



Ramaz students picking out books at the YU sefarim sale

YU Students Join Ramaz to Learn and Teach

SARA KLEINHAUS `27

Ramaz is launching a new Kollel this year, bringing four Yeshiva University semicha students to campus to study Torah in the morning and teach Ramaz students in the afternoons.

The program expands a Friday learning initiative piloted last year and is designed to inspire Ramaz students to learn more Torah while giving Kollel members hands-on teaching experience.

Traditionally, a Kollel is an organized way for advanced Talmud students to study together, usually for many hours a day. At Ramaz, the Kollel members will be in school five days a week, including for tefillah. Ramaz students also will have the opportunity to engage with Kollel members beyond the classroom as well.

According to Rabbi Kenny Schiowitz, associate principal, one of the main goals of the Kollel is to facilitate informal relationships between students and the Kollel members.

“I hope that they’re going to interact informally by being at shabbatonim and at lunch,” said Shiwitz. When asked whether the Kollel members will serve more as teachers or madrichim, Rabbi Zaki Dayan, the new head of the Kollel, said that they will be like “part-time Ramaz teachers.”

This past school year, Ramaz hosted both Yeshiva University and Stern College undergraduate students on Fridays. Each week, the students prepared Chaburahs to learn with groups of students during their Judaic Studies classes, often on a topic related to the weekly parsha.

When the announcement of the Ramaz Kollel program came out at Yeshiva University, more than 30 semicha students applied.

Rabbi Schiowitz interviewed all of the applicants, and some were selected to give model lessons. Out of those selected, the four who were chosen were selected based on their teaching abilities, as well as their ability to relate to students.

One of the members of the inaugural cohort will even be a Ramaz alumnus, Joey Kaplan. After graduating from Ramaz, Kaplan spent a year at Yeshivat Orayta, followed by Columbia University. The other Kollel members include Danny Srulowitz from Long Island, New York, Yitzzy Lanner from Florida, and Ari Needle from Passaic, New Jersey. All four Kollel members have prior teaching experience in some form, including on NCSY Kollel, a summer program for high school boys to learn in Israel.

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NEWS

Student Activities Enters a New Era

BEN BULLER `28

For the first time in Ramaz history, the Upper School is dividing the Student Activities Director role into multiple positions, with four administrators now overseeing GO, clubs, assemblies, and student programming. Rabbi Kenny Schiowitz, Associate Principal, explains the change comes as the responsibilities of the student activities role have grown too extensive for one person to manage. “It [the responsibilities] felt like it was too much for one person to do all of them well,” he said.

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FEATURE

Before the Bell: The Invisible Operation That Keeps Ramaz Running

ELI GOLDFINGER `27

Larry Berman's day starts before he's out of bed, checking Microsoft Teams and both his phones from his New Jersey home. The first real question isn't about Ramaz at all; it's about traffic, and whether the Great Neck bus company has swapped drivers again without matching the Ramaz calendar. That small detail—a school day hinging on a bus contractor's decision an hour before the first bell—is a fitting introduction to Berman's job.

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Student Activities Enters a New Era

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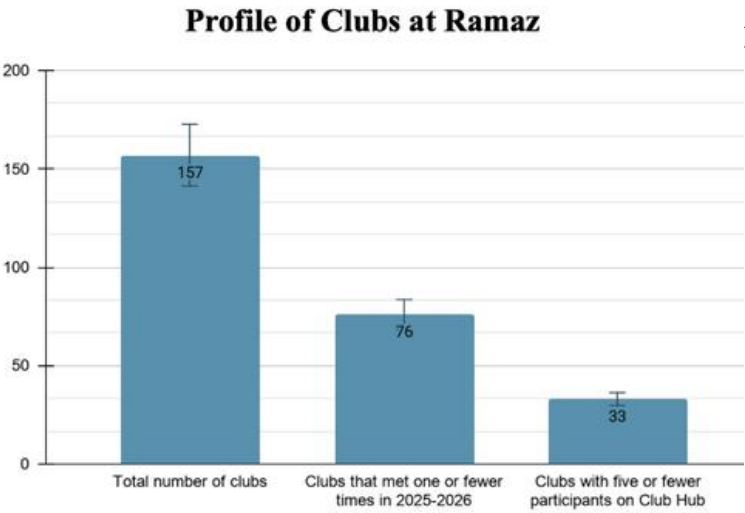
The new structure is intended to give each area more attention, including having a dedicated administrator spend more time with clubs after school. Rabbi Schiowitz highlights the need for somebody who can solely manage the clubs: “I feel like, for many years, [it] was really hard for student directors ... to really focus on...managing the clubs and guiding them, ... so we thought [of] having a separate person who is focused more on the clubs, who could always be there after school...”

Ms. Samantha Milowitz explains how she is planning to run clubs differently, “I really want to make Club Hub more of a thing then it has been and really encourage faculty and students to use it more for their clubs so that we can track all this information. I'm also going to spend some time after school with the clubs; this will allow me to really get a pulse on the clubs at Ramaz and showcase how each one is making a difference at Ramaz.”

The Student Activities responsibilities are now split into four positions: 1) GO is now being run by Ms. Eva Bernfeld, Associate Director of Guidance; 2) Clubs are now being run by Ms. Samantha Milowitz; 3) Assemblies are now being run by Ms. Ilana Wilner; 4) Student Programming is now being run by Ms. Yocheved Sobol and a part time employee.

Ms. Yocheved Sobol, Student Programming Coordinator, explains that she will try to create a “Fun vibe in the school and create good energy amongst the students and faculty!” However, Ben Abayve `27, GO President, commented, “...The idea of splitting one person's job... is very worrying”. Ben finds this approach alarming as he prefers fewer people to talk to in order to get change for the school done.

Club leader Gabi Flatto-Katz `27 sees the value in more than one person taking on the responsibilities that the old Head of Student Activities had to do and highlights the club aspect specifically.“Club management over the past few years has sometimes been confusing, whether it was about how to use Club Hub or when your club needed to meet," Flatto-Katz said. "So I am excited about the prospect of having somebody dedicated to making guidelines clear and working with club leaders to make sure that the clubs are working the way they should be.” Clubs will now get a lot more attention at Ramaz and Club Hub will now become more central in club affairs.



Data are estimates based primarily on Club Hub, with an approximate 10% margin of error due to variations in club participation and the frequency of information updates.

Student Activities is taking a new approach, with four staff members overseeing its major programs.



Student signing up for a club at Club Fair 2025



SUMMER JOURNALISM FELLOWS

BEN BULLER `28
TORY DOFT `27
ELI GOLDFINGER `27
SARA KLEINHAUS `27
NADIA OLSHIN `28

These five students produced this special summer edition through an independent journalism fellowship, reporting, writing, editing, and designing the issue from start to finish.

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WHY RAMPAGE?

You see what happens at school. We tell the story.

Rampage is more than just a school newspaper. It’s where you can find out what’s happening around school, hear different student opinions, and read stories about the people and events that make our school what it is.

