

## 2023 Bronfman Fellow Introductions



**Maor Baker**  
Brookline, MA  
Gann Academy

### **Fast Facts**

- I am a member of my high school's Mock Trial team, and we just made it to the Massachusetts state championship.
- In my Vietnam War class, my classmates and I curated an oral history project focused on previously untold personal accounts of the Vietnam War from all perspectives.
- I love art, and I like to spend time listening to music and sketching portraits.

Hi! I'm Maor, and I am from Brookline, Massachusetts. I come from an observant family, and we would describe ourselves as liberal Orthodox. I attend Gann Academy (a pluralistic Jewish high school), and I spent the past seven summers at Camp Yavneh, a Jewish overnight camp in New Hampshire. My favorite subject in school is history - this contributes to my life every day because I love engaging in conversations about politics and the world. I spend my free time talking to friends, playing all kinds of sports, reading fantasy and non-fiction books, and doing school work (but let's be honest, I spend most of my time on mock trial). I am the third of four siblings, so I developed a strong sense of competitiveness in almost everything I do. Let's just say you probably won't beat me at ping pong, but I'm up for the challenge.



**Odelya Bergner-Phillips**  
New York, NY  
Hunter College High School

### **Fast Facts**

- I am co-captain of my school's Mock Trial team, on which I've been a lawyer since 9th grade. In 2022, we won New York State Championships.
- I am the managing editor of my school's official newspaper, *What's What*. I've been on the newspaper staff since 7th grade, writing for and editing multiple sections, and I love seeing the excitement on students' faces when we hand out copies of the new issue each month.
- I am extremely interested in politics and admittedly a little obsessed with the Supreme Court. I am taking a course in school on constitutional law, have spent the past two summers studying comparative politics and the court at two different pre-college programs, and have interned on political campaigns.

Hi, everyone! My name is Odelya. I was born and raised in New York City and live on the Upper West Side with my parents and older brother when he's home on break from college. At Hunter College High School, my days are packed with activities, from pitch meetings for the school newspaper to theater rehearsals to mock trial practices, and endless coffee runs with my friends. I start each morning listening to NPR's UpFirst podcast and doing the NYTimes mini crossword and the spelling bee. I also rely on a variety of playlists to wake me up on my commute. My taste in music varies day by day, depending on my mood, from Lizzy McAlpine to Amy Winehouse to the Rolling Stones, and much more. I'm always looking for new song recommendations! I play acoustic guitar and sing, usually playing whatever happens to be stuck in my head at any given moment. I also love to spend my free time baking or making ambitious (and mostly successful) meals with my

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friends. One of my favorite bakes was a chocolate babka, a long process that allowed lots of time to re-watch my favorite TV show, *The West Wing*, and a variety of rom-coms and sitcoms, while kneading and shaping the dough. I love going to farmers' markets, plays and concerts, and taking walks with friends in Central Park when the weather is nice. Raised by Israeli parents, I am a secular, cultural Jew, and I can't wait to get to know everyone this summer!



**Joshua Danziger**  
Houston, TX  
*The Emery/Weiner School*

### **Fast Facts**

- I cohost a politics and business podcast with 115+ episodes and 9000+ listens.
- I am the founding secretary general of an annual model United Nations conference attended by four local schools and hundreds of students.
- I founded an organization called the Jewish Security Alliance to bring active shooter and antisemitism preparedness training to Jewish teens nationally.

I am Josh Danziger and I hail from Houston, Texas. I am looking forward to interesting debates and discussions on Bronfman as I like to learn from disagreements. In fact, I cohost a podcast called *The Young Perspective* where I facilitate and engage in debates about political and social issues. I feel that 115 episodes of debate and public speaking engagement have prepared me over the past three years to participate on Bronfman.

I have three older sisters who are a large part of my life. Though we fight, they have pushed me to be a better and more thoughtful person. Though they are older and my family lives across the country, we often Facetime call and make the best effort to be together. I am very involved at school as the vice president of the student

government (crossing my fingers the future president). I spend a lot of time participating in Model United Nations competitions which have taught me the importance of compromise and perseverance. My synagogue community is also very important to me as I make an effort to attend each Shabbat and participate in community events. Even though we are a small congregation, that makes all the regular congregants a much more tight-knit community. Kiddush lunch after Shabbat services is the best time in my week. I look forward to participating in Bronfman and being a part of the community.



**Raphael Delgado**  
San Diego, CA  
*The Bishop's School*

### **Fast Facts**

- I am a frequent audience member and performer of musical theatre, some favorites being *Les Miserables*, *Hadestown*, and *Parade*.
- I learned chess at age four and became a tournament player at age five, although I play less today.
- My favorite author is Leigh Bardugo, and my favorite series of hers is *Six of Crows*.

