



Application deadline: May 1, 2024

Applicant's name: Allison Levin

Applicant's email: Allisonlaurenlevin@gmail.com

Phone (daytime): 267-252-4521

Phone (evening): 267-252-4521

Number of years in education: 23

Grade or subject taught: K-12 Art (4 years in elementary/middle and 19 years in secondary)

School: Central Bucks High School West School

Address: 375 West Court Street Doylestown, PA 18901

Principal's name: Lyndell Davis

Principal's email address: ldavis@cbsd.org

Principal's Phone: 267-893-2500

Nomination and Gratitude:

I will begin this application by sharing my upmost gratitude and thanks to the judging panel, everyone who contributed to making this application possible, and Shana Trichon and Heather Reynolds. Stand Up For Justice is truly a remarkable organization, and I am extremely grateful for this opportunity. Shana and Heather have given so much time and effort to make positive changes in our community, and their leadership, friendship, and dedication are incredible. I am also so thankful for the student and two parents who nominated me for this award. I am thankful that they felt compelled to share their thoughts as to why I am deserving of this award. Their nominations are included at the end of this application.

Before I begin to describe the process where I have stood up for justice, I would like to share my connection to Judaism, which will help express my connection to the projects/lessons that I will be sharing in this application. As the advisor of the CB West Jewish Student Union, I thought understanding my passion towards spreading awareness and unity is so important. I grew up in a Jewish family where I had a Bat Mitzvah, was confirmed, was involved in a Jewish youth group called BBYO, attended a Jewish overnight camp, went to Israel in college, and have established these same milestones for my family. I have two teenagers in Central Bucks (my son is at Unami and my daughter is at CB South), and they have both had a Bar and Bat Mitzvah, are studying for Confirmation, both are involved in the same youth group and go to a Jewish overnight camp, and we took them to Israel with my mom and brother's family

2 years ago. I am involved as a parent volunteer in their youth group, I serve as a trustee on my synagogue's board, and I also volunteer in many capacities at their overnight camp.

I have been teaching in Central Bucks since 2005, and I have been fortunate to teach at CB South, East, and West. I have been at CB West since 2012, and it was not until October of 2023 that I was approached by a student to start a Jewish Student Union. There is a chapter at East and South, so I was more than thrilled to take on this opportunity. I didn't realize that what I was signing up for was truly an experience that would change my life. I have a group of approximate 20 members, and I have an incredible leadership board of 7 students. They have shown such compassion towards one another, and they enjoy sharing stories of their Jewish culture, customs, foods, and experiences. We meet once or twice a month and call our events "Schmooze and Schmears" --- where we talk and eat! The kids pick a relevant topic, and we discuss--- while having delicious foods. We also had a "Jewish Foods Bake Sale" where the kids baked and sold Jewish cultural foods. As an art educator who really loves my classroom and learning environment, I never thought I would be so moved and touched by such an amazing group of students. I have always run my classroom as a place of acceptance, kindness and understanding, and this mantra has translated well to the JSU. The Jewish Student Union at CB West is a special group of passionate, engaged, thoughtful, and compassionate students.

Now that I have explained to background of my Jewish lifestyle and how the CB West Jewish Student Union got started, I can now share more of the hands-on lessons/programs that have taken place and are the reasons why I have been nominated for this award.

Describe the precipitating events that motivated you to initiate these lessons/activities:

As described above, the Jewish Student Union at CB West was established in early November 2023. It started with one student asking if I would become the JSU advisor at CB West and has grown to a group that is about twenty members strong. We have a board of seven amazing students, and without them, I would not be nominated for this award. It is with their help, collaboration, and heart, that our group grew and came to fruition. I have three Presidents, one in 10th, 11th and 12th grades and they oversee all operations of our group. My Secretary takes care of making agendas and all email communication. My Social planner is in charge of all social events, from Sign Up Genius needs for events, to social programming. My Schmooze and Schmear leader is in charge of all conversations and content at meetings when we have discussions and open forums. My incredible Social Media Manager is responsible for positively promoting our group on the JSU Instagram.

We have held numerous events in our first year, such as:

- 1- **MONTHLY:** Membership meetings with a Schmooze and Schmear relevant topic and cultural food! Students sign up to bring Jewish foods on a Sign-Up Genius. We always have an activity or topic of discussion for all to participate in and enjoy.
- 2- **NOVEMBER:** Introductory JSU Schmooze and Food Interest Meeting open to all!!! Students wore nametags, described their connection to Judaism and why they chose to come to the meeting!
- 3- **DECEMBER:** We had a Hanukkah party with a white elephant event where the kids shared Hannukah foods and swapped Hanukkah gifts. It was awesome!