- Real student voices
- What’s actually happening at school
- Opinions that get people talking
- Events, sports, and school life
- A chance to make your voice heard



Erica Schwartz `93 Grew Up at Ramaz, Now She’s Shaping its Future

SARA KLEINHAUS `27

Erica Schwartz `93 has spent much of her life connected to Ramaz, first as a student, then a parent, a Charter Trustee, and most recently, as First Vice Chair of the Board. Now, as she begins her term as the school’s new Board Chair, Schwartz is bringing that deep connection with her while looking ahead to how Ramaz can continue to grow.

“I like to say that I have Ramaz in my blood literally and figuratively,” Schwartz says. The great-granddaughter of Ramaz Founder Rabbi Joseph Lookstein and grand niece of Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, she grew up in Westchester and attended the Ramaz Upper School. All six children have attended Ramaz; three of her daughters have graduated, and her twins are entering the Upper School this year. Schwartz says she can envision having grandchildren at Ramaz as well.

This multigenerational connection is now informing her approach as she takes on another new role: helping shape the future of an institution that continues to be a significant part of her and her family’s life.

Before becoming Board Chair, Schwartz served for five years as First Vice Chair of the Board, where she played a key role in bringing Dr. Noam Wasserman to Ramaz as Head of School, and in the school’s recent strategic refresh. As chair of the strategic refresh task force, Schwartz worked closely with Dr. Wasserman, the school’s senior management, and other community members to identify the school’s most important priorities and areas for growth.

With the first stage of the “refresh” process complete, the strategic goals emerging from the process will be implemented by up to five committees, including a “Mission” committee, a committee focused on admissions, and a committee focused on learning support. Schwartz commented that the strategic refresh process reaffirmed that Ramaz is committed both to “excellence” and to “excellent support” for students with diverse learning needs.

In May 2026, Schwartz was elected to be the next Chair of the Ramaz board, succeeding Jimmy Haber, and started her term July 1.

Beyond the strategic refresh, Schwartz has other goals and ideas for the school as she begins her tenure as Chair.

For the high school specifically, Schwartz said that she wants to work with the professional leadership to rethink the academic calendar and in particular the January finals period.

Having seen her own children go through the Ramaz midterms, Schwartz "would love to consider whether January finals are the best use of time, and whether they can be incorporated into the semester. Perhaps innovative courses and field work could take place between semesters instead.”

Schwartz also wants to work with professional leaders to consider the best options for the second half of senior year. When Schwartz attended Ramaz, students were able to spend the second half of senior year interning in different fields. She believes the school should consider a similar program today to expose students to career options.

“The most enjoyable aspect of [my] board role is the opportunity to partner with professional leadership in pursuing the mission of the school,” Schwartz commented. She believes the role of the board Chair and the board help ensure that the professional leadership has the support and resources necessary to achieve the school’s goals and priorities.

Schwartz’s fellow board members have also expressed enthusiasm for her appointment as Chair. When asked about Schwartz’s leadership, Adam Kaplan, the Second Vice Chair of the board, commented that “Erica is sort of like Pat Riley or Jim Harbaugh, two great coaches who can be a little scary but are 100% devoted to their team and players”

Over the summer, in addition to beginning her work as Chair, Schwartz was busy with a different project as well: she created a new dating app, called “The Well.” The Well targets Jewish day school graduates in their 20s and 30s who are looking to meet people with similar backgrounds.. Schwartz believes that helping day school graduates meet one another is another way to “invest in the future of day schools.”

With Schwartz taking over as Chair of the school’s board, and Dr. Wasserman one year into his term as Head of School, Ramaz appears to be headed for a period of continuity and change at the same time. On the one hand, Schwartz has been deeply involved in the school and board leadership for many years. At the same time, she clearly does not want to stand still, as shown by the strategic planning initiatives and her ideas for the high school and beyond.



Erica Schwartz `93 took the lead on July 1, 2026



Erica Schwartz `93 Ramaz yearbook photo

Before the Bell: *The Invisible Operation That Keeps Ramaz Running*

As Chief Operating Officer, he oversees security, facilities, IT, the health office, private transportation and food service across all three Ramaz campuses. "Everything touches my department," he said.

Most students go four years at Ramaz without thinking about who decided the entryways should be bulletproof, who picked the new food vendor, or why the lower school feels newer than the others. This is the operation the building runs on without anyone noticing.

Berman shares a workspace with about 20 to 25 other administrators—IT, Institutional Advancement, Communications, the business office, and HR—a group that used to sit in the middle school, where a plaque still marks the old "Operations Office." Rising enrollment and smaller, more differentiated class sizes forced the move. "Enrollment is high enough across our campuses that we don't have the space," he said.

Each campus has its own personality. The lower school, rebuilt after a fire in July, 2011, is the newest and has the fewest facilities issues—but the largest enrollment, close to 500 with its early childhood program.

That overlap creates real friction. Victor Cruz, the director of facilities, oversees all three buildings but can't be everywhere at once. Thankfully, on the days where Cruz cannot make it to the upper school, there are at least 5 facilities team members to fix any issues..

Most physical maintenance happens after hours: a night cleaning crew of four to six people spends about four hours in each building, a schedule that falls apart the moment an evening event runs late and the crew has to work around guests instead of an empty building.

Mamadou Deme is the Director of Security and oversees all security across the three campuses. In his time at Ramaz, security has changed more visibly. New entry vestibules—"man traps"—replaced doors that were reinforced but unlocked, giving guards a fully separated, bulletproof space. The building itself has gained heightened protection. Berman stated, “It's an actual layer of defense." A new visitor policy, sent ahead of arrivals as photos to the security team, is partly a response to rising anti-semitism concerns nationally.

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YU Students Join Ramaz to Learn and Teach

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One well established program similar to the Ramaz Kollel is the beit midrash fellows program at SAR High School. At SAR, the fellows meet with students during some of their regular Tanach and Gemara classes, but they are not responsible for grading, testing, or designing the curriculum.

Unlike at SAR, the Ramaz Kollel members will take full responsibility over a sophomore Judaic Studies class. Another thing that makes the Ramaz Kollel different is the fact that it will allow the members to continue their semicha studies while at Ramaz.

All Kollel members are third or fourth year semicha students planning careers in Jewish education.

Rabbi Zaki Dayan, the head of the Kollel, just finished his time studying in the YU Kollel Elyon, where Rabbi Schiowitz also studied.

Dayan aims to bring the high level of learning from the Kollel Elyon to the Ramaz Kollel.

Dayan also described the coming year as a trial year. The goal for the Kollel is to benefit both Ramaz students and the Kollel members, with this year serving as the foundation for the future of the program. While the Kollel will be at the school five days a week, last year's program of having YU and Stern students come on Fridays will continue, maintaining continuity at the same time as the new program starts.

Meet the Inaugural Kollel Fellows

Danny Srulowitz

High School:
DRS

Yeshiva:
Shaalavim

Year 3 of Semicha

Enjoys graphic design, movie editing, and tennis

Yitzy Lanner

High School:
Katz Yeshiva High School

Yeshiva:
Shaalavim

Year 4 of Semicha

Loves playing soccer

Ari Needle

High School:
TABC

Yeshiva:
Shaalavim

Year 3 of Semicha

Loves music and kumzits

Joey Kaplan

High School:
Ramaz

Yeshiva:
Orayta

Year 3 of Semicha

Loves going outside and hiking

Harry Honig '27 Turns One Tennis Lesson into a Movement

ELI GOLDFINGER '27

Harry Honig '27 has been named a regional honoree for the 2026 Billie Jean King Youth Leadership Award, an ESPN honor given to young people who use sport to drive social change. The award, announced via ESPN press release ahead of the July 15 ESPYs broadcast, comes with a charitable grant for Together Sports, the youth sports nonprofit Honig founded in 2024.