Hi everyone! I'm Raphael Delgado. I live in San Diego, California, and I am a 16-year-old junior at The Bishop's School. While I attend a Reconstructionist synagogue, Congregation Dor Hadash, if I had to briefly describe my theistic beliefs, I would likely compare them to those of Baruch Spinoza. I am highly interested in philosophy, ethics, and current events, and I love exploring those topics in my free time, from reading compilations of modern ethical arguments, to binging online Harvard lecture series on moral systems, to sparking in-depth meal-time discussions with my parents on topics such as the effectiveness of capitalism. I love learning from other people's points of view, and I will never stray away from a conversation.

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Outside of school, I seem to fill every last ounce of time with a variety of extracurricular activities. I am a varsity volleyball player, an actor, and a member of student government and other decision-making bodies at my school, such as our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Advisory Board. But my main passion is music. Ever since I discovered choral music in 7th grade, I have loved singing as an art form. Two years ago, I became a founding member of my school's barbershop quartet, the "Starry Knights," which I currently lead and direct. I also hold a choral singing appointment at All Souls' Episcopal Church, and I have recently begun to look into choral conducting as a new passion to pursue. On rare days off, I enjoy meeting friends, reading, or kicking back and watching TV with my family. I have always wanted to travel to Israel, and I am so excited for the Fellowship this summer!



### **Jackson Flagg**

Burlingame, CA  
*Design Tech*

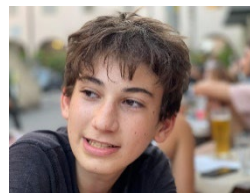
#### **Fast Facts**

- I am an avid volleyball player. I play indoors during the school year and beach during the summer. If there is a volleyball net in the vicinity, you can expect me to be there.
- I love numbers. I take an interest in analyzing financial statements and enjoy immersing myself in the calculus videos that pop up on my YouTube feed.
- I have an unhealthy obsession with In-n-Out Burger.

Hey! My name is Jackson, and I live in Burlingame, California. I attend Design Tech, which is a public charter school. Despite growing up Jewish, I come from an interfaith household, which means double the holidays (and double the presents). One of my major interests is

investing, and I do everything I can to learn more about it. I take accounting and economics courses at my local community college, research companies for investment competitions, and lead my school's financial literacy club.

On weekends, you can find me aimlessly strolling through the neighborhood, listening to my unnecessarily long playlist. My music taste is all over the place, ranging from Pink Floyd to Kendrick Lamar and everything in between. I have two dogs and a rabbit, which makes for a pretty crowded house, so I (attempt to) find safety by reading in my room. I'm mostly interested in nonfiction and enjoy my monthly National Geographic subscription. I almost enjoy books as much as I love a good film. It's extremely dangerous to talk about movies around me, as the conversation would inevitably lead to a rant about the crisp storytelling of *The Godfather* or the expertly crafted symbolism in *Parasite*. In fact, I have a note on my phone that contains a comprehensive list of the best movies I've ever watched and the films that I plan on watching. I'm also a huge basketball fan (go Warriors!) and love volleyball. Usually, the value of my outfit will not exceed 40 dollars, which I accomplish by harnessing the power of thrift stores. For 30 bucks, I can get a brand-new closet and have a fun way to spend my Saturday. Quite a deal!



### **Sasha Foer**

Brooklyn, NY  
*Saint Ann's School*

#### **Fast Facts**

- Creator and Host of "So Passes Life" podcast, listened to in 161 countries.
- I founded the chess club which has convened 1 time, and it was an amazing meeting.
- This summer I worked at Shakespeare and Co in Paris, and abused my cafe privileges.

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I was born at Lenox Hill hospital on the Upper East Side, but consider myself a Brooklynite. I went to Beth Elohim for nursery school, but have ever since attended Saint Ann's School, a progressive, private school in Brooklyn Heights. Things I love: ping pong, chilaquiles, the smell of bergamot, chopping wood, arriving at airports, every dog I have ever met, chili crisp hot sauce, playing basketball, making movies, and laughing with people. I have created a podcast about time, and when I am not procrastinating I find myself thinking a lot about how to use time better. Currently I am spending my spring semester at The Mountain School in Vermont, and preparing for a four-day solo camping trip. I have three dogs, one brother and one baby sister.



**Ellie Friedman**  
Vestal, NY  
*Vestal High School*

**Fast Facts**

- I play varsity tennis for my school but I also play verbal tennis including mock trial and debate.
- I have the opposite of a green thumb - no matter how hard I try, I can't keep plants alive. (I've killed cacti in mere days.)
- I love to write poetry on random torn slips of paper. I collect them in a gorgeous box that I keep on my desk. It's inspired by how my favorite poet, Emily Dickinson, collected her poetry in a trunk in her room.

My name is Ellie and I am from Vestal, New York. The biggest benefit of living "upstate" is getting to ski locally. There is something about racing down a mountain in the freezing cold air that I can't get enough of. I'm also a big fan of hot chocolate.