- 4- **DECEMBER:** Student leadership formed by asking for leadership volunteers. We ended up forming a JSU board of 7 members.
- 5- **JANUARY:** Student leaders designed a JSU t-shirt for members to purchase to wear to promote and celebrate our group. Most students purchased and we wear to school and meetings/events!
- 6- **JANUARY:** Jewish foods bake sale in the CB West lobby! This was such a fun and successful event and students baked challahs, cookies, apple cake, etc.
- 7- **JANUARY:** A speaker (Congregation Beth Or religious school director) came in to educate our group about the history of Israel and misleading news headlines.
- 8- **FEBRUARY:** A Holocaust survivor all-school presentation during Lunch and Learn in the auditorium for all CBW interested students (with the opportunity to buy a signed book from the survivor)- collaboration with the Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Elkins Park, PA.
- 9- **MARCH:** A Cooking for the Community event: We partnered with CB West's Cooking for the Community group and our Holocaust survivor came in and baked with the students and we donated the food to our community members in need.
- 10- **MARCH:** Some of our leadership attended a speaker event at the Doylestown Borough Hall planned by Shana Trichon. Rabbi Jason Bonder from Congregation Beth Or spoke about the history and current state of Israel.
- 11- **APRIL:** A majority of our leadership attended an Intercultural Community Panel at Pearl S Buck. The event was called "Leading with Humanity and Compassion: Virtues from Faith Traditions and Beyond". We attended with some of the MSA leaders, and we were invited by school board member Mariam Mahmud.
- 12- **APRIL:** We held a Passover seder event with our members. We shared Passover foods, talked about our upcoming MSA/JSU collaboration, and two of our board members played the role of co-Rabbi's and led us in a fun Passover seder!
- 13- **MAY:** A Jewish Student Union and Muslim Student Association collaboration event is held at CB West. This event will be touched on in greater detail in this application. This collaboration was my brainchild, and the intention is to show the commonalities and connections the JSU and MSA students have. It is not meant to be a political event- it is called "JSU/MSA Interfaith Event: Cultural Connections". The goal is to set an example for CBSD to demonstrate the power of student voice, and the importance of compassionately working can lead finding connections.

Describe the lessons/activities; and if adapted from another source please reference.

As mentioned above, there have been many lessons and activities that have taken place during this year as the Jewish Student Union advisor. I am so proud of my leadership and students who have given their time, dedication, passion, and collaboration to this year's JSU activities.

I'd like to use this section to highlight and share more of the details and activities of the Jewish Student Union (JSU)/Muslim Student Association (MSA) collaboration. I would like to share the steps of this collaboration as well as some resources that have been used in this collaboration.

The collaboration began after my JSU students hosted Aaron Nienshultz, the Religious School Director at Congregation Beth Or in Maple Glen, PA in January 2024. Aaron visits other JSU chapters in the area (Upper Dublin, SB South, Wissahickon and Cheltenham as examples). He offered to come to talk to my

students about the history of Israel. The purpose of the visit was not to go in a deep dive on the war—rather, Aaron wanted to share with the students how Israel formed, the disputes with other nations, the land, the general history, and misleading news headlines. It was an engaging experience and the students listened and asked lots of great questions. Aaron truly gave them the path that Israel took in history, and he also talked about the misconceptions of the news and news articles.

Below, you will see the slides Aaron showed the students. Then, you will see some photos of Aaron presenting and of this Lunch N Learn event in my classroom.

Central Bucks West Israel Update

1/29/2024



Guess the Headline....

JERUSALEM — Two Palestinian teenagers were shot to death Saturday in Jerusalem, officials said, after they carried out separate stabbing attacks on an ultra-Orthodox Jew and two Israeli police officers.



Two more Palestinian teens were killed by Israeli forces Saturday along the border of the Gaza Strip as violence spread and appeared to escalate. According to the Israeli military, scores of Palestinians later breached the border fence

ISRAELI BORDER GUARDS aid an injured Palestinian in Jerusalem, the second such attack in a violent demonstration.

Two protesters injured Friday in Gaza and the Jerusalem neighborhood of Shufat died, for a total of six Palestinian deaths Saturday.

Guess the Headline....

6 Palestinian teens die amid Mideast unrest

JERUSALEM — Two Palestinian teenagers were shot to death Saturday in Jerusalem, officials said, after they carried out separate stabbing attacks on an ultra-Orthodox Jew and two Israeli police officers.



Two more Palestinian teens were killed by Israeli forces Saturday along the border of the Gaza Strip as violence spread and appeared to escalate. According to the Israeli military, scores of Palestinians later breached the border fence

ISRAELI BORDER GUARDS aid an injured Palestinian in Jerusalem, the second such attack in a violent demonstration.

Two protesters injured Friday in Gaza and the Jerusalem neighborhood of Shufat died, for a total of six Palestinian deaths Saturday.

Guess the Headline...