Honig learned he'd been selected while alone in his room, checking email. "I was skeptical at first because I could just not believe it," he said. "It's the kind of recognition that made the last few years of work feel validated in a really concrete way."

Together Sports provides free coaching, equipment and court access to kids who might not otherwise have them. The idea traces back to Daniel Davis, Honig's coach at the Harlem Junior Tennis and Education Program, who died in September 2020. "He gave the same attention to a beginner as he did to elite players, and he'd give up weekends with his own family to take Harlem kids to tournaments so they'd get the same opportunities tennis gave him," Honig said. He kept competing for a few years afterward, but the sport stopped feeling the way it once had. "In 2024 I finally realized I could make a bigger difference building something than winning another match," he said. "So I started with one kid, on one court in the Bronx."

That first session, with a student who had asthma, forced him to adjust on the spot—fewer sprints, more breaks. "What surprised me most was how much that one session meant, not just to the kid, but to me," he said. "It was the first time I felt like I was actually continuing something instead of just missing it."

What convinced him the program mattered, he said, wasn't a single moment but a pattern: kids who'd never been coached before started showing up week after week. "That's when I understood this wasn't just about keeping kids busy, it was about giving them something steady to count on," he said.

Three people at Ramaz shaped how the organization grew, Honig said. Head of School Dr. Noam Wasserman pushed him to think about long-term sustainability rather than short-term wins. Dr. Nancy Block connected Together Sports to the school's Thailand mission trip, where Honig gave his own Together Sports T-shirt to a boy named Namo. A week later, he heard Namo was wearing it while leading games with his friends. "That's the one that stayed with me, because it wasn't about the hours I spent with him," Honig said. "It was what he did with it after I was gone." And Leah Silberstein, he said, "shaped how I think about the story behind the work," pushing him to see that the organization's impact isn't just in the numbers—"it's in the sense of belonging kids get from being part of something."

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Honig ‘27, Heyman ‘27, and Akilov ‘27 Coaching Youth

Beyond the Break: How Ramaz Students Spent their Summer

NADIA OLSHIN ‘28

Ever wonder what your Ramaz classmates actually do once summer begins and their school lives are put aside? From when that final bell rings in June to the start of the fall semester in September, it turns out not everyone spends the break sleeping in and scrolling on the couch. Some students chased passion projects that never quite fit into a school-year schedule, others served their communities. Some

launched new ventures, spent time in places that would not be expected, or got up close with marine life. Apparently, summer can be just as full of ambition as the school year. This feature highlights a handful of those stories: Behind the relaxed schedules and empty hallways, members of the school community are quietly doing things worth talking about. Here's a look at how a few of them spent their summer. :

Hannah Katz’27:

This summer, Hannah worked downtown at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, a museum and archive dedicated to preserving Eastern European Jewish culture, an opportunity she learned about through a family friend involved with the organization. "The idea of being immersed in history at the archives and getting real life work experience was super appealing to me," she said, adding being so close to all the primary sources and Jewish history also gave her insight into potential careers as she plans to study history in college. Her average day involved organizing, labeling, and photographing historical documents. “It is really cool to hold history in my hands; I never know what will be inside each box I open, and each day is a surprise,” she said.



Ben Abayev ‘27:

Ben spent his days interning at the district office of state Sen. Liz Krueger, D-Manhattan, where the work ranged from fielding calls from constituents to drafting informational pamphlets and researching proposed legislation. "I got the internship by emailing every single representative of my area, at every level, everything from city to state to federal level representatives," he said. A typical day started at 10 a.m., when interns gathered in a conference room for a list of tasks before being given time to work on their own initiatives. For Ben, the internship tied into a larger goal: "I hope to one day be a politician myself," he said, adding that since no one in his family has political connections, he felt he needed real experience in the field to start building his own. "The political industry is one that very heavily relies on connections," he said. Outside his internship, Ben spent about two hours a day writing roughly 10 pages of a sci-fi thriller about four teenagers drafted to fight a war on Mars that explores the idea of unnecessary conflict. Now around eight chapters in, he's hoping to finish and publish the book by December. "I've always wanted to author my own work, and I hope to improve my ability to write," he said.

Eleanor Goldfarb ‘27 :

This summer, Eleanor interned at Monterey Expeditions, a diving business based in Monterey, California, helping with promotion and assisting in leading tours including diving, tidepooling, and snorkeling. “I have always had a deep love for the ocean and the life it holds,” she said. The opportunity grew out of personal love for marine life. After getting a scuba certificate a few years earlier while visiting a cousin who works for a marine biologist in Montenary California, Eleanor became connected to the local diving community and knew who to reach out to when she was ready to come back for a summer job. "As soon as I swam through that kelp forest, over the rocky reef teeming with life, I knew this was something I wanted to continue doing," she said. Eleanor also explained that this internship offered something a typical pre- college program couldn't. “This internship allows me to do both what I love while gaining work experience.” Beyond the hands-on experience, Eleanor said the internship deepened both her personal connection to the ocean and her professional skill set.

Charlotte Farber ‘27:

This summer, Charlotte Farber took part in the Abarbanel Summer Seminar, a three week academic program for observant high school students in the Netherlands, drawn to it because it seemed like a great fit for what she wanted for her summer. A typical day began with philosophy and history seminars in the morning, leaving afternoons and evenings for touring, relaxing, or pursuing electives. The group was based in Leidan which Charlotte described as a "cute little university town with a lot of nice cafes and museums," and also took weekend trips to Belgium and Amsterdam. "It was an amazing experience, I really miss it," she said. Reflecting on what she gained, Charlotte said she made a lot of friends and learned about "the history of the Netherlands and the way their communities were built." She added that "It was just nice to learn so much in the classes and then go out with my friends and actually experience it in Europe."



Freshman Survival Guide:

What You Need to Know and Everything We Wish We'd Known

TORY DOFT '27

Walking into Ramaz on the first day of freshman year, you will probably have a lot of questions. Where am I supposed to be? Which staircase am I supposed to take? Is the elevator actually faster? And, perhaps most importantly, which vending machine can I find the best snacks?

Luckily, generations of Ramaz students have already made these mistakes so you don't have to.

The Rampage asked upperclassmen, GO leaders, freshman advisors, and the freshman grade dean for their best advice on navigating ninth grade. Consider this your unofficial survival guide.

The Important Stuff: Bathrooms, Vending Machines, and Elevators

Let's begin with the questions nobody covers at orientation. There is no consensus on the best vending machine. One upperclassman is firmly on Team Third Floor: "It vends the fastest, and the Milano cookies are the move." Another student backed the third-floor machine for a different reason: "They sometimes have Hershey's." But the fourth floor has its defenders too. One upperclassman argued that its proximity to the library makes it perfect for grabbing something right before studying or hanging out during a free period. The bathroom debate is even more contentious. One male student argues that the third-floor bathroom's windows

and natural light make it "scenic," while another's vote goes to the C-level bathroom because it is "so nice and quiet." A third recommends the newly renovated gym locker rooms.