Vestal is a rural town with a very small Jewish population. I'm one of maybe eight Jewish

students at my high school. I'd like to say it's forced me to feel more confident in my Jewish identity, but to be honest, that's something I still struggle with. Sometimes I feel that I have two entirely separate communities - the one at school and the one at synagogue. Though the community is small, it's close-knit. My family hosts lively shabbat dinners and most holidays.

As a Jewish Women's Archive's Rising Voices Fellow, I learned about the intersection of Judaism and feminism. I wrote articles about topics that matter to me like abolishing the death penalty, Jewish history, and female representation in media. I think it's important to hear other perspectives about topics you might think are one-sided. After working with Citizen University, I founded an inter-generational book discussion group called Between the Lines.

When it's not ridiculously muddy, my family and I love being in nature. Last summer I spent six weeks at Ramah Rockies. I learned how to lead a backpacking expedition, treat wounds, and discovered I have an intense hatred for beef-ish (the TVP we brought on trips). I'm currently a nonvoting board member and I love seeing how things happen behind the scenes.

2023 has been my year of trying new things. I started learning bass guitar, joined an advanced art class, and switched from distance to sprinting. I'm an avid reader of fiction and love musical soundtracks.



**Max Grinstein**  
Reno, NV  
*Davidson Academy*

**Fast Facts**

- I am very interested in the subject of prison journalism, and I have worked as an intern at the Prison Journalism Project since 2021.

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- I just completed my two-year term representing Senate District 15 in the Nevada Youth Legislature.
- I am taking classes at the University of Nevada, Reno, to try to learn Northern Paiute, one of the languages of the indigenous people of Nevada.

My name is Max Grinstein, and I live in Reno, Nevada, where I go to a public high school called the Davidson Academy. I attended a Conservative Jewish day school in Houston, Texas, from grades one through five. My dad was raised Jewish and my mom Catholic; I consider myself a secular Jew today. Fun Jewish fact: I was given the hook (by my parents) during my Bar Mitzvah speech when I went off-script and tried to argue with the Rabbi about which slate the congregation should support at the upcoming World Jewish Congress elections.

Reno is the Biggest Little City and a fun town; I like to hike in the mountains with my two pugs, people-watch in the casinos, and attend the weird local festivals (although I don't recommend the annual Camel Races in nearby Virginia City). I haven't been to Israel yet, but I think the Nevada desert-vibe will acclimate me for the Negev.

I love all things history and history-related. My school lets students teach classes for credit, and so last year I co-taught with a friend a seminar about special topics in U.S. history. I also collect old things, including lead toy soldiers and vintage typewriters. One of my prized possessions is a Hebrew I.B.M. Selectric that I got freecycle. I took it to a typewriter repair shop in Berkeley, California, and restored it to working condition. I guess they aren't so rare in Israel, but it was the first one the repair shop had ever seen!



**Akiva Himelhoch**  
Lexington, KY  
*MSTC at Paul Laurence  
Dunbar High School*

### **Fast Facts**

- I am interested in the study of pure math (I also collect old math textbooks).
- I have run multiple businesses, including a keyboard business and game-account flipping.
- Something that is meaningful to me is to try to think outside the box.

My name is Akiva Himelhoch. I live in Lexington, Kentucky, though I am originally from Silver Spring, Maryland. I love to cook new and exciting foods from all different cuisines. This cooking is the only reason my dog Obie (a black pug) likes me, and so I often also enjoy spending time with him. I also enjoy undertaking programming projects, which often lead me down distracting rabbit holes at the cost of my schoolwork. One of my favorite things to do with my family is hiking. The most beautiful hike I've attempted is the Besseggen mountain ridge in Norway, a nine-hour hike I completed with my father last summer. My last name means "high heavens" in German, and seeing the high heavens from up on a mountain after a long hike is one of the things that brings me immense joy. I enjoy reading fantasy novels and hanging out on voice calls with friends.



**Nathan Kahana**  
Philadelphia, PA  
*The Haverford School*

### **Fast Facts**

- I am an active member of my school's Jewish Student Union, and I immensely enjoy the experience of discussing Judaism with students who have little

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connection to their exceptional heritage.

- I am a Cross Country runner, and I find the experience of running to be both competitive and therapeutic (what could be a better combination?).
- I enjoy a certain degree of cynicism, and anyone who listens to my ideas would be well advised to take some of my statements with a grain of salt.

I'm Nathan, and I live in Philadelphia. I attend The Haverford School, a college preparatory school with a very small (and definitely unreligious) Jewish population. I was raised Modern Orthodox, but I have fluctuated in observance throughout my life. Over the summers, I have gone to more ultra-Orthodox summer programs, and the contrast between camp, my upbringing, and my school's culture certainly lends itself to a certain degree of instability. Personally, I find the experience exhilarating.

