

## **Gan Ami Parent Testimonial, June 2009**

Sherrie Rose Maleson, Director of Gan Ami Early Childhood Education Program at Congregation Beth Am has a unique ability to inspire her community - preschoolers and their families, her colleagues and every life she touches. She inspires us with her youthful exuberance, her inclusiveness and her innovativeness. It is remarkable what Sherrie Rose has accomplished at the age of 28.

Sherrie Rose was destined to be involved with early childhood education. She worked with preschoolers as a teenage counselor at the JCC T'enna Preschool's summer camp in Palo Alto. After majoring in psychology in college she returned to T'enna to work and to obtain a graduate degree in Human Development with a focus on early childhood development. After experiencing much success at T'enna, she was selected by Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills to launch Gan Ami in September of 2007 at the age of 26.

Gan Ami, in a short period of time, has become a success and Sherrie Rose cares about the community, parents, and students. She makes each of us feel special and welcome. Both our children look forward to each day they will be in the classroom (and outside exploring) with her!

Sherrie Rose is inclusive to a diverse group of people- Jewish, non-Jewish (Tamara is Buddhist and Lisa is Catholic), interfaith (we are both from interfaith families), American born or foreign (our class has family from Israel , Egypt , Japan , Thailand , France , Switzerland , and Trinidad ), parents who work, parents who do not work, people who are members of the congregation and not. We are inspired by her generosity of time, advice and openness to learn more about Jewish culture, religion and language as well as her help in raising our children to become curious, playful citizens while fostering emotional development.

She is creative and resourceful in building and fostering communication with parents in the classroom community. She turns to local online technology resources to make the Gan Ami pre-school community into a thriving virtual community. This online technology enables even the busiest parent to check in and view pictures of their preschooler participating in various school activities. We hope that more preschools look at what she has done to create such a rich, rewarding and inclusive educational environment in such a short period of time.

In closing, she is a delightful person--instantly likeable with a twinkle in her eye and a smile that makes you want to be around her.

Thank you,

Tamara Fagin (mother of former Gan Ami preschooler Zachary Fagin)

Lisa Gani (mother of former Gan Ami preschooler Alexander Gani)