On the elevator, though, the upperclassmen are closer to agreement: proceed with caution.

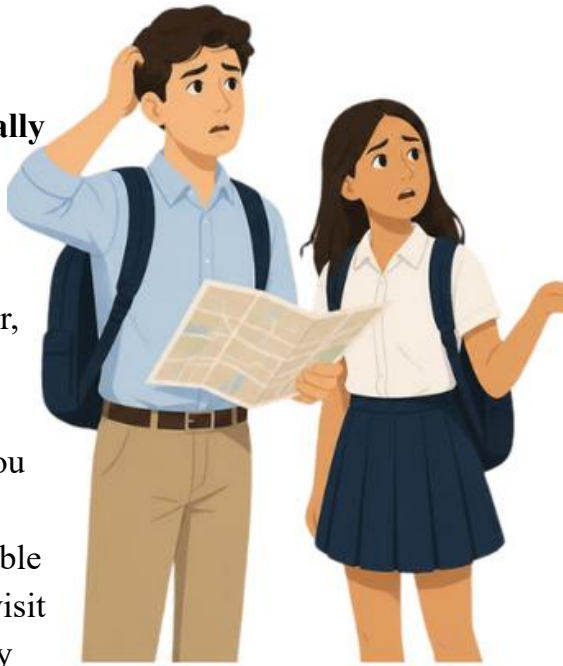
"I never take it unless I have to go to seven," one student said. "It's just not worth stopping on every floor." Another was even more definitive: "Avoid. You will be late to class waiting for it."

In other words, start getting comfortable with the stairs.

Academic Advice You Should Actually Listen To

Freshman year marks the time where things suddenly become real. However, one of the most popular tips given by both faculty and students is quite straightforward; ask for help before you actually need it.

"Your teachers are much more accessible than you might think. Email them or visit during their open periods; they'll really help you out," shared an upperclassman.



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Building a Safe Space for Jews and Muslims to Listen and Learn

BEN BULLER '28

Over the summer, Gabi Flatto-Katz '27 co-founded a program for Jews and Muslims to exchange their ideas and beliefs in an open environment.

Flatto-Katz wanted the name of the fellowship, a program with a goal of building community and trust between groups, to represent the essence of the program but also wanted to find a word that had the same root in both Hebrew and Arabic. Flatto-Katz explained, "Ohel in Hebrew means tent and Ahl in Arabic means community or brotherhood...we are trying to do both things that the two parts of our name encompass [in this fellowship]... we are trying to build an ohel, build a space or a tent for people to come in and feel like they can [freely] talk...but to also build an ahl, build a community...a community of people who are in this ohel together and who talk to one another. [The people in this program] see one another as a friend who disagrees with them. Flatto-Katz recognized the need for such a program when he attended a debate competition in Iowa. He explained, "I was shocked that I live in New York which is the place with the most Muslims out of any part of America, and I had to go all the way out to Iowa...and that was the only time I spoke to a Muslim."



The fellowship meeting with a speaker. She introduced the idea of civility during debates and disagreements

Flatto Katz's brief twenty minute chat with a Muslim made him realize how sheltered he had been. He craved the opportunity to speak with people from other backgrounds about "real world" conflicts to gather and hear opinions different from his own.



The fellowship in the MET

Flatto-Katz stressed that the program was important because typically others did not want to listen when people with opposing opinions shared their views. Additionally, Nabila Rahman '27, co-founder of the fellowship and a student at Stuyvesant said, "Programs like these are especially important for the youth because our brains are the most malleable right now...if we are stuck in one mindset, in a one-sided world view as a young person, we will keep that [attitude] for the rest of our lives"

“In Islam, the only real sects we have are Shia, Sunni, and a little bit of Sufi Muslims. Hearing about the spectrum of Jewish identity at one of our sessions was really interesting to me!”
- Nabila Rahman

The fellowship was designed to slowly ease the participants into more political and difficult conversations. The first meeting began with a volunteer who shared a hypothetical story and then the fellows debated who in the story was right and who was wrong. As the sessions progressed, Flatto-Katz raised more political conversations about war and the question that shifted the conversation into a more intense environment was, "How do we think that the ideas of war/ the histories of war [that we inherit intergenerationally through family stories and from our grandparents and parents]... affect the way that we look at conflict today?" After the fellowship discussed the Israel-Palestine conflict, they delved into the history of both the Jewish and Islamic claim to Israel. To go along with that discussion, they took a guided tour of the Met displays of the Islamic art and culture. Madiha Bukhari '26, recent graduate of Bronx Science High School and co-founder of the fellowship said that through these sessions she learned "...So much about early Islamic History and the start of Zionism."

Flatto-Katz decided to take action to address the issue of many students being sheltered. He explained, "In order for anything to be done, we have to talk."

Freshman Survival Guide:

What You Need to Know and Everything We Wish We'd Known

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Others recommend using the clinics and office hours provided by Ramaz faculty. "Bio clinic, math clinic, chem clinic, and writing clinic were lifesavers."

Associate Principal and Freshman Advisor, Ms. Miriam Krupka, repeated this tip. "Do not hesitate to go to the adults in the building who can help you out," she said. "It can be your advisor, your teacher, or someone from the admin - just pick the one you feel comfortable talking to and let them know what you need."

Freshman Grade Dean Ms. Ilana Wilner gave the single most valuable piece of advice: "Seek help from a teacher before getting lost!"

Remember: You are still a freshman. No one is expecting you to know everything from the start.

"Everything is new, and it is okay to make mistakes," freshman advisor Mr. Elie Adelman said. "Learning from mistakes is a great way to improve and feel more secure in our knowledge and capabilities."

Get Involved!

If there is one mistake upperclassmen want freshmen to avoid, it is waiting too long to get involved in clubs and other student activities.

"Start something," one student advised. "Don't wait until junior year to get involved because 'you're just a freshman.' The people who start early end up running things later."

Another recommends trying out for all the different academic teams, even if they sound similar. Debate, Mock Trial, and other teams require completely different skills while introducing you to students you otherwise might never meet.

Also don't forget about hobbies that are exciting and easy to participate in. One suggested that intramurals "are low-commitment, competitive, fun, and one of the easiest ways to bond with fellow classmates."

Morah Yris Bilia, Hebrew teacher and freshman adviser, said it plainly and clearly: "Be a part of something. Change the lives of Chesed and your friends' lives."

Ms. Wilner's advice is shorter still: "Say yes to things. Go to the sport's game. Join a club. Join a study group. You'll have way more fun being a part of your freshman year."

So You Want to Run for GO?

For the freshmen already eyeing a spot in student government, *The Rampage* went directly to the people who know how to win an election.

GO President Ben Abayev '27 says name recognition matters a lot.

"Talk to as many people as possible, put jarring posters all throughout the hallways, yell out campaign slogans in the lounge," he advised. "Anything to just make your name known on the ballot."