Besides running cross country, playing tennis, and debating societal issues with others, I enjoy reading novels. My reading spans many genres, but I specifically target books which explore the nuances of human emotion. Two of my favorites are *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky and *American Psycho* by Bret Easton Ellis. I also enjoy watching movies, and most recently I have found *Parasite*, a South Korean film devoted to the discussion of class conflict, to be particularly interesting.



**Talia Kantor Lieber**  
Brooklyn, NY  
*Dalton School*

**Fast Facts**

- Some books I love are *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith, *Her Body and Other Parties*

by Carmen Maria Machado, and *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro.

- My favorite styles of dance are modern and hip hop; my own choreography usually combines the two.
- I got my certification in dialogue facilitation in 2021.

Hey everyone! My name is Tali Kantor Lieber, and I'm from Brooklyn, New York. I attend the Dalton School in Manhattan, where I'm a writer and Managing Editor of the newspaper, *The Daltonian*. I'm one of heads of the Film Club (favorite movies include *Shiva Baby*, *Y Tu Mama Tambien*, *Léon*, and *10 Things I Hate About You*). I have been dancing on and off for about 12 years, in various styles and groups. I have danced in my school's annual show for the past two years, and this year I am both dancing and choreographing.

This past summer, I reported on how red state colleges and universities reacted to the overturning of Roe vs. Wade for a feminist media collective called *The Meteor*, and I worked as an intern for a local independent newspaper in Massachusetts. In the summer of 2021, I attended the Seeds of Peace dialogue program in Maine, and got my certification in facilitation after coming home.

I was raised a Reform Jew. I'm a member of Congregation Beth Elohim, and attended a Reform summer camp for seven years. My Judaism is ever-developing, but it involves a commitment to social justice and open dialogue, in addition to copious amounts of matzo ball soup and long Shabbat dinners with friends.

I love meticulously crafting Spotify playlists, reading books, playing with my 7-year-old sister, going to concerts, and wandering around New York City. I'm thrilled to be a part of Bronfman's 37th cohort, and am counting the days until summer begins.



**Rustin Kharrazi**  
Los Angeles, CA  
*Palisades Charter High School*

**Fast Facts**

- I am extremely passionate about the right and wrong way to peel a banana (NEVER peel from the stem).
- My all-time favorite TV show is "Dance Moms" because it is prime reality television.
- I am the host of my school's "The Leadership Show."

Hello! My name is Rustin Kharrazi. I am 16 years old and I am a junior at Palisades Charter High School in Los Angeles. I have grown up in a less religious, more reformed, and culturally focused Jewish household and have thus struggled with feeling ties to my roots in Judaism. Although I recently went on a trip to Israel with a teen program called LA Star where I found a newfound, deeper connection to my religion and heritage. Living in LA, I am part of the extensive Persian community, both my parents having immigrated from Iran. Being Persian is a huge part of my identity and the chaos currently ensuing in Iran is more than painful.

I would consider myself a passionate person and I have a number of interests that I care deeply about. I'm heavily involved in multiple areas at my school including ASB Leadership, California YMCA Youth & Government, DECA, and the VAPA department. Currently, I am the ASB Commissioner of Communications which entails being the host of "The Leadership Show," my school's weekly announcement show. "The Leadership Show" is one of my greatest creative outlets and allows me to instill hundreds of wacky (some would say stupid) ideas that I come up with. I am an avid reading hater and get into non-stop heated discussions about the necessity of reading with my extended family. Only a few novels really stand

out to me, including my all-time favorite series: *The Hunger Games*.

I see myself as a stubborn person and always feel the need to prove myself right, outwardly or not (I am a Virgo). I have heard plenty about how transformative and engaging this fellowship is and I am super excited to experience the Bronfman Fellowship for myself!



**Mason Klein**  
Sudbury, MA  
*The Rivers School*

**Fast Facts**

- I lead three clubs at my high school, including one I founded called Good For Good. This club examines mass incarceration and works with the Washington D.C. nonprofit Free Minds by reading and responding to poems written by incarcerated individuals. We also have the opportunity to have virtual discussions with former inmates.
- My favorite book is *The Silent Patient* by Alice Michaelides.
- I love to travel and experience new cultures. I've always wanted to go to Egypt and Japan!

Hey everyone! My name is Mason Klein (he/him/his) and I am a 17-year-old from Sudbury, Massachusetts. I am very passionate about music. I've played drums since I was about four and recently started teaching myself a few songs on piano. At school, I play Jazz but I have also really enjoyed playing in the pit orchestra for school musicals. Currently, my top genres of music are Rap, R&B, and House. Driving and listening to music is one of my favorite activities!

I enjoy most subjects in school but find English, History, and Science to be the most interesting. I very much appreciate the contrast between more vague and conceptual aspects of the humanities and the concreteness of STEM

classes. I am always game to talk about current events and love hearing other people share something they are passionate about.

