



MRS. LYNN ELTES HIGH SCHOOL
ROSENBAUM FAMILY MIDDLE SCHOOL

SHA'AREI BINA TORAH ACADEMY FOR GIRLS

MEET THE FACULTY 2021-2022

BELIEVE • **I**NSPIRE • **N**URTURE • **A**CHIEVE



Dr. Rochelle Brand joined the Sha'arei Bina family six years ago as the Head of School coming from serving as the Principal of HAFTR's Middle School for six years. Dr. Brand served as Head of School of Yeshiva University High School for Girls for 17 years during which she rose from the position of Coordinator of Academic Administration to Assistant Principal, then Principal and Head of School.

Dr. Brand began her career as a math and science teacher in the public school system. When she and her husband moved to Israel, she taught science at Yavneh Middle School. Upon returning to the United States, she taught at Beth Tfiloh High School in Baltimore, developing and chairing the Grade Advisor Department before returning to NY where she became Assistant Principal at the Sephardic High School in Brooklyn.

With many years of teaching experience both in the U.S. and Israel, Yeshivot and public schools, Dr. Brand has impeccable educational credentials. She graduated cum laude from Brooklyn College, earning both a Bachelor of Arts Degree and a Master's degree in Biology; she also received her Hebrew Teacher's Degree and graduated magna cum laude from Yeshiva University's Teachers Institute. While in Baltimore, she pursued a second master's degree in School Psychology from Towson State University. Dr. Brand received her Doctorate in Educational Administration from YU's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration. Her dissertation explored gender differences in spirituality.

Dr. Brand attained her Principal's License from the National Board of Jewish Day Schools. She also possesses licenses to teach Biology and General Science from New York State and City, Baltimore City, and the State of Israel. She is licensed by New York State and the Jewish Education Committee as a Judaic Studies teacher and Principal.

In addition to her numerous degrees and licenses, Dr. Brand is an ardent believer in professional development and has participated in Harvard University's Principals Leadership program. She has also served as a mentor at the Intensive Training Program for Aspiring Administrators through the Avi Chai Foundation, a Fellow at the Bar-Ilan Lookstein Center for Education in the Diaspora, and she has chaired a number of Middle States Committees evaluating other Yeshivot. Most recently, Dr. Brand completed a course given through the Avi Chai Foundation on Blended Learning. Dr. Brand is also recognized as one of the staff educators for the Names Not Numbers (c) project.

Throughout every stage of her career - as a teacher, department head, Assistant Principal, Principal, - Dr. Brand has shown exemplary devotion to maintaining the highest standards of Secular and Jewish Education, coupled with warmth and a good sense of humor: a winning combination. Dr. Brand is fond of saying that the best forty-five minutes of her day is when she is in the classroom. Dr. Brand teaches a variety of classes in Math and Limudei Kodesh. She leads the girls in davening every morning and afternoon, including a short lesson on the Tehillim recited.



Mrs. Shoshi Morgenstern joined Sha'arei Bina this year as the Middle School Principal. Her passion is connecting with her students, building their skills, cultivating their love for Eretz Yisroel, and helping her students develop a deep and meaningful relationship with Hashem and His Mitzvot. She believes that students should be active learners, and can acquire a love of learning and academic confidence through engaging questions, reflective thinking, cross curricular instruction, and individual and collaborative projects. Mrs. Morgenstern began her career as an educator over twenty years ago as a Judaics and general studies teacher in Prospect Park Yeshiva. Subsequently, she transitioned to the New York City public school system and taught for fourteen years as a certified gifted and