GO Vice President Caleb Doft '27 agrees that posters matter, but should do more than put your name on a wall. Make them "funny/relatable" and show your personality while still explaining what you actually want to accomplish.

More importantly, figure out what your classmates care about.

"Find out what it is that people want fixed and use that as a platform," Doft said. He also recommends simply talking to people, not necessarily about GO, but because genuinely getting to know your classmates matters.

Sophomore Class President Lily Brody '29, who successfully ran as a freshman last year, offered similar advice.

"My biggest advice is just to be yourself," Brody said. "Talk to everyone in the grade so that people know who you are and that you're running. Listen to what people want and have a few realistic ideas that you genuinely think would make freshman year better."

The Unwritten Rules

Every school has rules that will never appear in a handbook.

Rule No. 1: Know your staircases. One upperclassman recommends figuring out which staircase gets you closest to each classroom. Those saved seconds matter more than you think.

Rule No. 2: Use your mornings wisely. One student says 8:02 is about as late as you want to push it: "8:05 and you have a problem." Another takes the opposite approach, arriving at 7:30 for Mishmar and using the extra time to make Judaic classes less stressful. A third student says to take advantage of the 5 days you can arrive late: "You might as well just take the late and sit in detention one day for 30 minutes in exchange for five days of sleeping in".

Rule No. 3: It's okay to be tired. If exhaustion wins, another piece of upperclassman wisdom is that the lounge can double as a surprisingly useful place for a quick nap.

Rule No. 4: Your freshman friend group is not necessarily your senior friend group. And that's okay. "Friend groups change constantly throughout high school," Ms. Wilner said. "Be open to new people, new experiences."

She also stressed something easy to forget in the rush of freshman year: kindness. Invite the extra person to lunch.

Include someone in the hangout. Small decisions can have a much bigger impact than you realize.

Doft's final rule might be the most important: don't promise impossible things. Your speech can be funny. Your posters can be ridiculous. Your campaign can be memorable. But at the end of the day, your classmates should know what you actually plan to do for them.

You Don't Have to Figure It All Out Yet

Freshman year comes with a strange pressure to immediately find your people, your activities, your best subjects, and the version of yourself you are going to be for the next four years. The adults who will be guiding this year's freshman class want you to know that isn't how it works.

“Ninth grade is an exciting time for you to develop genuine friendships, grow as a person, and to learn successfully...We are here for you!”

-Dr. Jerry Zeitchik

Director of Guidance and Freshman Advisor

Ms. Rebecca Weisberg, Science teacher and freshman advisor, similarly encouraged freshmen to lean on the community around them.

"We're so excited to watch you grow this year, in your academics, your friendships, your interests, and your Judaism," she said. "Your teachers, advisors, and administrators are here to help you succeed in all of these areas." And Morah Yris, remembering what it was like to be new at Ramaz herself, had one final reminder: "Take your time to enjoy your days."

One Last Thing, From a Senior Rampage Reporter

As I head into my final year at Ramaz, the biggest thing I can tell you is that four years sounds much longer than it actually is.

Rams Reloaded: Ramaz Athletics Eyes a Big Year

TORY DOFT '27

A new school year means new classes, new teachers and, for Ramaz athletes, another chance to bring championships back to the Upper School.

Athletic Director Ari Witkes enters the year optimistic about Ramaz’s teams, with veteran varsity squads, up-and-coming teams, and several new coaches giving fans plenty to watch for this season. “I’m very excited for the fall sports season,” Witkes said. “A lot of great teams and a lot of great players. I’m looking forward to seeing how kids progress, the new kids, the returning kids, and seeing who put in the work in the offseason.”

Basketball

Few Ramaz teams enter this season with higher expectations than Boys Varsity Basketball.

At its center is a senior trio that Witkes calls the “Big Three”: Noah Hiltzik ’27, Edward Ash ’27 and Emanuel Kushner ’27. He has watched the three develop together for years..

Their history together dates back to middle school. Although they did not win a title in eighth grade and later fell short at the JV level, they played a critical role in helping Ramaz claim the title at the Sam Gyenes z”l Memorial Tournament last year. This year is their last one playing together, and Witkes believes the group is “thirsty and hungry” to win the championship.

The Big Three will have plenty of help this year. Moses Nakash ’27, Hank Dweck ’27, Ralph Sigoura ’27 and Jared Miller ’27 are among the returning seniors, with Charlie Kaplan ’27 potentially returning as well. The junior class should add another layer of talent.

Head Coach Scott Ferguson returns and will be joined by new assistant coach Spencer Rubinstein, a former Ramaz basketball standout who replaces Max Zakheim after Zakheim moved on to college-level coaching at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Early tests at the Brooklyn-based Magen David Yeshivah preseason tournament and the 12th annual Steve Glouberman z”l Tournament should offer a glimpse of whether this group can turn years of anticipation into a championship run.

The Girls Varsity team has reasons for similar optimism. Last year’s roster relied heavily on underclassmen, including leading scorers Mia Form ’28, Natalie Safdieh ’28, and Rae Meyer ’28. Those players now enter their junior seasons alongside an experienced senior group.

After a first-round playoff exit last year, Witkes sees Ferguson’s girls team as one capable of going significantly further this time around.

The JV programs are looking for jumps of their own. Girls JV Head Coach Abby Tepper returns after a difficult season in which Witkes nevertheless saw steady improvement. Maya Yashar ’29 headlines the returning players, while a talented freshman class should provide reinforcements.

On the boys side, Head Coach Akiva Poppers returns alongside new assistant Ari Shklyar, who previously coached many of the incoming players in eighth grade. Jonas Eliasson ’29, Leo Kasell ’29, Oliver Friedman ’29, Isaac Spodek ’29, Andrew Peldman ’29, and Steven Dweck ’29 are among the players Witkes is eager to see develop.

“The coaches have been working nonstop since the season ended,” Witkes said. “They are really motivated to get us back to the playoffs, and I really think this team can do that.”

After missing the playoffs last year, the goal is straightforward: get back.

Hockey

Boys Varsity Hockey has one big question to answer: Who will take over in net?

Last year’s senior class helped bring Ramaz back to the playoffs, but replacing that group will require new players to emerge. Caleb Doft ’27 and Leon Kremer ’27 headline the incoming senior class, while members of last season’s JV team, including Jack and Haim Dabah ’28, will have an opportunity to make their mark at the varsity level.

The biggest uncertainty, according to Witkes, is in the net. Ramaz needs to find its next starting goalie. If it does, Witkes believes the team has the talent to make a deep playoff run.

Head Coach Zach Levy will also lead a JV team with serious expectations of its own. After reaching the playoffs and falling in the

first round last season, the Rams return Isaac Freilich ’29, Nate Ottensoser ’29, Raphael Bakhchi ‘29, Avi Englander ’29 and other key contributors. A promising incoming eighth-grade group could make the team even deeper. Witkes pointed specifically to Ariel Tantleff ‘30, whom he has seen play, as a newcomer to watch.