I also really appreciate leisure reading even though junior year hasn't allowed me many opportunities for it. I play soccer and lacrosse at school, and I enjoy being active in general, especially outside. I also snowboard in Vermont in the winter, which provides such a nice change of pace from the busyness of high school. I became injured playing soccer during my sophomore year, and after taking two weeks off from exercise, I realized how much physical exertion positively impacted my mental health.

I am the youngest of three siblings in a family that belongs to a Conservative temple. I am not sure of my own beliefs but do especially appreciate the family traditions, community, and foods of Judaism. My family is very important to me and I think they've guided me well in establishing my own core values of empathy, respect, positive impact, and determination!



**Benjamin Kruger**  
Chesterfield, MO  
*Parkway Central High School*

**Fast Facts**

- I am the Junior year class President at my school.
- I write articles for the *Saint Louis Jewish Light*.
- I am an alum of the wonderful program "Cultural Leadership."

Hi, my name is Benjamin Kruger. My passions include - in no particular order - playing the piano, watching shows on Netflix, and running track. I have two sisters, one older and one younger, and a cat named Pixie. I have found that singing to music while driving at night is one of the best things you can do in this life. Since this is an informal thing, I can confidently share

that the left Twix is better than the right... but I'll deny it vehemently in a more academic setting. Thai food is my favorite by far to eat, but I also have a tasteful appreciation for chicken tikka masala, hamburgers with onions and pickles, and Oreos. I don't have a favorite color, but my favorite kind of line is the dashed one that you use when defining an asymptote in math. In school my favorite subject is English, and in a very linear fashion, one of my favorite things to do outside of school is write. I can't think of much else to share, but if the person who reads this wants to speak in person, they can definitely find out more.



**Merav Lafer-Kirtner**  
Eugene, OR  
*South Eugene High School*

**Fast Facts**

- I taught myself to code.
- I'm an associate editor at my school newspaper.
- I am a published poet.

Hi! I'm Merav, some friends call me May (I'm happy with being called either), and I use she/her pronouns. I'm a writer and an editor, and although I write more poetry than fiction currently, my dream is to author a dystopian and/or fantasy book series. I also enjoy math, coding, and reading ancient Greek tragedies (or anything about Greek mythology).

I am a member of my local reconstructionist synagogue, and a junior at South Eugene High School. After school, I write sessions for my friends and me to play Dungeons & Dragons, and I play branching narrative video games (my current favorite is Hades). I am really excited to learn about different world views/ perspectives than my own, and to get to know everyone at Bronfman.





**Hannah Mani-Abraham**

White Plains, NY  
*The Leffell School*

**Fast Facts**

- Currently varsity track co-captain and varsity soccer co-captain for my next season.
- Teen leader in international Jewish teen choir, HaZamir.
- There was no rabbi present at my bat mitzvah (one was in Israel and the other one's wife was having a baby).

My name is Hannah Mani-Abraham. I am an only child who was born in Maryland but now I live in New York with my aunt and grandma. My parents were both born in India but I have not been back since I was three. I am sixteen years old and attend The Leffell School. I have been a conservative Jew all my life and am surrounded by Judaism in all aspects of my life. I am an active member of my synagogue, Beth El, and often read Torah or participate in other areas like the USY board or being an MC at the Purim Shpiel. I have been going to sleep-away camp for 7 years and the past three summers have been spent at Ramah in the Berkshires.

In my free time I love to sing, read, cook, and sometimes do embroidery. I am also part of my school's varsity soccer and track teams. I really like working with children and have worked as a teacher's assistant at my shul's religious school and did online tutoring for underprivileged kids for a little while. I am part of a phenomenal choir called HaZamir that has chapters in America and Israel. I am also still learning how to drive but I know how to parallel park!



**Rami Melmed**

Los Angeles, CA  
*Shalhevet High School*

**Fast Facts**

- I teach guitar to underserved children in LA.
- I'm captain of my school's tennis team (we are not very good).
- I do research on thrombosed hemorrhoids for a colorectal surgeon.

Hi! I'm Rami. I live in Los Angeles and I go to Shalhevet High School, a small Modern Orthodox Jewish school. I love playing music, learning new instruments, and listening to funk and classic rock. I enjoy playing bass in clubs around LA, and I'm a pickleballer.



**Miriam Niestat**

Chicago, IL  
*Kenwood Academy*

**Fast Facts:**

- I like to challenge myself and test my memory. I can identify all 195 countries and their flags (I try to play "Worldle"—the geographical cousin of "Wordle"—daily), I can recite the first 50 digits of Pi, and am ranked in the top 1% of 2048 players.
- I am the president of my school's chapter of Best Buddies, a club dedicated to building one-to-one friendships between people with and without intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD), and I spearheaded our first school-wide Inclusion Day where we passed out 750 inclusion bracelets and got over 600 signatures on our Inclusion Pledge poster. I am hopeful that Inclusion Day will become an annual event at Kenwood.