Police have confirmed that the explosion of a bus in Jerusalem, wounding 21 people, was a terror attack. Egged bus number 12 was travelling on Derech Hevron street at the intersection of Moshe Baram Street in Talpilot, a neighborhood in south-east Jerusalem, when the attack took place. Two of the injured are in serious condition, one in critical condition. Seven people were moderately injured.

Initially, police were unsure whether it was a terror attack but it became clear that this was the case when the injured arrived at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital. The director of the emergency care unit stated to the press that the injuries clearly indicated a terror attack.

"Some of the wounds of the victims who arrived to us are from nails and bolts that penetrated their bodies. It gives the impression of wounds from a terror attack," stated the doctor.

Guess the Headline...

Jerusalem bus fire injures at least 21, police say



Police have confirmed that the explosion of a bus in Jerusalem, wounding 21 people, was a terror attack. Egged bus number 12 was travelling on Derech Hevron street at the intersection of Moshe Baram Street in Talpilot, a neighborhood in south-east Jerusalem, when the attack took place. Two of the injured are in serious condition, one in critical condition. Seven people were moderately injured.

Initially, police were unsure whether it was a terror attack but it became clear that this was the case when the injured arrived at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital. The director of the emergency care unit stated to the press that the injuries clearly indicated a terror attack.

"Some of the wounds of the victims who arrived to us are from nails and bolts that penetrated their bodies. It gives the impression of wounds from a terror attack," stated the doctor.

Guess the Headline...

JERUSALEM - Three Palestinians armed with automatic weapons, explosive devices and knives killed an Israeli security officer and seriously wounded another in Jerusalem on Wednesday before police shot and killed the attackers, police said.

It was one of the most brazen attacks in nearly five months of near-daily Palestinian assaults, mostly stabbings, on Israeli police, soldiers and civilians. Israel has struggled to contain the violence, despite sending troops to secure cities, expanding police powers and toughening punishments for attackers.

Guess the Headline...

3 Palestinians killed as daily violence grinds on

JERUSALEM - Three Palestinians armed with automatic weapons, explosive devices and knives killed an Israeli security officer and seriously wounded another in Jerusalem on Wednesday before police shot and killed the attackers, police said.

It was one of the most brazen attacks in nearly five months of near-daily Palestinian assaults, mostly stabbings, on Israeli police, soldiers and civilians. Israel has struggled to contain the violence, despite sending troops to secure cities, expanding police powers and toughening punishments for attackers.

What can you do?

Donations:

American Friends of Magen David Adom (<https://afmda.org/>)

Friends of the IDF (<https://www.fidf.org/>)

United Hatzalah (<https://israelrescue.org/>)

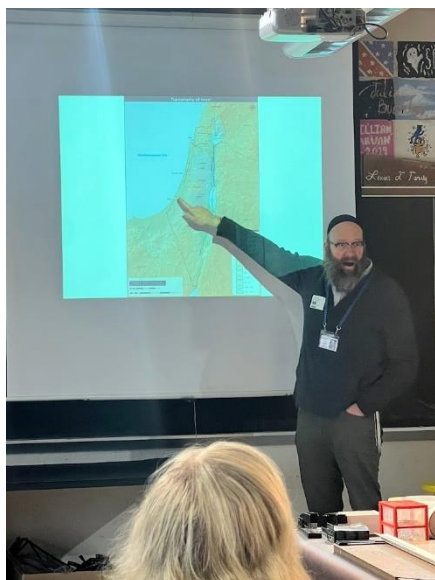
What can you do?

Religious things:

Pray! (I have psalms for you)

Light candles (Ask me for a set)

Donate tzedakah





This was a very successful and interesting event, and it culminated with about a dozen JSU students writing letters to the IDF thanking them for protecting Israel.

A few weeks after our event, the MSA posted flyers around CBW inviting any students at CBW to participate in a letter writing campaign with the title "Invest in PA Not Bombs". It was asking students to join collectively to write a letter to PA State Treasurer "listing ways we can better use the \$\$ here in PA, rather than for killing more innocents in Gaza". This caused a great deal of public scrutiny on social media and beyond, and I instantly saw that there was tension between the two groups. I took it upon myself to set up a meeting with the MSA advisor to discuss ways we could come together and collaborate and find commonalities. It has been my goal to have the JSU and the MSA work together to identify similarities in their cultures, and we have met many times both in my classroom and the MSA advisor's room. The students have been doing a lot of talking- and listening, and through this time, they have discovered so many things they have in common. These include areas such as food, fasting, language, clothing, and customs. The students have been working together to prepare for an event on May 3 called "JSU/MSA Interfaith Event: Cultural Connections". The event entails a collaborative presentation that the leadership from both groups have been working on together. They will be teaching one another about the cultures and customs of their faiths. They will then play a fun game of Jeopardy at the end. Students will be bringing in foods from their cultures and sharing them with one another. This was put together by creating a Sign-Up Genius which contains both Jewish and Muslim foods. The event will be videoed by an in house CBSD videographer, and this will also include interviews of the leadership talking about their experiences working together. The video will be available and posted on the CBSD website and may also make its way to some local news stations.