Varsity Boys Basketball team after winning the 2025 Sam Gyenes z”l Memorial Tournament

Volleyball

The Girls Varsity Volleyball team is back after a playoff appearance in their last season and boasts an experienced senior class headed by Sonya Zinder '27 and Caroline Kollander '27. Despite losing several seniors during graduation, Witkes still sees promise in this year’s returning players.

One thing he certainly is not worried about is the person on the sideline.

“Rachel Kohn is the best coach in volleyball,” Witkes said. “There is no one better than her.”

The JV team, meanwhile, enters the season looking to make a leap. After taking on a particularly young roster and missing the playoffs last year, many of those players are now sophomores. They will also have new leadership in Head Coach Lynn Jacobowski, who spent more than a decade assisting Kohn, and Assistant Coach Ashley Botnick, a former Shalhevet and Maccabi volleyball player with coaching experience. Witkes sees the combination as enough to turn the Rams into playoff contenders.

Beyond the Break: How Ramaz Students Spent their Summer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Harry Honig ‘27:

Harry Honig spent two weeks in Thailand coaching soccer for kids through Together Sports, the nonprofit he founded to bring sports instruction to underprivileged youth. Harry started the organization in memory of a coach he had growing up, who passed away in 2020. "He made every kid feel like they belonged, regardless of their background," Harry said. "I've been trying to do the same thing ever since."

Sara Kleinhaus ‘27

Sara Kleinhaus made her way to Camp Mesorah in Guilford, New York to be a vocational job coach for Yachad participants, Jewish adults with special needs.

Last year she went on Yad B’ Yad, a separate program which takes place in Israel and she “fell in love with Yachad and everything that they do.” A typical day for her consisted of accompanying participants to jobs and activities, and helping them through different tasks. The day would be split into two: The first half focusing on building life skills such as sorting mail,or packaging ice for the infirmity- things that might seem intuitive to people like us, but were very difficult for the participants. The second half of the day then allowed for them to have some fun. They went swimming, played games, and just hung out all together. For Sara, the most meaningful part of her experience was spending time with the participants. "They are just so fun and enjoyable to be with. Just getting to spend time with them meant so much."

Dr. Nancy Block, Upper School Chessed Coordinator, aware of the work Harry had put into building Together Sports, suggested he bring the organization's programming to the school's Thailand mission trip, and it ended up being the perfect fit. Mornings were spent running drills and playing with the kids, afternoons were spent with the local community, and evenings were used to plan for the next day. When asked about the organization, he said, ”most people have no idea the organization even exists, let alone that it's expanding to Southeast Asia.”



Rams Reloaded: Ramaz Athletics Eyes a Big Year

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Cross Country, Track, Wrestling, Swimming and Golf

Some of Ramaz’s most accomplished athletes will compete outside the Ramdome. Cross Country and Track return captained by Elianna and Ezra Gonen ’27 along with Lyon Levin ’28, “one of the best all-around athletes in the school,” according to Witkes. Returning coach is Zoe Wolmark, with a team Witkes describes as “never knowing who is going to step up.” Levin will be just as important to Ramaz Wrestling. After attending specialized wrestling camps during the offseason, he returns as one of the program’s leading wrestlers. Witkes also credited Coach Jake Stein with generating excitement around a program that continues to grow. That growth will now extend below the Upper School. Ramaz is starting a middle school wrestling program, giving younger athletes a pathway into the sport and potentially strengthening the varsity program for years to come.

The Boys and Girls Swim teams also bring back a large group of experiencedswimmers. Ramaz will have to replace graduated standout Truman Edell, but Witkes highlighted Manny Chelnitsky ‘28 as one of the program’s top swimmers and expects others to take another step forward.



Lyon Levin ‘28 at a summer wrestling camp with the head coach of the Iowa wrestling team.

Golf enters the year with perhaps the clearest accomplishment to build upon. After winning the Yeshiva League Open Invitational last season, Coach Judah Rolnick’s team returns Ben Rubinchik ’27, Mayer Silvera ’27, Max and Alex Majzner ’28, Gabriel Tambor ’27 and Elliot Libin ’27. With much of the championship group intact, the Rams will try to prove last season was only the beginning.

Bringing Back the Ramdome

For Witkes, though, the upcoming season is about more than wins and losses. He wants Ramaz students in the stands. The athletics department is planning surprise giveaways, a bobblehead night and other special events designed to turn games into school-wide events. Witkes wants students to put down their books for a few hours, fill the Ramdome and give Ramaz teams a true home-court advantage.

“Take a break from all your academics,” Witkes said, “because there are no better fans than the Ramaz Rams.”

Freshman Survival Guide

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

At this point, as a freshman, you worry about locating your classrooms, making friends, and passing your tests. But before you know it, you’ll be so familiar with every staircase that you won’t even need to think about it, freshmen will seem unbelievably small, and you’ll be the senior offering them advice. Do not try to make your high school experience perfect in your freshman year. Try out for the team despite being nervous. Be a part of that club you that you know nothing about yet.

Run for GO. Create your own thing. And try your best to branch out and meet new people. The biggest thing I wish someone had told me was to not put so much pressure on every moment. You don't have to make freshman year the best year of your life, and you definitely don't need to have high school figured out by September. A lot will change between now and senior year. Let it. Make some memories you’ll actually want to tell the freshmen about. Four years goes fast; the elevator does not!”

RAMAZ RAMS ATHLETICS						
TRYOUTS CALENDAR						
SEPTEMBER 2026						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 BOYS JV BASKETBALL CROSS COUNTRY BOYS V BASKETBALL	4	5
6	7	8 GIRLS JV BASKETBALL BOYS JV BASKETBALL 2ND CUT GIRLS V BASKETBALL	9 BOYS V BASKETBALL 2ND CUT BOYS JV HOCKEY BOYS V HOCKEY	10 BOYS WRESTLING GIRLS JV VOLLEYBALL GIRLS V VOLLEYBALL	11	12

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Harry Honig '27 Turns One Tennis Lesson into a Movement

ELI GOLDFINGER '27

Honig came up through a junior program once led by Katrina Adams, who later became president of the U.S. Tennis Association, which shapes how he sees the King award. "Billie Jean King's entire legacy is about using sports to break down barriers and create equity," he said. "Having her name attached to Together Sports feels like confirmation that the mission we've built, making sports accessible regardless of income, is part of something much bigger than me."

The \$2,500 grant—part of a roughly \$7,500 annual budget funded by grants, donations and in-kind support—will cover about \$1,400 in equipment and \$1,100 in court and facility fees, extending programming to chapters in Texas, Ohio and India. Honig said he had to sit on the news under embargo, even while writing about Together Sports for other purposes. "I kept having to leave it out," he said. "But the embargo was in place until right before the ESPYs broadcast, and I understood why that mattered, so I sat on it. It made the actual announcement feel more meaningful."

Asked to describe Together Sports in a sentence, Honig didn't hesitate: "Together Sports is a nonprofit that removes the three things that keep kids out of sports: cost, equipment, and access to real coaching, by making all of it free."

He pushed back on the idea that youth sports nonprofits are just recreation. "What we're actually running is a coaching model, our coaches are trained in Sports-Based Youth Development, which is a real methodology, not just showing up with a bag of balls," he said, adding that free doesn't mean lower quality: "We give away equipment and coaching for free specifically so the quality doesn't depend on what a family can pay."