- I play the trumpet in my school's jazz, concert, and marching bands, and I play attack and midfield for our women's lacrosse team.

Hi! My name is Miriam Niestat, and I am from Chicago, Illinois. I go to Kenwood Academy, which is my neighborhood public school that I've attended since seventh grade. Prior to that, I attended a secular private school and, even before that, a Jewish day school. I've had a lot of experience and insight into the differences among schools with vastly different resources. I'm very involved in activities at my school ranging from lacrosse to band to model government.

Outside of school, I spend a lot of time with my friends – really, trying to ignore all the things that stress me out. Despite my inclination to memorize obscure information, I have a terrible long-term memory and can hardly ever relay a favorite book/movie/song. In the moment, I think, "Yep, this is it. This is my favorite \*insert item here\*." Yet when the time comes to offer it, the thought is gone. The one piece of media that always comes to mind, however, is the documentary, *Free Solo*. I could watch it a thousand times and never get bored. I'm also a big re-watcher of shows and am currently on round 4 (maybe 5?) of "Switched at Birth."

My family belongs to a Conservative synagogue, and my involvement is mostly for the community, so I don't have a ride-or-die affiliation with any particular denomination. When I left Jewish day school after second grade, my Jewish outlet quickly became a progressive after-school program that encouraged me to question everything. My approach to Judaism has never been an apprehensive one because, from a young age, I was taught that no idea is too far out when it comes to interpreting the Torah.



**Rebekah Oppenheimer**  
New Haven, CT  
*Hotchkiss School*

**Fast Facts**

- I have three younger sisters, a younger brother, and two dogs, all of whom I adore.
- I spent eight very happy summers at Camp Ramah New England (COVID cruelly stole my ninth).
- My three favorite books of the moment are *The Things They Carried*, *Between Two Kingdoms*, and *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*.

Hi! My name is Rebekah, and I'm from New Haven, Connecticut. I'm a boarding student at the Hotchkiss School, but I'm currently spending my junior year living abroad in Rennes, France. At school, I enjoy playing on the varsity soccer and ultimate frisbee teams, and putting my best effort into JV Basketball. I'm also an avid fan and follower of the US national women's soccer team, the Tottenham Spurs, and of course, since September, the local team Stade Rennais. In addition, I'm the news editor of *The Hotchkiss Record*, and am heavily involved with my school's community service organization and Hillel.

My relationship with Judaism is ever-evolving and changing. I know what it's like to be the lone Jew in the room, whether in my New Haven public school classroom or in the very Catholic Rennes; I know what it's like to be part of a small but close-knit Jewish community, like the one I've experienced at Hillel at Hotchkiss; and I know what it's like to be part of a vibrant majority, from my many summers at Camp Ramah in New England. However, especially since my bat mitzvah, my interest in Jewish texts and Torah reading has remained constant, and I'm excited to continue to explore that in a new environment this summer.

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In my free time, you can probably find me beating a sister (or two) in a heated game of Scrabble, curled up with my dog (again, or two) and a book, or enjoying a bowl of Haagen-Dazs coffee ice cream.



**Aviyah Ravin**  
Brooklyn, NY  
*Friends Seminary*

**Fast Facts**

- Over the summer I was an intern at the Cook County State's Attorney's Office where I assisted State's Attorneys by conducting legal research, preparing memos, partnering with counsel regarding case management and procedural requirements, and aiding courtroom proceedings.
- I've been dancing since I was three years old, and for the past 7 years I have been a member of Dance Performance workshop, an invitation-only postmodern dance company at Brooklyn Arts Exchange that focuses on developing original choreography, improvisation, and technique.
- As the leader of the Jewish Culture Club, I run workshops on combatting antisemitism; host outside speakers, such as Holocaust survivors, to speak to the school about Jewish identity; and lead activities surrounding Jewish holidays.

Hi! My name is Aviyah and I'm from Brooklyn. As a half-Chinese, kosher-keeping, Shomer Shabbat, and Hebrew-speaking New Yorker, I'm a big proponent of intersectionality and discussions about identity. I go to Friends Seminary, a Quaker school, where I'm the leader of the Jewish Culture Club as well as the leader and co-founder of the Mixed Affinity Group. I have two dogs named Golda and Morris, named after the first female prime minister of Israel, Golda Meir, and her husband. I love reading and

I'm equally obsessed with books about the Supreme Court and the law as I am with YA books that have happy endings.