talented teacher. Additionally, Mrs. Morgenstern served as grade leader, mentored new teachers, directed the Showcase School program for peer collaboration, facilitated professional developments, and coordinated student activities. Mrs. Morgenstern has an extensive educational background including studying at Maalot Seminary, a Masters in Special Education, courses in educational leadership, and certification in general education, special education, and talented and gifted education. In 2018, Mrs. Morgenstern moved to Florida and served as the Middle School General Studies Principal for Torah Academy of Boca Raton for three years. Mrs. Morgenstern leads the daily sixth grade davening and is implementing The Tefillah Program that SBTAG is developing with JEIC. She teaches Parshat Hashavua to each middle school class weekly and enables her students to connect to the Parsha and discover meaning in the Torah through interactive lessons and group discussions. Additionally, Mrs. Morgenstern has created a Middle School Middah of the Month program and has started an 8th grade Shabbat Club to help the girls enhance their love for Shabbat. Mrs. Morgenstern feels privileged to join the incredible Sha'arei Bina family including our board members, administrators, teachers, staff, parents and students



Mrs. Rivkah Bodkins, our Director of Student Life and Mechanechet, nurtures the individual talents of our student body by creating and coordinating our chesed and extra-curricular programming, as well as serving as the girls' cherished advisor. Mrs. Bodkins is a certified teacher through Miami CAJE and the Azrieli Institute (Technology and Education). She is also a Certified Activities Director, and published a workbook for Shmuel Bet and Malachim Alef. She attended a CAJE trip to Israel and participated in the mentoring program through Miami-Federation. Mrs. Bodkins teaches a variety of Limudei Kodesh subjects. In addition to coordinating the 11th grade trip to Israel, she arranges and oversees the school shabbatonim, retreats, chagigot, simcha dancing, color war, father-daughter learning, sports night, and fundraising activities for the 8th and 12th grade graduation trips.

We are continuing the Better Together Intergenerational Project that Mrs. Bodkins initiated at Sha'arei Bina three years ago.



Rabbi Shlomo Ackerman joined the Shaarei Bina faculty this year for both the general studies and Torah studies departments. He holds a B.A. from the University of Florida in both English Literature and Religion, an M.A. in Religion (History of Judaism in Late Antiquity) from Brown University, and pursued a PhD in Talmudic studies at Hebrew University of Jerusalem and JTSA, where he was awarded a Richter Fellowship and a Revson Fellowship. He has taught from grade 5 through grade 12, as well as college and graduate school. Rabbi Ackerman has authored a dozen publications for Judaic studies classes in the areas of Chumash, Navi, Halacha, Hasidism, and Talmud. As real Renaissance man, Rabbi Ackerman's outside interests include music, music theory, history, jewelry making, and theoretical physics.



Coach Tricia Ankle, our Health and Physical Education instructor, is a firm believer that "health isn't a goal, it's a lifestyle." "Coach T," as our students commonly call her, has a Master's degree in Educational Administration and Exercise Science, and a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education. She is certified and licensed as an Exercise Physiologist and Nutrition and Fitness Specialist. Coach T is also a personal trainer, yoga trainer, therapeutic pain therapist, and she owns her own personal training and fitness company.



Miss Chumie Berkman graduated from Bais Yaakov Miami and then graduated from Lahav Seminary in Israel. She is pursuing a degree in social work and hopes to work with teens at risk. Ms. Berkman teaches Chumash, Navi, Beur Tefila, Parsha, and yediot to our 6th-10th graders. She loves being able to share her passion for Judaism and hopes that her students gain a great excitement for learning.



Mrs. Ofira Bashiry joined our Hebrew language department three years ago. Mrs. Bashiry holds a B.ED. and teachers diploma from Beit Berl college in Kfar Saba, Israel. Previously, Mrs. Bashiry taught Hebrew for 17 years at Yeshiva University High School For Girls (Central) in NY. She has also taught at the Solomon Schechter School in Queens, NY and Solomon and Huberman elementary schools in Israel. Morah Bashiry has participated in the Bar Ilan University seminar for teachers of Tanach and attended the NETA Hebrew Language curriculum development program at Boston's Hebrew college. In the summer of 2008, Mrs. Bashiry participated in an advanced course at Bar Ilan University on the topic of leadership and leaders in the Tanach. In July 2010, Mrs. Bashiry attended the annual conference of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew (NAPH) at Stern College of YU. In the summer of 2017 Mrs. Bashiry participated in Better Lesson Professional Learning Conference in NY. Morah Bashiry coordinates our Yom Hazikaron, Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim programs.



