2s, 3s and 4s. She especially loves exploring nature, making music and cooking with young children. She has two grown sons and lives in Hartsdale with her husband and dog, Teddy. When not teaching, she loves yoga, dance, hiking, biking and kayaking.



Georgia Mischka graduated from the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre and worked as an actress in New York City and California. She opened and ran a 70 seat non-profit off-Broadway theater in NYC and taught theater to teenagers throughout NYC public high schools. Since 2010, she has been teaching nursery school in Westchester and NYC sharing her

creativity and love of the arts with young children.



For the past 20 years, **Renee Orscher** has been working in Finance analysis, planning and forecasting for various consumer product companies. She has also been volunteering in her daughters' schools since 2015. Working in the schools brought her so much joy so she decided to leave the Finance world and pursue work in early childhood education. She lives in Pound Ridge with her husband, Christian, and her two daughters, Eva and Scarlett. When not working, she loves to cook, and watch her daughters compete in their hockey and swimming events.



Lucia Palmiero has worked with children ages ranging from pre-k to 5th grade for over 25 years. Her passion has always been working with children and teaching them to love one another and to be kind to one another. Lucia has two adult daughters, and is an avid hiker and gardener. She is also passionate about preserving nature and is on the Darien Beautification committee, and she volunteers with the Darien Land Trust. In addition to working with children, Lucia owned and operated a business in Westchester county for close to 30 years. Even though she currently resides in Fairfield

county her heart will always be in this area and it gives her great pleasure to come to work at ECC.



Garynn Rodner joined the ECC at Temple Shaaray Tefila in August 2022 as an Assistant Teacher in the 3s. Garynn's father, Jeffrey Rodner, was a founding member of the Temple and her family belonged for many years. Prior to joining Shaaray, Garynn worked at Temple Beth El ECC in Chappaqua for four years where she was an Assistant Teacher in the 2s and 3s classes. Garynn grew up in Bedford and moved back over 20 years ago to raise her two children, Taylor and Hunter, who attended the ECC at Shaaray. Garynn loves spending time with family and friends and enjoys taking long walks with her

dog, Brody.



Judy Ruskin has been on staff at Temple Shaaray Tefila since 2005 in the Early Childhood Center and has taught in the Religious school for the past 10 years. During her tenure, she taught for many years in 2s and 4s classes. This year, she is pleased to be working as a floater in the ECC while continuing as a 6th grade Hebrew teacher in the Religious school. Judy has two grown children and resides in Armonk in an "empty nest" with her

husband, Jim. She feels privileged to work at the Temple where she is able to impart her love and knowledge of Judaism to even our youngest ECC students.



Kathy Sarfaty was a 3s teacher at Shaaray Tefila for 4 years, and before that, she worked at the JCC in Pleasantville for 16 years as both a head and assistant teacher. This year, she is excited to join the ECC's

admin team while also subbing as needed. She loves helping children take positive steps forward by providing developmentally appropriate educational and Judaic experiences in a safe, cheerful, and enriching learning environment. She has a CDA (Child Development Associate Credential, the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education) through the Council for Professional Recognition. She also provided in-home daycare for 12 years while raising her own 3 daughters, all adults now, and she has been married for 41 years. When not working, she enjoys long walks, country drives and getting together with family and friends.



Jennifer Schmelkin, LCSW, has been working as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker since 1995. She completed her undergraduate social work degree at Ithaca College and went on to receive her Masters in Social Work (MSW) at the University of Pennsylvania. She is excited to be a part of Project SEED and the Shaaray Tefila ECC community. Jen has extensive early childhood experience through her current role as a Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) social worker in various school-based settings, including both preschool programs and elementary schools. She works with teachers and parents to support and encourage children to reach their greatest potential. Jen provides child guidance and social-emotional learning support, while paying close attention to developmental issues. She offers concrete support on a range of issues related to emotional-regulation, social-skill development and problem-solving, with empathy and sensitivity. Jen has 3 adult children, who have been her greatest teachers!



Sallie Sills ran a martial arts school in Bozeman, Montana for 10 years with her husband before moving to Westchester County in 2010. Since then, she has taught pre-k at the New Canaan Nature Center Preschool, worked with school groups at Muscoot Farm and Hilltop Hanover Farm, taught yoga at preschools throughout the

county, and taught theater to tweens and teens in Northern Westchester. She lives in Bedford Hills with her husband and twin daughters. Sallie has been involved in working at and running camps for many years, and feels very lucky to be the director of Goldens Bridge Day Camp.



Jen White has a Masters in Childhood Education, a Certificate in Early Childhood Education, and an Advanced Certificate in Students with Disabilities. Before becoming a teacher at ECC, she spent 7 years in education teaching a multitude of grades, subject areas, and learning abilities. She knew she wanted to be an educator for as long as she remembers, and strives to help her students meet their full potential. After a day full of lessons, learning, and laughter, Jen comes home to her husband Justin, son Jackson, and Luna, the family pup. Jen enjoys spending time with her family, listening to music, and being outdoors.



Ally Wolland is a wife and mother of three boys Ethan, Emmett and Eli and their sweet dog Avery who is an apricot colored Bichpoo. Her Youngest son Eli attended preschool at the ECC and had such a positive experience, Ally couldn't wait to join the Shaaray Tefila family as an assistant teacher in the Cubs! Ally earned a BA in speech pathology and audiology

and has been an active volunteer within the Byram Hills school district for over 13 years. She currently sits on the board of the Byram Hills Education Foundation (BHEF) as well as the parent advisory board for J-teen which is a Part of the UJA and is dedicated to inspiring Jewish teens with leadership training and community service. Ally is passionate about enriching the lives of children by making them feel safe, happy and confident as new members in the school community. When not working at school, Ally enjoys reading, cooking and baking, and playing tennis. She and her husband Jahn live in Bedford with their boys.



Jane Zeitler has been a teacher since 2013, working with children in preschool through 5th grade. She earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from Manhattanville College and a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts from Amherst College. Before coming to Shaaray, she taught the 3s/4s class at Temple Sholom in Greenwich. Jane lives in South Salem with her husband and she has a 22-year-old son at Columbia University Teachers College. A few of her hobbies include drawing, baking, swimming, skiing and reading.