If I'm not at school or dance, you can usually find me sleeping in a giant sweater on the Q train. I've spent most of my summers as a camper at Camp Young Judaea Sprout Lake, a pluralist, Zionist, Jewish sleepaway camp. There, a lot of my first and most impactful experiences talking about Israel and Judaism happened (I also got some awesome tan lines). For middle school, I went to Hannah Senesh Community Day School, where the community and education built around Jewish values helped me leave Senesh with a strong sense of my Jewish identity and significantly better Hebrew spelling. I've tried to apply the values I've learned in these Jewish communities to my life now, whether it be tutoring kids at Workshop Middle School and as a peer tutor at my school, or lobbying my Congressional representatives for environmental justice with the Friends Committee on National Legislation. Most importantly, my biggest accomplishment to date is that I haven't killed my two cacti, Gerald and Fitzwallace.



**Noa Rone**  
Baltimore, MD  
*Beth Tfiloh Dahan  
Community School*

**Fast Facts**

- My passion for faith and bridging the religious divide in Baltimore inspired me to create B'more United, an inter-faith teen service corps aimed to unite Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Baltimore teens in service and friendship.
- I've been doing art since I was young. I once had a piece of my artwork in an exhibit at the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA).
- My guilty pleasure is Hollywood pop-culture. I can tell you pretty much any

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celebrity drama and could probably beat Kris Jenner at a game of Kardashian trivia.

Hi! My name is Noa Rone, and I live in Baltimore, Maryland. I'm the middle child of three. One of my favorite things to do is listen to people's stories: where they come from, how their environments shaped them, their passions, their regrets, their perspectives on the world around them. As for my own story, my mother is a Conservative rabbi and I have been surrounded by Judaism my entire life. I come from a family that identifies as religiously Conservative, but I don't love labels, so I just think of myself as "Jewish". I have attended Jewish day schools, gone to Jewish summer camp (Camp Ramah New England), and live surrounded by Jews. This drove my desire to form relationships with people from different religious backgrounds, inspiring me to launch B'More United, an Inter-faith teen service corps for Baltimore teens.

When I'm not in class, I spend my time working on Mock Trial, Model UN, the Women Empowerment Club, and Badminton Club. Outside of school, I'm always up for a Sunday brunch or to travel and scout out the best eats in that city (feel free to ask for food recommendations). Oh, and I pretty much can't do anything without playing music in the background. While I enjoy all music, the Lumineers take the prize as my favorite artist. Making pottery and painting brings me joy and I will jump at any opportunity to create art (even face painting). I have a deep fondness for historical fiction and dystopian novels (Khaled Hosseini is a favorite), a good nap, and movie nights with family and friends.



**Daniel Shames**  
Fort Mill, SC  
*Fort Mill High School*

***Fast Facts***

- I love volunteering for our local EMS station as well as local hospital.
- My favorite dish is chicken and rice.
- My favorite movie is *Hidden Figures*.

Hi! My name is Daniel, but many people call me Danny. I am from Fort Mill, SC and I attend Fort Mill high school. My favorite subject in school is Biology because I like to learn about how life and how the world works. When I get older, I want to become a doctor and help save lives. I love to hang out with friends and go to the gym but also value alone time where I can read books and watch TV.



**Julia Sprung**  
New York, NY  
*The Brearley School*

***Fast Facts***

- I am an amateur, but highly enthusiastic, Cross Country runner.
- I am very interested in ancient Greek and the classical world.
- I speak limited amounts of three different languages and I am, of course, a fluent English speaker—which makes me a not-quite polyglot!

I am from New York and have always lived in Manhattan. I attended Jewish school through eighth grade; my family is not particularly observant, but Jewish practice and tradition have been a steady presence in my life. Now, I go to a secular, all-girls school. It is drastically different from my old Jewish school. The two clash, but they also complement each other. Lately, I have been toying with a conception of myself as a crash. Perhaps this is typical teenage angst, but I am seriously concerned with the question of what makes a person. I will consider anything from television shows to religion as I grasp for an answer. Seriously, though, my life is full of opposing influences and this shapes my identity and interests.

Speaking of interests: I like to read and write, to run, to sing in the shower, and to scribble poems in the middle of the afternoon. In my spare time, I take walks with my dad and bloviate; sometimes, I dabble in crosswords and Sudoku. I also started a book review publication at my school; frantic emails to forgetful reviewers have sort of become my thing.

Academically, I favor the humanities, but I also enjoy math. Once again, opposing influences. Or not. Math is one way of detailing reality; language and historical trends are others. Perhaps the idea of the crash, though tidy, is not reflective of my life. But I think my flirtation with it, as well as with many ideas, embodies a deep quality of mine. It is, I believe, a virtue: I like to think. Given a topic and a comfortable chair, I am content for a long time. But if there is anything that my education has taught me, it is that the presence of another person in the chair beside me vastly improves the experience.



**Rivka Tamir**  
Brooklyn, NY  
*Abraham Joshua Heschel School*

**Fast Facts**

- As a member of the debate team, I almost exclusively argue stances I don't believe in; I find that it not only enhances my debate skills but can unexpectedly broaden and challenge my opinions.
- I partner with the Latin club at my school to teach the Latin roots of commonly used legal terminology.
- I am currently working on a research paper that explores America's hyper-susceptibility to radical anti-technology philosophy in the latter half of the twentieth century. As of now, my thesis is that the Cold War and civil rights movement acted as a catalyst for the

anti-technology movement that later inspired Ted Kaczynski.