Mrs. Risa Berkowitz, as now in her second year on the Limudei Kodesh faculty, she began her teaching career at a Kiruv school in NY while simultaneously completing her BA in Psychology from Queens College. Knowing that her passion was to teach and spread Torah, she wanted to graduate with an education that focused on understanding human nature and behavior. Upon marrying and moving to Baltimore, MD, she taught Limudei Kodesh in Shalheves H.S. for girls. Her responsibilities included hosting Shabbatonim and special programs with the girls. Years later, her family moved to Miami where she has taught preschool. This enabled her to continue to contribute as a teacher and still be near her little

ones. During that time Mrs. Berkowitz helped run yearly women's events to inspire spiritual growth in the community, weekly lunch and learn programs, and summer learning programs. In her spare time she enjoys writing and hopes to complete a sequel to a pamphlet she put together for post-seminary young women. Now that her youngest has graduated preschool, Mrs. Berkowitz is excited to be "back in High School", especially with her own principal from her H.S. years in YUHSG, Dr. Brand.



Mrs. Yonina Blumenthal, a Judaic Studies faculty member, teaches a variety of classes in the High School. This is her sixth year teaching at Sha'arei Bina. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Science and a Master's Degree in Occupational Therapy. In addition, Mrs. Blumenthal received her teaching certificate in Judaic Studies from Midreshet Efrata and Misrad Hachinuch in Israel. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Jewish philosophy at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies - Yeshiva University. Mrs. Blumenthal runs a private tutoring business, helping students of all ages with one-on-one assistance in a variety of both secular and Judaic studies.



Mrs. Chaya Brody is a member of our general studies faculty and teaches middle school and high school art. She received dual Bachelor's degrees in special education and general education, and is currently pursuing her master's degree in art education. Her passion and knowledge for her subject gives our students the confidence and skills to work to their potential in a creative and professional studio.



Professor Pesach (Paul) Charney is a new social studies faculty member at Sha'arei Bina. He comes from New York City with many years of teaching experience at Touro College in the Department of Psychology as well as teaching high school and elementary school social studies and English. He received semicha from Kollel Ayshel Avraham Rabbinical Seminary. It is his distinct privilege to work with Holocaust survivors for many years in New York City and build on this work at Sha'arei Bina with the Names Not Numbers Course and Holocaust survivor interviewing project. He was invited to host a weekly radio show on JRoot Radio on a wide range of challenging Jewish topics for several years and worked with Rabbi Yosef Wikler at Kashrus Magazine as well. Professor Charney earned

a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology at Bennington College and a Master of Arts Degree in Political Science with a Major in American Politics at Columbia University. He brings significant and wide-ranging teaching experience to benefit his students.



Ms. Christina Daniels returns now for her third year teaching social studies for our Middle School girls. She is originally from the island of Jamaica, but considers Florida her first love. Ms. Daniels is more than just a teacher, she is actively engaged with staff to ensure that our girls are being pushed to excel in emotional and moral values. She has spent more than 8 years educating students at both ends of the learning spectrum - either those who are struggling or those working at an accelerated pace. Ms. Daniels currently holds a Public Policy M.A. and Psychology B.A. We appreciate her enthusiasm to help our students understand how human psychology and behavior shapes our world history, governments, and modern events. If you ever have the opportunity to walk into one of her classes

you would find students engaged in debates, hands on projects, and activities that further analytical thinking and comprehension. Students often leave her classroom excited to share their takeaways with their parents and peers. It is not a surprise the students feel so comfortable expressing themselves because Ms. Daniels creates a warm and fun environment for her students to dive head first into challenging historical material and current events! Ultimately, Ms. Daniels hopes to inspire and educate great minds that are destined for greatness!



