SSCPL LESSON PLAN SHOWCASE

Julie Koven, Judy Petersen, Arlene Ratzabi, Esther Schnaidman and Ellen Share

Description: Refresh your program offerings with some inspiration from experienced librarians! Whether you’re new to a library position or an old-timer with loads of experience, there are always new ways to engage your patrons and connect with your community. Five librarians will describe Jewish-oriented activities they have successfully implemented, for a variety of library types and a variety of ages - from storytime series to digital citizenship lessons and beyond.

Julie Koven is the Librarian/Technology Integration Specialist at The Rashi School in Dedham, MA, a Pre-K-8 Jewish day school affiliated with the Reform Movement. In addition to library literacy skills, she teaches technology, digital citizenship and media literacy lessons across all grades. She has previously been the Reference/Cataloging Librarian at the American Jewish Historical Society in New York, NY; the librarian at Gann Academy in Waltham, MA; and Systems Librarian at Ave Maria School of Law in Naples, FL. She was the 2020-21 president of the Greater Boston Independent School Collaborative Library Association.

Judy Petersen is the Library Director of Congregation Har Shalom, a small non-denominational synagogue in Fort Collins, CO, where she has been a member and either a library volunteer or the Director for the past 30 years. The library has received Basic Accreditation, and Judy is very grateful for the mentorship and education she received through AJL that made this possible. In her non-library life, Judy is a retired physical therapist and a retired Middle School music paraprofessional. She enjoys reading (of course!), crocheting and genealogy. Wearing other hats in her congregation, Judy teaches Israeli folk dancing to the Religious School students and for community holiday celebrations, and also does a genealogy research project with the 5th grade class. In the genealogy sphere, she is currently the VP of Programming for the Jewish Genealogy Society of Colorado.

Arlene Ratzabi has been the librarian of the Hendel Family Library of Westchester Jewish Center for the past fifteen years, as well as the volunteer librarian for her own synagogue, the Israel Center of Conservative Judaism in Flushing, NY. Arlene began her library career in Israel after completing her master's in library science at Columbia University. She spent ten years as a professional librarian in Israel; first as a Periodicals Librarian at the National and University Library in Jerusalem and then as the Acquisitions Librarian at the Central Library of Agricultural Science in Rehovot. After moving back to New York, she used her library/research background to begin a new career as an Executive Recruiter with a boutique recruiting firm. Through the years, Arlene became very involved with her synagogue in Queens and decided that she would like to return to the Jewish community in a professional capacity and use her library background in research and subsequently. She joined the staff of the Westchester Jewish Center in Mamaroneck, NY to manage their library. Since resuming her library career as a synagogue librarian, Arlene has been a member of AJL and for the past five years has been serving on the Accreditation Committee.

Esther Schnaidman has been the school librarian/teacher at the Rosenbaum Yeshiva of North Jersey in River Edge, NJ since 2000, where she teaches information literacy skills and shares her love of books with her students. She received her MLS from Rutgers School of Communication and Information. Besides being active in AJL, she also serves on the board at the New Jersey Association of School Libraries as the Liaison to the Non-public schools. She lives in Teaneck, NJ with her family.
Ellen Share has worked as a librarian for over 30 years at Washington Hebrew Congregation. She holds an MLS from the University of Maryland. Ellen has been active in AJL, holding several positions and presently writing book reviews for the AJL Newsletter. She is also on the Board of the Capital Area of the Association of Jewish Libraries. Ellen is passionate about using Jewish books and literature to convey Jewish history and beliefs to children.