Honig '27 and Heyman '27 Mentor Students in Thailand

Now class president heading into senior year, Honig treats the nonprofit like a job—weeknights for outreach, weekends on-site—but credits its growth to letting go of the coaching himself. "I've trained 26 coaches and chapter leaders who run programming without me," he said. "If I were still the only person coaching, this would have capped out two years ago."

Dr. Wasserman assigned him case studies on two youth-focused founders confronting what comes after early success. "I stopped focusing on what we'd accomplished and started thinking about whether Together Sports outlasts me," Honig said. "That's the problem I want to keep working on in college and after."

He measures future success the same way. "If Together Sports is still running free, high quality programming long after I've moved on, and I'm just one name in its history, that's the version I'd consider a success," he said. His advice to a freshman with a similar idea: "I started with one kid on one court in the Bronx, no organization, no plan, no 501(c)(3). The consistency is what turned it into something, not the idea. Most people with good ideas never take the first step, and the first step is always smaller than you think it needs to be."



Thai Students Practice with Coach Honig '27

Before the Bell: *The Invisible Operation That Keeps Ramaz Running*

Food has been this year's biggest overhaul. After roughly ten years with Five Star Foods, Berman ran a formal request-for-proposal process last November, spelling out Ramaz's needs—three kosher buildings, about 1,100 students, 300 employees. Eleven companies responded; Ramaz chose Butter Beans, a vendor Berman had worked with previously. Around 65 percent of Five Star's staff moved over with the switch. 80 percent of upper school staff moved over too. Even so, food draws the most complaints of anything he manages. "Something is too hot, too cold, too healthy, not healthy enough," he said. "You can't have only chicken nuggets—there has to be a salad bar. It has to be balanced." Nutrition plays a major role in ensuring that all types of eaters and dietary restrictions have the appropriate balance of food.

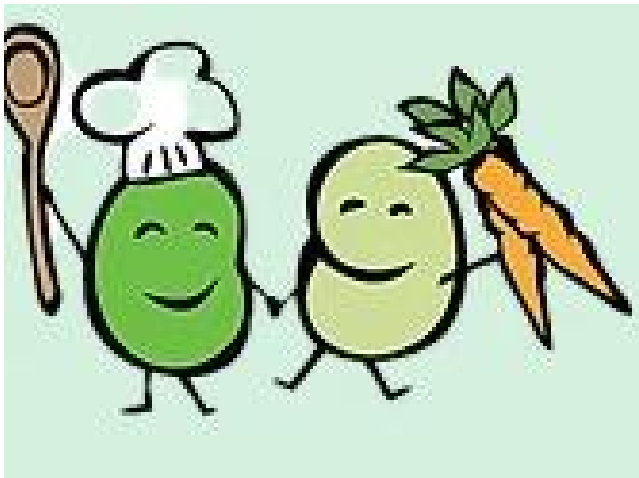
Running three campuses in Manhattan means running them without much room to spare. Berman's team recently cleared out decades of stored props and set pieces, throwing away roughly 70 percent of what had been sitting in offsite storage for decades before consolidating what was left into a smaller unit uptown.

Bigger decisions move slower by design. A recent library renovation required buy-in from the librarian, facilities, Head of School Dr. Noam Wasserman, Upper School Principal Rabbi Aaron Frank, Head of Institutional Advancement Kenny Rochlin, and donor considerations tied to the room's history, producing new carpet and lighting, but not everything that had been requested.

"I don't want to make rash decisions," Berman said. "I listen to people. I hear things out." He was direct that the deliberateness has a cost, comparing Ramaz's pace to a smaller institution nearby that moves faster simply because it has fewer layers of process: a tradeoff he accepts rather than one he loves.

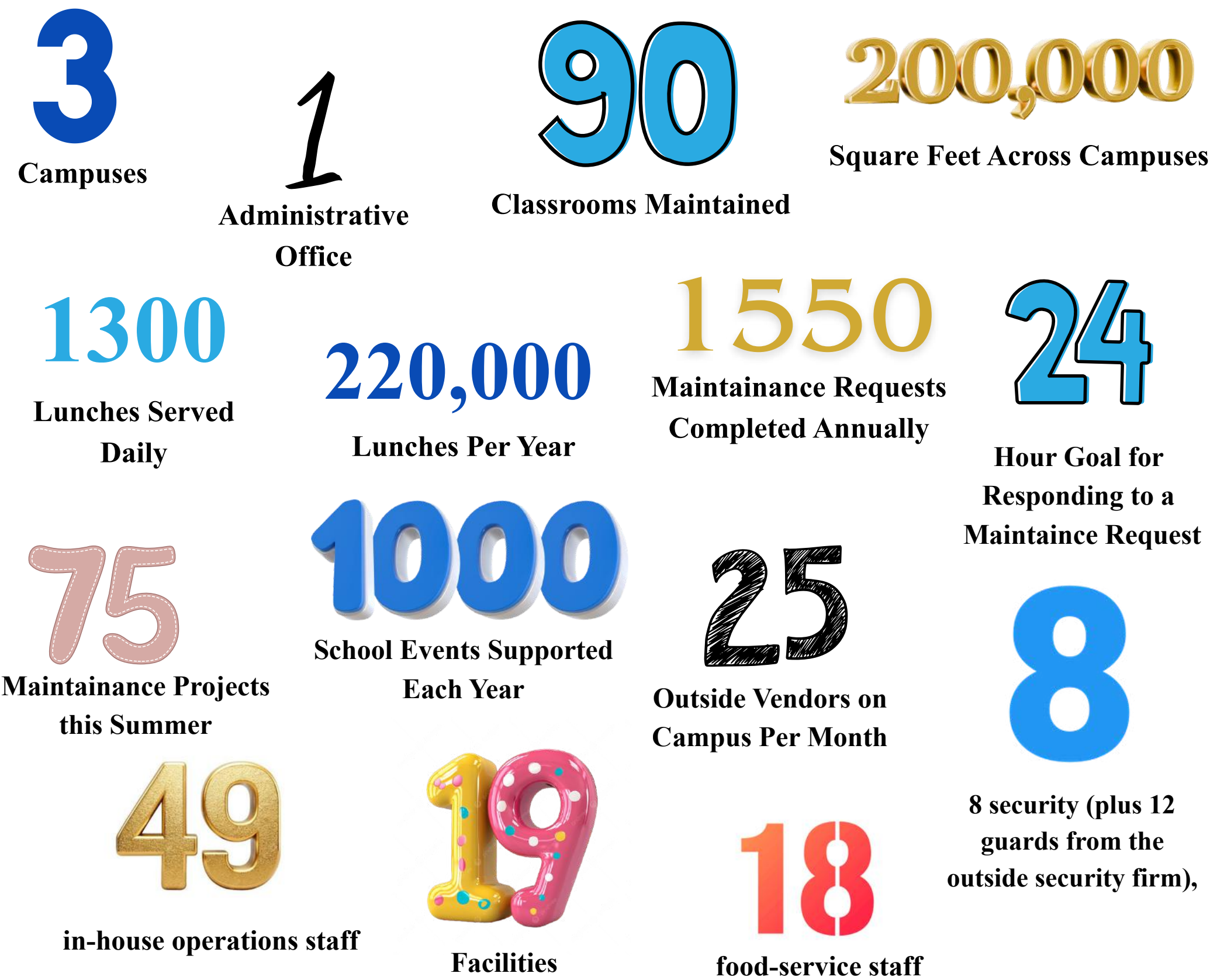
Five years in, Berman said what keeps him coming back isn't the routine; it's the absence of one. He likes the unknown. As he said, "there's always room for improvement, and that's what drives me." His calendar the day before this interview held five unrelated meetings, from food-program tech support to a call with the board president — none of it visible to a student walking past.