Below is the presentation that the students put together for their JSU/MSA collaboration. Any of these resources (and more!) are available if you email me at Alevin@cbsd.org. I have many documents and spreadsheets that could easily be adapted to another group, should they be interested in doing a collaboration such as this (or ANY of the events listed in this application!)



MSA/JSU INTERFAITH EVENT

WHO WE ARE

JUDAISM
ELIAS TRICHON & ETHAN COHEN

ISLAM
SALMAN BENJELLOUN



The Origins of Judaism

- Judaism started over 4,000 years ago when God revealed himself to Abraham
- Abraham's son Isaac, and grandson Jacob became central figures in Judaism
- Jacob took the name Israel, and his descendants became known as Israelites
- 1,000 years later, Moses led the Jewish people out of Egypt after being enslaved for hundreds of years
- God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, which are the holy laws of Judaism

Three Main Sects of Judaism



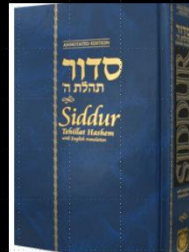
- **REFORM** – A denomination of Judaism that is centered around the evolution of Judaism which modifies traditional beliefs and customs
- **CONSERVATIVE** – This sect is centered around conserving the essential elements of traditional Judaism while also allowing for modernization
- **ORTHODOX** – Orthodox Jews adhere most strictly to traditional religious practices



Jewish Milestones

- Bris/Baby Naming
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Confirmation

Jewish Texts



Siddur



Torah



Yad

Jewish Holidays

- Rosh Hashanah - The Jewish New Year
- Yom Kippur - The holiest day of the year (Day of Atonement)
- Shabbat - The Sabbath (celebrate every Friday night - Saturday morning)
- Channukah - The Miracle of Lights
- Passover - Jews freed from slavery by Moses
- Purim - Defeat of Haman and his plan to eradicate the Jews



Religious Fasting in Judaism

The only time in Judaism where there is fasting is during Yom Kippur. The purpose of this fasting is that Yom Kippur is the day of repentance. We take a break from eating and drinking to focus and think about what we've done wrong throughout the year and look for forgiveness. This is considered one of the holiest days in the Jewish year.



What is Islam?

- Islam, by definition, means: **Submission to God.**
- Islam means to live life primarily guided by **God's final Word, called The Holy Quran and God's final messenger, Prophet Muhammad, to whom the Quran was revealed.**

Islam is a person's lifetime journey to their Lord and Creator; a journey that is built on:

1. **Declaring there is no deity worthy of being worshipped except God and the Prophet Muhammad is His final messenger**
2. **Praying 5 times a day**
3. **Paying alms-due**
4. **Fasting from dawn to dusk every day of the month of Ramadan**
5. **Making the pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime**



Islam provides you with clear answers to the central questions of your life:

- What is the purpose of life?
- What is true success?
- What is death?
- What is after death?

Islam Began With Adam...

Hundreds of thousands of prophets conveyed the same message.

Prophet Muhammad is the last messenger for all living things

At age 40 he started receiving the revelation through the angel Gabriel.

Foods: Maen, Veronika, Marley



Foods in Islamic cultures:

- Biryani (Pakistan)
- Cous cous (Morocco)



- Macaroni Beshamill (Egypt)
- Hummus (Palestine)
- Shawarma (Syria)
- Doner (Turkey)
- Pilav (Uzbekistan)



Jewish Foods:

- Challah
- Apples and honey
- Hamantasch
- Latkes
- Matzah ball soup
- Jelly donuts
- Matzah
- Kugel
- Rugelach



Foods (cont.)

- Muslims must eat halal foods slaughtered in the Islamic way.
- We are not allowed to eat pork, carnivores, animals that have been killed in a non halal way.
- Some examples of foods: Maqluba, Hummus, shawarma, etc.
- Jewish people must eat foods that are deemed Kosher (1. Must be blessed by a Rabbi. No scavengers, no pork, no meat mixed with dairy)
- We are not allowed to eat pork
- We can't eat anything with flour (or anything that rises such as bread) during Passover

Art and Music: Max, Salman



Hora- Jewish dance



Dabke- Palestinian dance

Music

- Klezmer
- A type of instrumental music that originated in Eastern Europe
- Originated in the Middle East in the early 1900s
- The movement ended during the Holocaust
- There was a revival in the 70s with bands like Davka that combined funk/jazz/middle eastern/ and klezmer music

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِلَهًا لَا تُدْعَىٰ لَهُ شَيْءٌ
 لَّهِ نَسْتَعِينُ
 إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
 هُدًى نَالِ الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ لَا تُغْوِئْهُمُ شَيْئًا وَلَا الظَّالِمِينَ

- Nasheed
- Quran Recitation

Chapter 1 – The Opening
 In the Name of Allah—the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.
 All praise is for Allah—Lord of all worlds,
 the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful,
 Master of the Day of Judgement
 You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help
 Guide us along the Straight Path,
 the Path of those You have blessed—not those You are displeased with,
 or those who are astray.

