



By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

This week while I was at shul for Yom Kippur, the rabbi told the following story.

There was a young girl, Shira, about 13, who came to the jewelry shop. “How can I help you?” asked the jeweler. “I want to buy a necklace,” said Shira. She looked around the store and zeroed in on a beautiful necklace. “This one,” she said, pointing to a very expensive necklace that had a price tag of a little over \$1,000.

Shira began to count out her money, about \$13.25. The jeweler said, “Who is this necklace for?” Shira proudly replied, “My oldest sister.”

The jeweler asked, “What has she done that she should rate such a beautiful necklace?” Shira, with a catch in her voice, said, “Ever since my mom died about 6 months ago, my sister has taken care of me and my sisters and brothers. She gets up extra early to make sure we have clean clothes, a nutritious breakfast and get to school on time. She makes sure that our homework is done each evening and that we have everything we need.” The jeweler said, “I will be right back.”

The jeweler took the necklace into the back of the store, carefully placed it into a velvet box, wrapped it in silver paper and adorned the package with a bow. The jeweler then headed back into the front of the store and handed the wrapped present to Shira.

“Tell your sister to wear it in good health.” The next day, the sister came into the jewelry store. She walked up to the jeweler and said, “Did my sister come into your store yesterday and purchase this necklace (pointing to the box)?”

The jeweler replied that yes, Shira had come in and purchased the necklace. “My sister can’t afford this,” she said. “I need to return it.” The jeweler looked at the sister and replied, “Some people purchase items with money, some with a trade-in and some purchase their gifts with their heart. Shira was able to purchase the necklace with her heart.”



What a touching story that was used to begin our services with.

It really made me think of the ways that people give of themselves to others and ultimately brought to mind the staff at the Early Learning Center.

Each day, they give their heart and soul to the children in their classrooms. Each day is a new adventure, new emotions to navigate, new goals to be met and they meet each one with their hearts and souls.

Will a child need an extra hug today? Will someone need that extra time to understand the directions? Will a child need extra space to navigate their strong emotions? It doesn't matter the challenge. Each day is met with a smile, open arms and a renewed sense of purpose.

This is the life of a teacher at the J. There is no challenge too great to be mastered, addressed, solved. There are no obstacles that stop the progress. There is only a new path that may need to be forged so that each and everyone of the teacher's children get what they need, when they need it.

It is such a blessing to arrive at the J each day and work with our amazing teachers. Be sure to give them a smile and a thank you for all of their hard work, their kindness, their compassion, their experience and their willingness to go above and beyond.

Wishing you all a year filled with blessings and kindnesses.
Shabbat Shalom.