Rabbi Moshe Gruenstein is the Director of Project Heritage, a dynamic kiruv organization which at its inception was focused on reaching out to Jews of all backgrounds and bringing them closer to a Torah way of life. After hearing of Rabbi Gruenstein's accomplishments the Young Israel of Bal Harbour reached out to him to become the Rabbi of their fledgling congregation. Under his leadership the congregation grew from a small community of 60 families housed in a simple facility above a bank to a congregation of over 300 families which moved into a magnificent edifice in the heart of the Surfside, Bal Harbour community. Recently retiring from his position as founding Rabbi of the Young Israel of Bal Harbour. Rabbi Gruenstein is doing what he loves most which is to teach Torah not only

at Sha'arei Bina but to the wider Jewish community. He is a dynamic and sought-after speaker who has

lectured in cities across North America-New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Toronto. He currently is the rabbinic director of the in-reach program of Project Heritage. Rabbi Gruenstein received smicha Yorei Yorei- Yodin Yodin from Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim. Rabbi Gruenstein's mission statement in teaching is not just to impart knowledge but more importantly to infuse a real "geshmak" for Torah and mitzvos into the hearts and souls of his students.



Mrs. Debbie Hirsch is our School Administrative Assistant. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Education from Brooklyn College with a concentration in Special Education. Mrs. Hirsch was instrumental in the establishment of the Keshet program where she also taught General Studies. Additionally, Mrs. Hirsch has worked as Secretary of Congregation Sha'aray Tefillah in North Miami Beach. As the heart and soul of our school, Mrs. Hirsch greets every student with a smile and keeps the office organized and running efficiently.



Mr. Bryan Jacobs is extremely excited to be teaching Math this year at Shaarei Bina. With years of tutoring experience, he is looking forward to breaking down the students math fears. Not only will he bring a fresh, new, and exciting take on math learning, but also ensure the students are ready to succeed in future math courses.



Ms. Sabina Joseph is our high school science teacher. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Classical Studies from the University of Florida and Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in Biology from Nova Southeastern University. In addition to her studies at NSU, she conducted microbiological research and served as a laboratory assistant in the subjects of Anatomy and Physiology and Microbiology. Ms. Joseph has used her research background to help guide Sha'arei Bina's recent science laboratory upgrades and looks forward to engaging her students through hands-on experiments. With years of experience as a private tutor, Ms. Joseph brings a wealth of knowledge to her students and looks forward to leading learning in the areas of Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry, and Biology.



Rabbi Warren Kasztl received his Rabbinical Ordination from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. He also has a Masters in Jewish Education and Counseling from Yeshiva University's Ferkauf Graduate School. He was the founding Rabbi of what is now the Young Israel of Kendall and was appointed as the first Jewish Chaplain in the United States to work full time for a Hospice, with a focus on servicing the Jewish community. He developed a program with the Miami Dade County Medical Examiner's Office providing Rabbinic oversight for Jewish people in their facility. Rabbi Kasztl has been learning Hashkofas Yisroel with HaRav Shimon Kessin, a recognized Godol, since Pesach, 2017. Rabbi Kasztl is a published writer in the United States and Israel covering a whole host of

topics within the world of Hashkafa. He has spoken for numerous groups and organizations, representing many backgrounds within the Jewish community. As a result of his twenty-year plus work experience in Hospice, Rabbi Kasztl developed a private practice that focuses on bereavement, marital, and family counseling. Beginning in 2021, he will be teaching Hashkofas Yisroel at Sha'arei Bina Torah Academy for Girls.