JEWISH ART/ARCHITECTURE



The Dome of the Rock is the oldest Islamic structure. It was built in Jerusalem in 1023 after collapsing in 1015.



The Western Wall is the most sacred place in Judaism.

ISLAMIC ART/ARCHITECTURE



Clothing- Haziq, Jordan

Islamic Clothing

Jewish Clothing

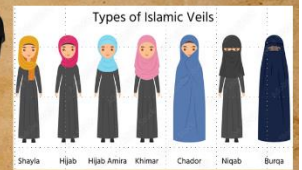
Men's Wear



Women's Head Wear



Women's Islamic Clothing



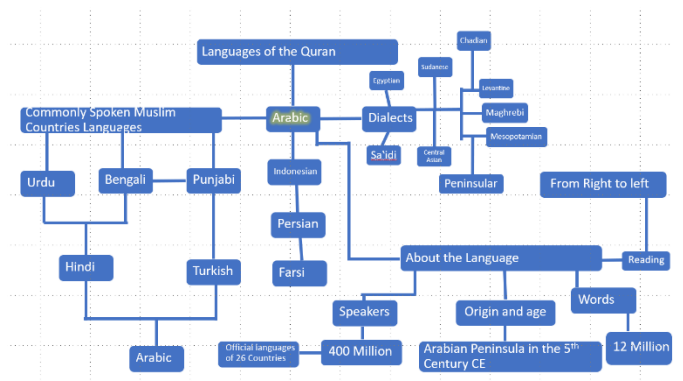
Important Aspects

- Modesty

Clothing in Judaism

Clothing

Tzniut: Modesty
 Clothing can be kosher just like food
 Shatnez: mixture of wool and linen
 Orthodox women cover their hair after marriage
 More modest when in synagogue



Language JSU- Brandon

| | Long | Short |
|------------|------|-------|
| A (green) | א | א |
| E (blue) | ה | ה |
| I (red) | י | י |
| O (yellow) | ו | ו |
| U (purple) | ו | ו |

ORIGIN OF HEBREW

Folded lead tablet from Mt. Ebal

• 3200 YEARS AGO

Photograph by Michael C. Ludeni

Hebrew over time

- Biblical Hebrew:**
 - 10th Century BCE
- Post-Biblical Hebrew:**
 - 1st Century CE
 - Dead Sea scrolls (See photo)
 - Medieval Hebrew
 - Revival of Hebrew 19th century in Germany
 - Modern Hebrew

Language In Islam- Mary

Muslims around the world speak various languages, mainly all over Asia and Africa. However, the Quran is written in Arabic which unites us all. Muslims are expected to be able to read Arabic but many of us do not understand it. For example, "Hufath" are people who memorized the entire Quran and 80% of Hufath are non-Arabic speakers.

Languages in MSA

- Tajik: Tajik is a variety of the Persian language that is primarily spoken in Central Asia, mainly Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- Turkish: Turkish is part of the Turkic language family and is spoken in Turkey
- Uzbek: Uzbek is also part of the Turkic language family and is spoken in Uzbekistan
- Urdu: Urdu is Indo-Aryan language spoken mainly in Pakistan. It is derived from Persian, Hindi, and Arabic
- Arabic (Syrian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Egyptian): Arabic is a semitic language spoken in many countries in West Asia and Africa

TIME FOR JEOPARDY!!! 😊

Explain how the lessons/activities teach students the importance of respecting others no matter what religious, racial, cultural, or other differences exist.

The activities of collaboration between the JSU and the MSA have been absolutely inspiring, and they show the importance of the MSA and JSU members respecting one another's religious, racial, and cultural connections, and differences. This project literally embodies the definition of these concepts. Not only did this collaboration set a tone for CBSD, showing that it IS possible for two groups of kids that have very different groups to come together to share their views and commonalities, but it absolutely models kindness, empathy, and unity. The hope is this collaboration is viewed as truly a steppingstone for our district, showing that the KIDS can really put aside their difference and model the importance of kindness, empathy, and resilience.

