



Jewish Education Center of Anne Arundel County.

Shalom!

I would like to introduce myself to you, if we have not had the opportunity as yet to meet. I am Ellyn Kaufman and very excited to be starting up a new Hebrew School at KI, which will be known as the Jewish Education Center of Anne Arundel County.

How did this come to be and why was I asked to start up this school?

After working in Arnold for 13 years as a Jewish Educator, the position I held as Director of Education for a local Hebrew School was changed and shortly thereafter, Rabbi Weisblum invited me to start a new Hebrew School with KI.

As a Jewish Educator for the past 38 years, I accepted the challenge and have been meeting with local people since to see how we can best build this entity for our current KI families with children, for people in AAC who are unaffiliated and as an option for other families who may be looking for a new Jewish home to call their own.

My Jewish philosophy is simple - I believe we need to help our children be proud of our Jewish heritage; catch them doing mitzvot and help them realize that we are the future of our peoplehood. We need to establish a Hebrew School that is relevant, educationally viable, fun, and a social environment where they will want to come and be with other children. At the Jewish Education Center, we have the opportunity and obligation to teach our students about our holidays, Jewish customs, Jewish history, Siddur and some conversational Hebrew, Torah stories and studies, a love of Israel and about Jewish identity.

A few words about me and my background:

I am from Portsmouth, Virginia, a neighbor to Norfolk and Virginia Beach. Being raised in an area with very few Jews, I can relate to the uniqueness of being a minority as are our Jewish children in the Annapolis area. After going to Israel as a teenager and falling in love with the country, I chose (against my parent's advice) to continue my college studies first at David Yellin Teacher's College in Jerusalem before continuing studies at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I met and married my "practice husband" in Jerusalem and a few years later, we moved back to Tidewater Virginia where my 2 amazing children, Avi and Mindy Elfersy were born. I went back to school when my children were teenagers to attend Old Dominion University for a Masters Degree in Education Administration.

Please allow me to brag for a moment about the joys in my life. Avi and wife Kathie are parents to my brilliant grandsons Benjamin and Jackson and they reside in Nashville, Tennessee. My daughter Mindy and fiancé Jim, parents of wonderful Aidan, reside in Crofton. I came to Arnold as a single woman and thanks to JDate met my "b'shert", Martin Kaufman, in 2003 and we married in 2006.

I am beyond thrilled to be part of the family at KI as of July 1, 2014 and I look forward to working with Rabbi Weisblum and getting to know the KI families!

Thank you for welcoming me to your community and into your lives.

Shalom v'kol tuv, wishing you all the best,

Ellyn Becker Kaufman
Director of Education
Jewish Education Center