



## 45 Amazing Alumni To Celebrate 45 Years Of Exceptional Epstein Education - #45at45

This year, The Epstein School is turning 45 years old. To celebrate this, we are highlighting 45 amazing alumni in honor of 45 years of Exceptional Education at Epstein. Our school has hundreds of wonderful and talented alumni and we love to share their successes!

### 45 at 45 - The Countdown Continues!

Throughout this year, we are recognizing 5 alumni via email, until we reach a total of 45 alumni. **View previously highlighted alumni:** [#1-5](#) [#6-10](#) [#11-15](#)

#### #16

**Dan Finkel** (Class of 1990) - Dan started as Head of School at Gesher JDS, in Fairfax, VA in 2015. Since then, he's been focused on articulating and implementing a shared vision of an excellent school that is gracefully balancing commitments to Jewish tradition as well as modern, innovative approaches to educating children. While Dan considers his time as a founding staff member and Outdoor Educator at Camp Ramah Darom (1997-2003) to be the real launch of his journey as a Jewish educator, he began his formal career at The Weber School teaching Psychology and Judaic Studies, and eventually became the Director of Student Life. He holds a Bachelor's in the Biological Basis of Behavior from the University of Pennsylvania, and Master's in Judaic Studies and Anthropology. Dan's primary roles in life are as husband to his wife, Ellie, and as the father of Oren and Yaara. He is also a bass player and a big fan of live music. Dan's early years at Epstein laid the foundation for the professional and the person he is today. He is proud to be able serve as a leader in the Jewish education field and in his local Jewish community; he is grateful for the skills and knowledge Epstein provided that enable him to step up in this way.



#### #17

**Guy Pyrzak** (Class of 1995) - Guy is the Deputy Ground Data System Manager for the Mars 2020 mission: NASA's next Mars rover,

at the Jet Propulsion Lab. Guy started his interest in NASA while getting his Master's degree from Carnegie Mellon, where he studied Human Computer Interaction. He was fascinated with the work NASA engineers and scientists did to explore planets with robots. Designing software to make work easier and more efficient was not only challenging, but deeply rewarding. Upon graduation, he joined NASA Ames Research Center, where he assisted with the design of the planning software for the Phoenix lander. After working on the lander, Guy led the development of new anomaly reporting software for the Shuttle, the International Space Station, and the canceled Constellation program. After that software was released, he led the design and development of the planning software used for the Curiosity rover. He was subsequently asked to be one of six Science Planners for the Mars 2020 mission. A Science Planner's primary responsibility is to work with scientists and engineers to determine what the rover will do each day. After working at NASA for 10 years, he worked in the private sector for a year, where he managed an engineering team. He returned to space exploration at NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab, where he ultimately became the Deputy Ground Data System Manager, after re-architecting the ground software to utilize modern technology to enable more efficient operations.



## #18

**Danielle Ishak** (Class of 2005) - Danielle researches the interactions between humans and robots in a variety of environments and situations. Danielle discovered the field of Human-Robot Interaction in Israel, where she completed her undergraduate studies. She was always interested in human psychology, but her fascination grew when she realized that an entire field exists for researches to observe how humans interact with robots that mimic human behaviors. Danielle went on to complete her Master's in Human Factors and Ergonomics and conducted research investigating the ways in which older adults seek interactions with assistive preventative health social robots. Today Danielle works for Intuition Robotics, an Israeli company that builds social robots for adults who feel isolated. Danielle credits so much of who she is to her early years spent at Epstein. Having grown up in a school that values community and family, Danielle's daily work, interfacing with people and trying to prevent loneliness, has been a natural progression, thanks to the tight-knit, loving community of her childhood. Some of Danielle's closest friends to this day, who she considers family, are also Eagles.



## #19

**Jonathan Berger** (Class of 2007) - Jonathan is an infantry officer, serving in the 101st Airborne Division of the United States Army. His experience in ROTC during college drew him to military service, and after graduating from Vanderbilt University in 2015 with a degree in political science, he commissioned as a lieutenant in the

Army. Jonathan is a graduate of the Infantry Basic Officers' Leadership Course, the Airborne School, and the elite U.S. Army Ranger School. As a rifle platoon leader, he deployed to Iraq in 2016 as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, supporting Iraqi forces as they fought to expel ISIS. Jonathan also served as his battalion's mortar platoon leader for a year, overseeing the specialized mission of providing fire support to infantry troops. Currently he serves as the executive officer and second-in-command for B Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne. When not in the office or in the field, he enjoys camping, reading, and making music. He plans to attend law school in 2019.



## #20

**Adina Karpuj** (Class of 2010) - Adina is currently a first-year student at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem. During her final year at The Weber School, Adina was accepted to Tufts University, but decided she would take a gap year before she began what she thought would be her college studies. After graduation, Adina participated on KIVUNIM, a program for high school graduates, and through which she lived in Jerusalem, travelled around the world and studied Jewish history, humanities, and Arabic. During that year, Adina decided that she wanted to make Aliyah, and upon finishing her gap year, she did just that. Adina enlisted into the IDF and served in the Field Intelligence Unit as a social worker where she provided aid to low-income and immigrant families. Since her release from the army this past January, Adina has been working at The Israel Democracy Institute - Israel's leading think tank - and MEET: Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow--an after-school program for high achieving Israeli and Palestinian students. This fall, Adina began her studies at The Hebrew University where she is majoring in psychology, sociology and anthropology. The Epstein School laid the foundations for Adina's love for Israel and Hebrew, and she considers it the best decision her parents ever made.



## Developing Future Leaders

Today's Epstein students, [like these 2018 Knesset Officers, are our future leaders](#) and are fortunate to continue to receive the value of a high-quality, Epstein education. We prepare our students for success in high school, college and beyond. This is [evidenced by the caliber of the colleges our alumni attend](#) and the fact that our recent graduating classes have had a 100% acceptance rate to Atlanta's premier private high schools, public school magnets and honors programs. Many enter high school with advanced standing in mathematics and foreign



language as well as eligibility for honors classes. Epstein graduates are academic lauded by high school administrators and faculty as academic stars, peer leaders and successful student athletes.



## Do You Have An Exciting Story/Accomplishment To Share?

**We Want To Hear From You!** We are very proud of our alumni and enjoy sharing alumni success stories with our community. If you have any personal news (marriage, baby, engagement etc) or a story you would like to share, please let us know and [update your information](#). Or, perhaps you or an alumnus you know is deserving of being nominated for the Alumni Hall of Fame or Alumni Spotlight. If so, please fill out the appropriate nomination form ([Alumni Hall of Fame](#)) and send to Alumni Relations Coordinator [Marni Bekerman](#) or 404-250-5649. And, don't forget to join our [alumni association on Facebook](#).



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