I will share that this has been a personal journey of strength, resilience for ME, and it has truly opened my eyes to the importance power of the voice of teenagers. I am continually reminded that it is THEIR strength and willingness to take the time to understand one another that has allowed this journey to continue. We have been faced with community scrutiny and influences, and through all of this, I continue to check in with the kids to make sure they're still feeling positive about the collaboration. Through ups and downs, they have remained vigilant to coming together to find this commonality and unity. It truly is inspiring to see a group of teenagers show their passion and dedication to this collaboration.

The photo below on the left was taken at one of our JSU/MSA meetings where we were working on our collaborative presentation. The photo on the right shows the JSU and MSA with school board members Mariam Mahmud and Heather Reynolds at a local event called the Intercultural Community Panel at Pearl S. Buck where we heard from a panel of diverse cultural leaders regarding the importance making connections and spreading peace and awareness. We have been posting collaborative social media photos and posts sharing our collaboration on our respective MSA and JSU Instagram pages.



MSA and JSU leadership at CB West during Lunch and Learn, planning for their collaborative event on May 3, 2024.



MSA and JSU leadership at Pearl S. Buck Intercultural Community Panel in April 2024.

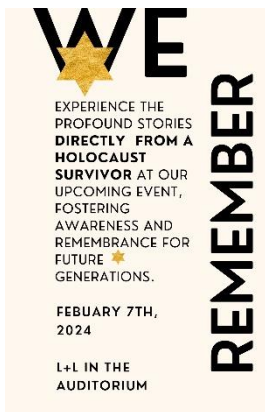


To the left is JSU President Brandon Horak and MSU board member Maen Alfeen featured in CB West’s “Humans of CB West” featured In April 2024. This is a CB West group that highlights what is going on in the student body at CB West.

Explain how it helped them counter bigotry or bullying and prepared them to Stand Up For Justice.

Before the MSA and JSU came together for their collaboration, the JSU brought a Holocaust speaker to CB West for any student to attend in the auditorium during Lunch and Learn. I truly believe that this event opened the eyes of not only the JSU, but to other groups regarding the topic of bigotry and bullying. There were absolutely members of the MSA also in attendance, as well as hundreds of other CBW students who were interested. This event preceded the MSA/JSU collaboration and brought awareness of these topics to our school community.

Below are some photos from this school wide event, sponsored by the CB West JSU.



This is the flyer advertised



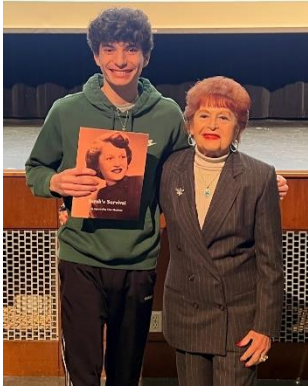
JSU members with Holocaust speaker Sarah Meller



This is the view of the audience



JSU President with Sarah



JSU Social Media Manager Elias



Sarah Meller speaking to the students



JSU members after the event



Allison with Sarah Meller

In addition to this, the students spread their cultural foods with the school through a JSU sponsored bake sale in the lobby for a few days after school. This also allowed the JSU to share more about their culture, educating CBW students to not have feelings of bigotry toward Jews, but rather to understand that they are just part of the school culture, and it really did open many students' eyes to more about our JSU students.



JSU members at the bake sale!



Students loved their goodies!



Some of the baked goods!



Gotta love some good challah!

After the Holocaust speaker event, we invited our speaker back to CBW where we collaborated with the "Cooking For the Community" group and Sarah taught us how to make her family's recipe of rugulah. The JSU students worked with Sarah to make the rugulah and the Cooking For the Community students made 6 noodle kugels. The two groups were able to enjoy both recipes once they were made. The rest of the food was packaged and donated to needy CBSD families in our community.

Below are some photos from this meaningful collaboration.



Students at the baking event!



The JSU students preparing the rugulah dough!



JSU students cooking with Sarah Meller



Sarah

These are just three of the events that the JSU held prior to the MSA/JSU collaboration. It really does embody the importance of spreading awareness of the culture to help combat bigotry and bullying. The MSA/JSU event in itself is literally two groups of students coming together TO Stand Up For Justice. I know that I was nominated for this award, but I absolutely, positively couldn't be preparing this application without the amazing dedication and leadership of my JSU members. I am eternally grateful for them and inspired by them.

Provide evidence/proof of effectiveness such as, but not limited to: a questionnaire, interviews, documented anecdotal conversations, and student writings, video, etc.

Below are a variety of student, parent, and administrator documentation regarding my nomination of the Stand Up for Justice award. I am indebted to them for taking the time to prepare their thoughts on my behalf.

Video Message from Alissa and Keith Hrak, Parents of JSU President Brandon Horak, 12th



Keith and Alissa
Horak_SUFJ_Allison L

Words from JSU President, Veronika Teres, 11th

Ms. Levin has been one of the most supportive teachers that I know at CB West. I had the pleasure of having Ms. Levin as a teacher since the beginning of Sophomore year in Art 1. I can recall that during some Lunch-and-Learn days, she would shut down her room and give a voice to LGBTQ+ students in the school. Although I haven't been a part of these meetings, I do know that a lot of students walked out of those meetings feeling relieved and heard by other students in our community.

