A Message from Rabbi Julie
Executive Director

Diversity & Inclusion are major priorities for both the Center for Jewish Life and the University as a whole. This newsletter welcomes our new Orthodox educators, an important feature of our religious diversity. We proudly introduce you to J-Asians, a new student-initiated affinity group, that like our NH fall break trip is part of our Co-Create incubator. And finally, we include details of our Muslim-Jewish dialogue trip to Utah, an example of our diversity commitment across the University.

Part of the reality of campus life today is our responsibility to be vigilant in combating anti-Semitism when it arises at Princeton. This past month, a guest lecturer made deeply disturbing anti-Semitic remarks and verbally attacked a student. We immediately communicated with all Jewish students condemning the incident. Together with Chabad, we engaged in numerous conversations with students and administrators across the University. We would like to share this important joint statement from the Carl A. Fields Center and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as well further details about what happened. Last week, I attended the ADL Never Is Now conference on combating hate and will work closely with our university partners to better educate the campus about national trends in anti-Semitism.

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, we have so much to be grateful for at the Center for Jewish Life. Princeton’s Jewish community is thriving, and Princeton University is a tremendous partner in ensuring Jewish students are safe, nurtured, and inspired. Thank you for all your support and best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving.

Muslim Jewish Dialogue & Co-Create Fall Break Trips

Hiking, bonding, sharing experiences and exploring differences were the themes of two CJL fall break trips led and organized by students. The Muslim Jewish Dialogue (MJD) group of 12 Jewish and Muslim students flew to Arches National Park in Utah to camp, do various day hikes, and learn about one another’s backgrounds. While hiking and asking each other any question we could think about relating to our religions, it became clear how much our religions share and the way we connect to them, said Olivia Myers ’21, trip leader.
READ THE MJD TRIP BLOG TO LEARN MORE

A second group of 8 students traveled together on a wellness trip to New Hampshire as part of CJL’s Co-Create Project Incubator. They spent several days hiking and bonding. There were some structured and lots of unstructured activities. Group bonding started happening pretty quickly, especially during the long car rides, said Arielle Mindel ’21, trip leader. By the end, I think everyone felt comfortable around each other and the bonds we formed will likely continue on campus.

READ THE MJD TRIP BLOG TO LEARN MORE
JLIC Senior Night

CJLSB - Make your own brick oven pizza

J-Asians Study Break with Mochi

Campus Engagement Interns (CEI's)
At CJL Shabbat dinner on Nov. 15th, I dropped my wrapped fortune cookie on the ground and glancing around to see if anyone was watching, I exchanged my crushed cookie with a different one. Of course a friend saw, and I joked to her, “Does this mean I will get a worse fortune?” But when we opened our cookies, each fortune said, “Shabbat Shalom from J-Asians.” Watching the dining hall filled with students receiving the same positive message felt symbolic, a manifestation of community and coming together.

Several weeks earlier, I spoke at a CJL Shabbat meal about the challenges of meeting new people on campus and experiencing other cultures while continuing to observe my Jewish practices. This Asian-inspired Shabbat dinner was another example of how the CJL is a place to embrace cultures and learn about one another. There was great food including ramen soup, Taiwanese tea eggs, and seaweed salad, and there were great speeches. At dinner, Arielle Korman, co-founder of the Jews of Color Torah Academy, spoke about the importance of affinity Shabbats. She explained how communities need these gatherings to show that all people are welcome. Sakura Price, co-founder of CJL student group J-Asians told me, “It’s particularly meaningful for me to see the CJL hosting J-Asians Shabbat because I get to share some of the ways that my family celebrates Shabbat at home with my Princeton community. My mom often makes Asian food for Shabbat dinner— and I think it’s important that we normalize the experiences of Jews of Color even in predominantly Ashkenazi communities!”

As an Ashkenazi Jew of European decent, the stories shared at J-Asian Shabbat described experiences that were familiar to them and unfamiliar to me, and the food they were introducing to me for the first time were recurring parts in their stories and lives. As Sakura talked about how the Jewish and Asian sides of her family do not necessarily understand each other, yet can bond over food, I was reminded of hundreds of fortune cookies that were each filled with the same “Shabbat Shalom.”

I hope to have more opportunities at the CJL like this one to learn about other people, address difficult questions about building communities, and continue learning the answers from people around me.