Hi! My name is Rivka Tamir, but most people call me Rikki. I live in Brooklyn, NY with my parents, two younger brothers, and my dog, whose full name is Sam Shmuel Lebron James Tamir. I grew up in Miami and spent some time living in southern India. I love the outdoors, especially hiking and camping. Over the summer, I went on a backpacking trip across the Sierra Nevada mountains and learned how to rock climb. I like to read when possible. I recently finished *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong and loved his writing style and narrative structure. My favorite poetry is anything written by Shel Silverstein and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

I really enjoy music, particularly rap, jazz, and folk-rock and I play rhythm guitar in my school's band. My favorite artists right now are Kendrick Lamar, John Coltrane, Bob Dylan, The Grateful Dead, and The Velvet Underground. Recently, my favorite musical niche is early 2000s rap which samples classical music.

I am passionate about our legal system, specifically the discourse surrounding bail reform and educational access. American legal reasoning is structured similarly to the Talmudic perspective and I enjoy exploring the intersection of these legal arguments.



**Danielle Wasserman**  
Saint Louis, MO  
*University City High School*

**Fast Facts**

- I am the founder of InvestNow Clubs which brings investment clubs to schools in historically disadvantaged, lower income communities.
- I work at the McDonald's drive-thru and perform surveys of driver demographics and donation behaviors.

- I enjoy playing tennis and am on my school's varsity tennis team.

Hi! My name is Dani Wasserman, and I am from Saint Louis, Missouri. I attend my local public school, University City High School and went to a Jewish Day School through eighth grade. I come from a Conservative Jewish family and enjoy hosting and going to Shabbat dinners and lunches at our Modern Orthodox friends' homes. I attended a pluralistic Jewish sleepaway camp, Camp Alonim, every summer through tenth grade.

I really enjoy learning about business and real estate. I am the founder of InvestNow Clubs, a nonprofit which brings investment clubs to schools in historically disadvantaged, lower income communities. It is highly rewarding to teach financial literacy to economically disadvantaged students and to make a large impact on theirs and their families' futures. Last summer, I interned at an affordable housing developer where I ran financial models and assisted in the evaluation of development sites. I am very interested in data analysis and operational efficiencies of large companies. I work in the drive-thru at McDonald's every Sunday. To make the time go quicker, I perform various studies on the drivers such as their demographics and whether they round up for charity. It is interesting to analyze the data and see how it contributes to the success of McDonald's!

In my free time, I love to play tennis, piano and watch movies. My favorite movies range from *Airplane* to *Crazy Rich Asians* to *The Godfather*. I am really excited to participate in the Bronfman Fellowship and to learn from and with everyone!



**Samuel Zambilowicz**

Nanaimo, BC, Canada

*Dover Bay Secondary School*

**Fast Facts**

- I cofounded a composting program at my school with the help of a close friend. I am an active participant in many of my school clubs including the social impact club, eco club, and student council.
- I have developed a passion for rock climbing and volunteer with my local community to restore old climbs as well as clean and bolt new ones. My journey began with indoor gyms and competitive climbing which progressed to outdoors on local cliffs.
- I have been playing piano for around 9 years now and use it as a space to relax and create. Interestingly, during my first two years of training, I never learned to read sheet music; rather, I would subconsciously memorize the sounds, and learn to play them back.

Hello, my name is Samuel Zambilowicz, and I'm delighted to introduce myself! I have lived my whole life in British Columbia, Canada, a place filled with stunning natural beauty that has deeply influenced who I am. Over the past five years, I have developed a strong passion for rock climbing, a sport that not only provides me with a sense of thrill, but has allowed me to push my comforts, connect with a vibrant community, and explore what my home has to offer. Alongside climbing, I continue to be a physical activity enthusiast, partaking in hiking, skiing, and kiteboarding which help me maintain an active and balanced life.

My love for art is also a fundamental part of who I am. From visual art to music and literature, I find great inspiration and meaning in creative expression. As a person who is constantly exposed to media, I am particularly interested in



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how it can impact others on both individual and societal levels. Taking on new perspectives and hearing different outlooks invigorates me, and raises my curiosity. I play bass clarinet, but my primary instrument is piano. For almost a decade, I have been playing, yet I still feel as though I have only just scratched the surface of what it has to offer me.

Being a person who contributes to the world and keeping my mind open to learning are other aspects that define me. Having a great variety of passions, people, and activities in my life gives me energy and inspires me to constantly improve. An example of this is my spontaneous crocheting phase during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Being able to make 3D objects out of yarn fascinated me, even if I never got to be all that good at it.