Ms. Levin continued to help students the following year as well. Come around Junior year, Ms. Levin announced to my AP Art class that she would shut down her room for Jewish students that wanted to unite and talk about experiences of being a Jewish student at CB West. I came to the meeting which prompted a discussion about issues our school faces with the rise of antisemitism. These meetings continued, and the Jewish Student Union chose to have a leadership board which I am a part of.

In February, tensions began to rise on social media about the conflict going on between Palestine and Israel. Students were verbally harassing one another on social media and bullying one another over views about the conflict. Then, the Muslim Student Association at our school held a meeting in support of defunding the conflict, which caused up-roar all over social media and even the news. Seeing this conflict occur, Ms. Levin quickly jumped into action and held numerous meetings with Mr. A (the Muslim Student Association advisor). She effectively worked out a solution that would help disperse tension on social media by suggesting that we do an interfaith event where both clubs would learn about the cultural and religious life of the other club.

On Instagram, both clubs teased a collaboration, which I believe calmed down the tension on social media. I haven't witnessed a single fight on Snapchat over personal beliefs since we began to collaborate with one another. I genuinely believe that no other teacher would have stepped up and made such a huge impact in a conflict such as this one. It would have gone ignored. Ms. Levin chose to step up and take action, making sure that both sides become more understanding of one another with every meeting we have. I can confidently say that the MSA and the JSU have learned more about each other and have grown more tolerant over our beliefs, which is an incredibly hard thing to do considering most adults aren't brave enough to become understanding of one another. Ms. Levin shows this bravery and strength as she continues to push towards our interfaith event, despite any roadblocks that appear to be ahead.

I, and many others, can safely say that Ms. Levin is one of the most supportive teachers at CB West and truly makes an impact on her students. No teacher, that I at least know of, has ever attempted to mend two seemingly separate groups effectively. And for that, I have gained a massive amount of respect for her and what she is doing as a teacher. Ms. Levin truly captures what it is like to be open-minded and bring respect between two people or groups that don't see eye to eye and give a voice to those in our community who don't.

Words from JSU President, Brandon Horak, 12th

To whom it may concern,

My name is Brandon Horak, I am a senior at Central Bucks High School West. I am one of the presidents of our JSU, under the guidance of Mrs. Levin. Through my experience at high school, and especially through these events at JSU, Mrs. Levin has been such a supportive teacher and leader.

In our JSU group, we have been very active in our community promoting unity and co-existence between different minorities, mainly being the MSA. In our collaboration, Mrs. Levin has always put our personal feeling and comfortability first and made us all feel good and cared for through some rough times. There have been moments where collectively as a group, we all needed support and an ear to listen to us talk, and Mrs. Levin has always been there for it. Mrs. Levin has always led by example, guiding us in very difficult topics such as interfaith conversations and events.

I feel confident to speak on behalf of not just the JSU, but every student Mrs. Levin has worked with, to say that she has always made everyone feel comfortable and safe in her room. Mrs. Levin always welcomes everyone and is willing to help anyone whenever she can. And as a student who has needed that and went for it, it has always helped. I will be forever thankful for all Mrs. Levin has done for me, and I have no doubt others will say the same thing.

Words from JSU Social Planner, Jordan Pollner, 11th

My mom and I chose to nominate Ms. Levin for the Stand up For Justice Educator Award due to the unconditional amount of kindness she's shown me, and everyone else at CB West. She always treats everyone with respect no matter their religion, background, or even feelings about her and the JSU (Jewish Student Union). When I first joined the JSU I was nervous about the backlash we would get due to the rise in antisemitism, and once we joined forces with West's MSA (Muslim Student Association) many of us were worried about what they would think about our club. But every time we had doubts Ms. Levin would remind us that what we're doing is important and that we are being leaders for our community. But she would also let us know that it was okay to be scared and if we were ever uncomfortable there would be nothing wrong with taking a step back. Ms. Levin is the definition of Standing up for Justice. She took it upon herself to speak with students who were reposting antisemitic things from our schools Snapchat story, she created the opportunity to support and join forces with the MSA when they were facing backlash due to their beliefs, and when others told her that a private activity we had in our club was wrong she quickly apologized for hurt feelings but refused to agree that it was wrong because she will always stand up for justice and won't take back something she believes in.