Mrs. Naama Parnes is our Dean of Student Affairs, ensuring that our students are accomplishing their goals within the guidelines of the school. Mrs. Parnes is also a member of the Middle and High School Judaic Studies faculty and teaches a wide variety of subjects. Prior to moving to South Florida, Mrs. Parnes taught in Temima High School for Girls in Atlanta. She received her teaching certification from Seminar Yerushalayim and has taken professional development courses in Holocaust Studies, Adolescent Development, and Multiple Intelligences. With more than 30 years of teaching experience both in the classroom and the community, it was no surprise when Mrs. Parnes was honored as Sha'arei Bina's 2015 Teacher of the Year.



Rabbi Michoel Sheinkopf has been a member of the Judaic Studies faculty since the inception of Sha'arei Bina. He received his Talmudic Degree from Yeshivas Chaim Berlin and teaches Halacha and Chumash to the Middle School and High School. A true cornerstone of our school, Rabbi Sheinkopf plays many roles; serving as the expert shofar blower in Elul, and our go-to-guy for the Theater Production and everything construction-related. Rabbi Sheinkopf always responds to our many requests with a tool and a smile.



Mrs. Naomi Sprung is returning to Shaarei Bina as a High School Judaic Studies teacher. Mrs. Sprung is a well-beloved teacher for over 30 years, in Florida, New Jersey, Atlanta and Australia. Mrs. Sprung attended Breuers Seminary and received Teachers Certification in Both Elementary and High School education from Torah U'Mesorah, and CAJE. She received a BA in English and Fine Arts from UMBC. Mrs. Sprung has taught Adult Education classes in Florida, New York, New Jersey, Israel and Australia. Mrs. Sprung has given Teachers Workshops on teaching Navi, Teaching to Multiple Intelligences, and Helping our Children Daven. Mrs. Sprung is also a well-known artist, who has had art shows and sold her paintings around the world. Her unique talents and warm personality infuse the classroom

and beyond, as her endless creativity enhances her classes and is shared with our school on every front. She developed ground breaking curriculum that fuses Tanach and Torah She Baal Peh to teach Middot and Hashkafa. She has a strong belief in developing the unique characters, talents and intellect of all her students.



Ms. Monica Vera has been a member of Sha'arei Bina's English Department since 2014. She has taught English for grades 6-12, and currently teaches High School English, as well two dual enrollment classes for High School students earning college credit. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English from Florida State University and a Master of Arts in English Literature from Florida International University. Ms. Vera has certifications and licenses in a variety of subject matters, including TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certification (2009), a certification of completion for the College Board's AP Summer Institute in English Literature (2015), and a Professional Certificate in English Education from the State of Florida for middle and high school grades (2016). Ms. Vera has also

earned certificates in Professional Development courses for Educators, including "Blended Learning: Personalizing Education for Students" (2015), "Teaching Character and Creating Positive Classrooms" (2016), and "Supporting Children with Difficulties in Reading and Writing" (2017). She published and presented an article in the Florida Atlantic Comparative Studies Journal, entitled "Taking Issue with History: Reconciling Vestiges of Enslavement and the Power of Creative Interventions" (2011), which later became the focus of her Master's thesis, "Taking Issue with History: Empathy and the Ethical Imperatives of Creative Interventions" (2012). Ms. Vera serves as our College Advisor as well, guiding the high school students on their journey to higher education.



Ms. Marie Yoda is one of our new general studies teachers. She joined the Sha'arei Bina family last year as a Math Teacher Assistant and came back this year as our middle school math teacher. She pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Sustainability. She will be continuing her education to obtain a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology. Ms. Marie carries a strong passion for helping people, and for mental health. She combines her passion, proficient knowledge in mathematics, and knowledge of psychology, and applies it to her role as a teacher. This is what makes her such a dedicated and skilled teacher here at Sha'arei Bina.



Ms. Valerie Yoda is a General Studies faculty member in Middle and High School. She teaches Science, Math, and A.P. Psychology. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a second Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Management. She has also completed her Master's in Environmental Science with a concentration in Atmospheric Sciences. She brings a passion for inquiry and discovery into her experiential science classes.