

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **JEWISH ACADEMY OF ORLANDO CREATES KINDNESS GARDEN**

(1.10.19) - **Maitland, FL** Jewish Academy of Orlando will break ground for its new Kindness Garden on Monday, January 21st, Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The garden will be a segment of the campus playground. The project is part of a grant to incorporate fine arts in to the school's Judaic Studies program.

A segment of the grant requirement was to solve a problem in the school through the creative process. Led by the 5th grade class, the problem that students chose to solve was how to ensure all members of the JAO community act with utmost respect for their peers, teachers, and the greater community. The students chose to solve this problem by creating a "*Gan Shel Chesed*" – "A Garden of Kindness, Compassion, Respect and Understanding." The garden will be both an artistic and natural garden with words and messages of *Chesed*. The *Gan Shel Chesed* will be a permanent legacy that the 5th graders will leave for the school.

"For our students, Martin Luther King Jr. day has always been a day of service, kindness and learning about the civil rights movement," stated Alan Rusonik, Head of School. "Instead of having the day off from school, our students experience a meaningful day in the spirit of Dr. King."

The groundbreaking ceremony for the *Gan Shel Chesed* will take place on Monday, January 21st at 9:00 a.m. The school's weekly Monday Morning Minyan will precede the ceremony followed by a reception. Appropriately, the groundbreaking ceremony will take place on Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish holiday celebrating trees and nature and Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, which this year both happen to fall on January 21st. The garden will be a reminder of the ideals and values to which Dr. King dedicated his life, namely, kindness, compassion, respect and understanding.

“Dr. King once said that, ‘Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education.’ At Jewish Academy of Orlando, we strive to live by this goal to truly serve our students,” added Rusonik.

*Jewish Academy of Orlando serves Central Florida students of all faiths from grades kindergarten through fifth. The school delivers a whole-child education fostering academic excellence and character education rooted in Jewish values. Jewish Academy of Orlando is accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools. Beginning in fall of 2019, the school will offer a transitional kindergarten.*

*To learn more about Jewish Academy of Orlando, please visit: [jewishacademyorlando.org](http://jewishacademyorlando.org) or follow the school on Facebook [facebook.com/JewishAcademyOrlando/](https://facebook.com/JewishAcademyOrlando/)*