Words from JSU Secretary, Marley Steiner, 11th

Mrs. Levin has been a great inspiration to me, and the rest of the JSU group. She always looks out for our best interests, and supports not only JSU members, but many students as well. Since starting JSU towards the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, she has been a great leader and mentor as she continued to grow JSU at Central Bucks West. Mrs. Levin was the first person to tell me about the beginning of the JSU club, and she was so supportive of me joining and becoming part of the JSU student leadership. Whenever we have our club meetings, Mrs. Levin always is very encouraging with the group and manages everything very well. When starting the leadership of JSU, Mrs. Levin allowed us to takeover more, but still is very involved with getting events started up, making dates for other leadership meetings, etc. She has pushed me to stay on

top of all my work for JSU, but she always makes sure to check on everyone and see if they need any assistance. Mrs. Levin has been very important in the collaboration with MSA, and she has put so much work in for the upcoming event. When MSA first started, Mrs. Levin was very organized and responsible, and began kindly communicating to MSA's leaders. She was able to clear the air, and because of her, we can have a good relationship with them and collaborate with them on certain events, like the one coming up! Our club has grown so much, and it's all because of how great of a leader Mrs. Levin is. She is such a great mentor, and a person who I can look up to! I'm so glad Mrs. Levin is apart of JSU, and it makes me feel great knowing that we have an amazing teacher leading our group who has been so understanding of everyone and their hard work!

Words from CB West Principal, Lyndell Davis



CENTRAL BUCKS HIGH SCHOOL WEST

Steeped in Tradition, Building on the Legacy, Inspiring the Future

April 26, 2024

Dear Stand Up for Justice Educator Award Committee:

It gives me immense pleasure to write a letter of support for Mrs. Allison Levin, in her nomination for the Stand Up for Justice Educator Award. Aside from being a fantastic Art teacher, Mrs. Levin has created a safe and welcoming space in her classroom for all students, regardless of their identification. It has become the norm to see her classroom full of students working on art during our Lunch and Learn period. Mrs. Levin has sacrificed her personal time to provide those students with a welcoming place to work on art.

Mrs. Levin also serves as the advisor for the Jewish Student Union here at Central Bucks High School West. With the current Israeli/Palestinian conflict, Mrs. Levin has created a supportive environment for members of the JSU. Additionally, she has worked with members of the JSU on leadership skills, advocacy, and being mentors for others. Mrs. Levin has worked with the advisor of our Muslim Student Association to foster and develop inter-cultural relationships and understanding between our Jewish and Muslim students. She has helped facilitate planning meetings between the JSU and MSA on a joint cultural event the two groups are hosting in early May here at Central Bucks High School West.

Mrs. Levin's work at Central Bucks High School West and with students, make her a deserving candidate for the Stand Up for Justice Educator Award. Her work truly embodies the ideals of promoting understanding, countering bigotry and bullying.

Sincerely,

Lyndell Paris

Principal
Central Bucks High School
West 267-893-2511

West Pride

Achievement, Community, Kindness and Tradition

Stand Up For Justice Website Nominations

Name: Elias Trichon

Email: ewtrichon@gmail.com

Subject: Nominate Allison Levin

Message: Mrs. Levin is an art teacher at Central Bucks West High School. She is also the advisor of the Jewish Student Union there too. I am a leader of the JSU so I spend a lot of time with her and other JSU leaders. Mrs. Levin has done an amazing job as the advisor, especially with meetings with the Muslim Student Association. Mrs. Levin truly deserves to win the stand up for justice award because she is doing just what it means to stand up for justice.

Sincerely, Elias Trichon Student of CB West High School

Name: Erin Greb

Email: eringreb8@gmail.com

Subject: Nominate educator from CB West

Message: I'd like to nominate Mrs. Allison Levin for the SUFJ educator fund. Her art room at CB West is a safe haven for numerous students who find the space a creative place for them to express themselves without fear of being judged. Mrs. Levin respects students' identities and allows them to expand their artistic skills by focusing on themes that are meaningful for their self expression. She's also been a great source of support and encouragement to help her students apply to college programs that will work well for their own unique personality and skill level.

Name: Jessica Pollner

Email: jspollner@gmail.com

Subject: Nomination

Message: I would like to nominate Allison Levin, CB West art teacher and advisor for the newly formed CB West Jewish Student Union. It has been a challenging time to be a Jewish student with a significant rise in anti-semitism worldwide. When the students at CB West saw a need to bring Jewish students together to support one another, Ms. Levin graciously - and excitedly - stepped in to be the advisor. She has helped a group of teens find each other and learn from each other. The JSU raised money to bring in a Holocaust survivor to speak with students school-wide. She has supported the JSU planning activities with the Muslim Student Association so the two groups can find their own similarities and common ground. She has helped the students to process difficult feelings during a challenging time. As a parent, I am so grateful to her for supporting and guiding our students, while always letting them take the lead and choose the direction. She has been a shining light for the Jewish students at CB West and the CB community. I believe this work is just beginning and see a lot of amazing things that could be done with additional support from the Stand Up for Justice Educators Fund.