

Introducing our teachers

RUACH Community School at Beit Ahavah



Rabbi Chanina said: "I have learned much from my teachers, more from my friends, and from my students most of all." - Babylonian Talmud Ta'anit 7a

TEACHERS:

- **Molly Parr:** *L'CHAIM - To Life! preK-2nd grade*
- **Esther Benari-Altmann:** *Hebrew Havurah & RUACH Lab, grades 3-7*
- **Rabbi Riqi Kosovske:** *Rabbi, Family & Youth Educator, B'nei Mitzvah Journey*

Molly Parr

L'CHAIM - To Life! preK-2nd grade teacher

Molly Parr was born and raised in Western Mass and has just returned after nearly twenty years in New York and Boston. After growing up in Longmeadow, Molly earned degrees in Hebrew Bible from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and in Ancient Studies, with a focus on the Near East, from Columbia University.

While in New York, Molly taught Hebrew prayer at Temple Beth Am, the People's Institute. She has written for numerous Jewish publications, including writing a weekly interview column for JewishBoston.com.

Before moving back to Western Mass last year, Molly spent twelve years in Boston. She worked in development at Hebrew Senior Life, Boston University and Perkins School for the Blind. While at BU she pursued graduate coursework in gastronomy and food studies.

Molly currently lives in Florence with her husband Rich, and their two daughters, Lilli and Beatrix. She works in Donor Relations at Smith College. In her spare time she writes the food blog [Cheap Beets](#), where she shares stories from her mostly vegetarian kitchen.



Her favorite Jewish holiday is Simchat Torah, and she loves hosting new friends for Shabbat dinner. Molly is also a Tot Shabbat mom and is very excited to be the new L'CHAIM teacher for the RUACH Community School at Beit Ahavah!

Esther Benari-Altmann

RUACH Lab grades 3-7 teacher

Shalom!

My name is Esther Benari-Altmann and I am very excited to be teaching at Beit Ahavah.

I am a native Israeli and have an extensive background in teaching at Jewish Day Schools and Supplementary Schools. Recently I received the 2015 award for Excellence in Jewish Education, from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. I hold several degrees, among them in Education and Law, and I am also a certified principal for Jewish Day Schools.

I have been involved in the Reform Movement since 1991, when I moved with my family from Israel to Toronto, Canada. Currently, I am the Director of Education at Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield, which is also a Reform congregation. I love to chant Torah and am very involved as a community member.

I look forward to engaging with the youth, parents and the entire congregation of Beit Ahavah, and to instilling in them my love for Judaism and the Hebrew language. I believe that a good teacher has to be creative, think out of the box, understand the needs of her/his students and lead by example.

Hoping to build together with you a community of learners filled with Ruach (spirit) and Ahavah (love). I am looking forward to meeting you all soon and answering any question you may have! Shalom and Shanah tovah!



Rabbi Riqi Kosovske

Rabbi Riqi is thrilled to begin her second decade at Beit Ahavah as our rabbi. Rabbi Riqi also directs and oversees all our youth and family programming, works with teachers, teaches Hebrew and other subjects, runs the B'nei Mitzvah Journey class, and other parent and family programs.

She loves working with every age of children from zero on up and with families to explore Judaism, art, Torah, midrash and creativity. Her favorite holiday is Shabbat. If she had to pick her favorite holiday outside of Shabbat, it would be Sukkot. But she also



says she really loves Passover... and just about all of them. She loves how the Jewish holidays and calendar all work together in “Jewish time” to express feelings and all parts of living, as a complex system for tikkun olam (fixing the world), creating love and justice, and care for the earth.

Rabbi Riqi has been a rabbi for ten years and a Jewish educator-artist, JCC day camp director and writer before that for a long time. She once worked as a scientific journal editor after college. She has visited and lived in Israel many times for different lengths ranging from a week, a month to a year (on Kibbutz Lotan, in Jerusalem, in Haifa and the Ben Shemen youth village) ever since she was an exchange student at age 17 on the Reform high school in Israel program called EIE (now EIE-Heller High). She “grew up” at URJ OSRUI camp in Wisconsin, where her Judaism and passion for creative Jewish community and learning especially took flight.



She is especially excited that her son Chanina is becoming Bar Mitzvah at Beit Ahavah on his 13th Hebrew birthday this October!

In addition to Shabbat services, class and holidays, Rabbi Riqi hopes you will stop by often to visit her in her office... her dog Kayla sometimes hangs out there with a Torah stuffy she “adopted” from the Tot Shabbat box.

Rabbi Riqi is excited to grow with Beit Ahavah in this 20th Anniversary Year, and can’t wait to have a great new year with kids and families!

MADRICHIM - Teen Teaching Assistants:

Mimi Feinland

Fabulous Madrichah Mimi returns to be a Madrichah for Hebrew Havurah and RUACH. Outside of Beit Ahavah, when not writing creatively, singing, acting, farming or marching for the earth and social justice, she is busy with other dynamic and creative pursuits including being a 10th grader at Northampton High. She is an amazing chocolate chip cookie baker for her beloved RUACH students.



More on additional
Madrichim Coming Soon...