That, more than any single project, may be what the back of house at Ramaz actually is: not a department, but a constant, largely unseen act of translation between a dozen people's needs, running quietly enough that the first bell rings on time and almost no one asks how.



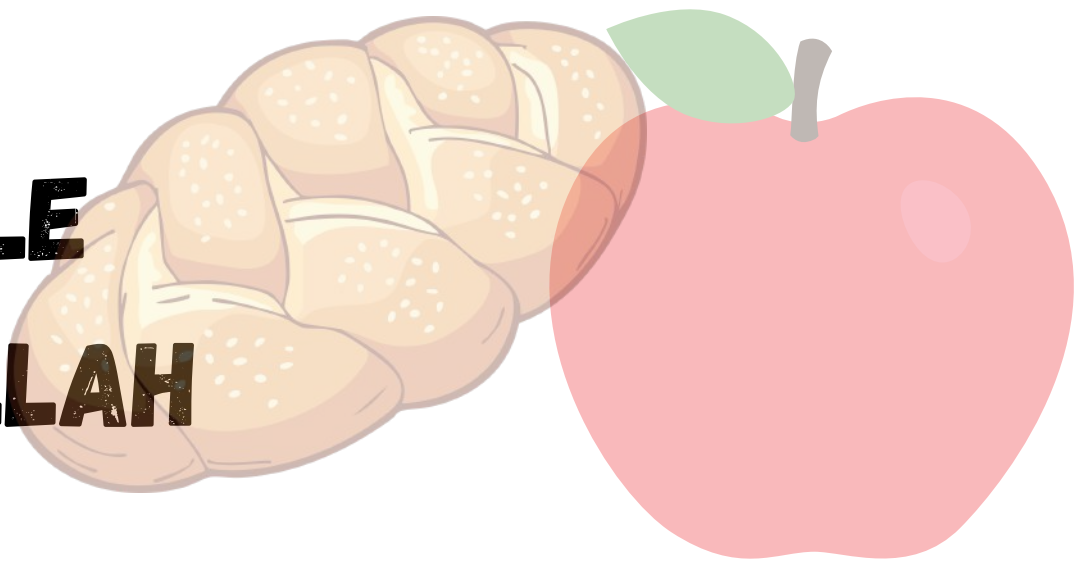
Butterbeans Kitchen Logo: Ramaz’s new caterer

Ramaz By the Numbers



Upcoming Events

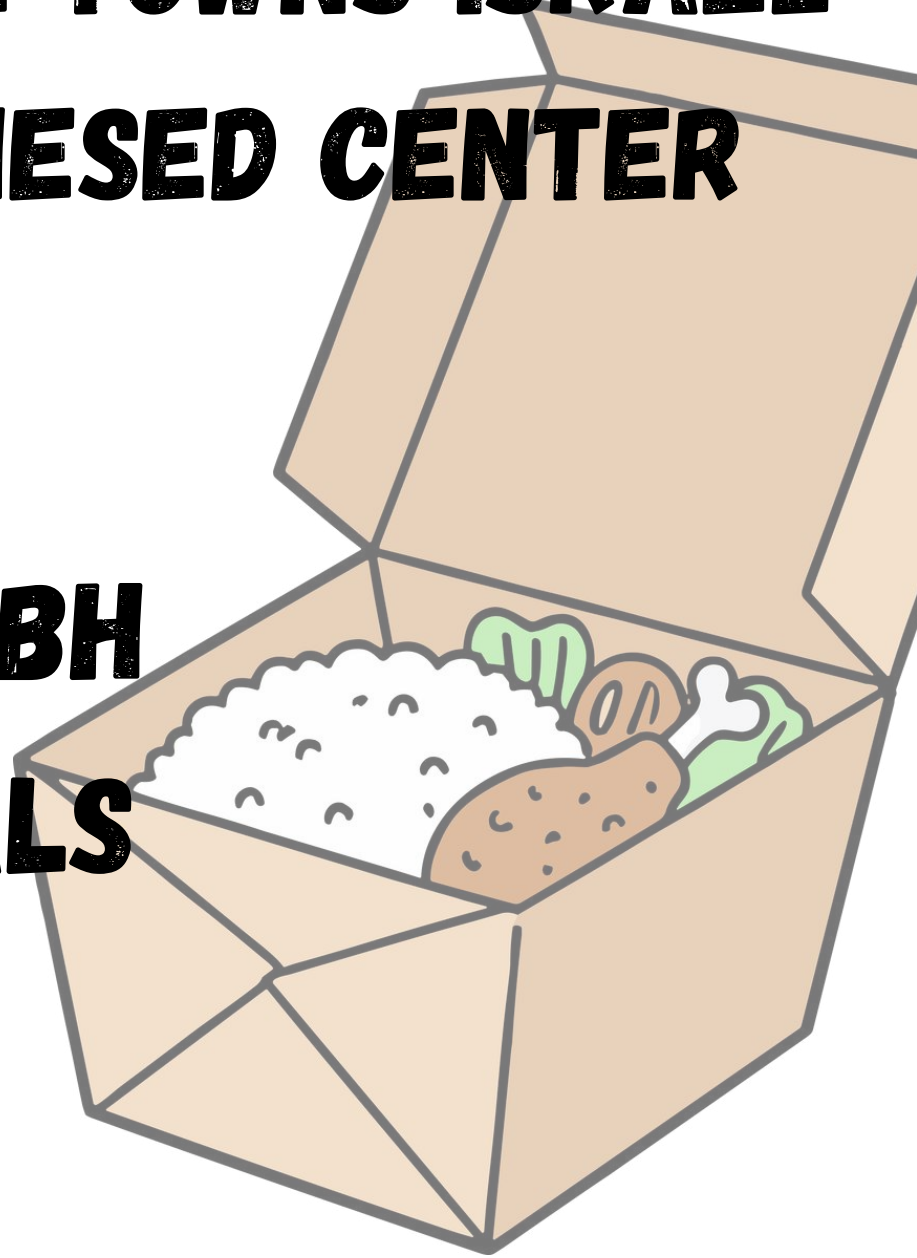
**SEPTEMBER 8:
FRESHMAN APPLE
PICKING AND CHALLAH
BAKE**



**SEPTEMBER 15:
SENIOR TRIP TO
FIVE TOWNS ISRAEL
CHESED CENTER**



**SEPTEMBER 16:
JUNIOR TRIP TO SBH
TO PACKAGE MEALS**



**SEPTEMBER 23:
CLUB FAIR**