



# PROJECT WEEK 2021

## at the

# Israel Arts and Science Academy

February 28 – March 5, 2021

*"In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity."*

– Albert Einstein

### ***'From Lamenting to Celebrating'***

Students who attend the Israel Arts and Science Academy are admitted based solely on merit, irrespective of financial ability. Admission is based on talent in one of four disciplines: Science, Art, Music or Humanities. While students are divided by grade level, their homerooms consist of students from all four disciplines.

During **Project Week**, students are divided by their chosen discipline rather than grade level. It is a unique opportunity for the students in each discipline to be together as a whole department. **Project Week** is both an opportunity for departmental activities and a chance for students to work on their individual study projects.

Special events, trips, lectures and activities of particular interest to each department are undertaken. In addition, there are school-wide activities conducted for the entire student body as a whole. This year, because of the pandemic, required extreme creativity to rearrange these activities.

11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students submit a proposal for a project of interest to them for approval. While this project must be approved by the department head, every effort is made to approve it. During the weeks prior to **Project Week**, a large bulletin board is on display in the central lobby listing approved projects. A mentor is made available to the student as a major resource and advisor on the project. Mentors include university professors, alumni, and various experience experts in the field.

For the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, the projects are each student's final year-end project. For 10<sup>th</sup> graders, **Project Week** is a unique opportunity to choose and pursue a personal project that excites them.

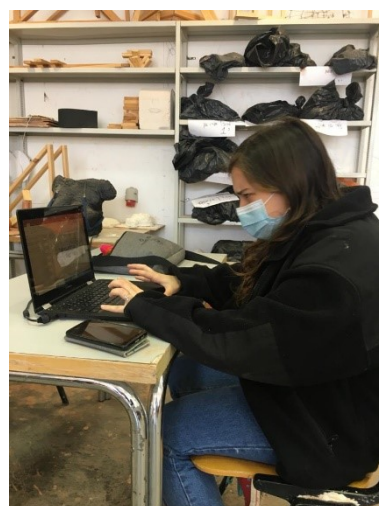
The week concludes with a series of events, including a keynote ceremony organized entirely by the 10th graders in which they present their projects; a prom, which the 11<sup>th</sup> graders put together; and a variety of other activities, including an Escape Room designed and built by 12th grade students in the Chemistry track. In the days following the ceremony, 10th grade projects remain exhibited in the school, for the scores of visiting parents to see.

Because of the pandemic, this year's **Project Week** had to be abbreviated. It took place from February 25 through March 5<sup>th</sup>. Several changes took place: IASA's 10<sup>th</sup> graders participated from home, 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grade students participated on campus, outside lectures had to be abandoned because of the pandemic, and outside trips had to be postponed. Some tours were organized via Zoom. There had to be a great deal of improvisation in order to conduct **Project Week**.

However, with the upper grades remaining on campus, IASA was buzzing 24/7 with students up at all hours and teaching staff often staying on until 10 or 11 pm to assist with student projects. These upperclassmen mobilized and organized the events (while simultaneously working on their own projects), including a keynote event to showcase the 10th graders' work. The gesture was especially noted by the teachers. As one put it,

*"It's important to point out that even though we weren't able to bring all the grades together, nor have the lectures, there was still a special atmosphere. The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders really came through and organized this event, in the 10<sup>th</sup> graders honor."*

*IASA teachers are so engaged with the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, we turn to graduates of the school to help out the 10<sup>th</sup> graders. The alumni are always willing to be helpful and allow the 10<sup>th</sup> graders enormous flexibility. Despite the large size of 10<sup>th</sup> grade class this year, the alumni rose to the challenge and provided mentorship to each one."*



Some of the topics chosen by 10<sup>th</sup> graders included:

- Parallaxes, Cepheid Variables and Hubble's Constant: Measuring Distances in Space
- A Guide to the Newly Blind
- Arabic Study Course
- Calculating AU (Distance of Earth from the Sun)
- Positive Psychology: The Evidence on Positive Thinking
- Python Simulation of Crystal Formation
- Ecological Fashion: Dress made from Disposable Masks
- Connection between Personality Traits and Mental Disorders
- Harry Potter Exhibit
- Electronic Chessboard
- History of Investigations into Dreams



The Minister of Education selected IASA to represent Israel with a concert recital to honor the delegation from Morocco, charged with reopening of the Kingdom of Morocco's Liaison Office in Jerusalem. The concert is organized around the Mimouna, which is a unique Moroccan celebration which takes place immediately after the end of the holiday of Passover. It is a festive event with traditional Moroccan food, art and music. Achieving this presentation is not a simple activity. The Schusterman Campus at IASA is closed for the Passover break. IASA students come from all across Israel and need to be transported from their home towns and back. Security and maintenance must be brought back, lighting and sound for the auditorium must be provided. The concert will take place March 24<sup>th</sup>, just prior to the beginning of Passover. We are sure the Music Department will shine. The Art Department also participated by preparing stage scenery with a Moroccan theme.

Despite the constraints imposed by the pandemic and the enormous creativity required to make adjustments, IASA's **Project Week 2021** showcased the impressive academic work of its students, and most important - the camaraderie

and team spirit that pervades the entire school—from its students to its staff to its alumni.

The quality of 10<sup>th</sup> graders' work from home really stood out. This is the first year we have graduates of IASA-Middle School as part of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. However, 2/3's of the students come from elsewhere. For these youngsters, **Project Week** was the first time they have ever undertaken an independent study project of their own. The ability of these 15 and 16 year-olds to sit down and undertake intensive work on their own is a testament to the self-discipline and motivation of these IASA students.

In the words of 12th grade homeroom teacher, Inbal Yakir:

*“A major part of Project Week is that we really encourage the 10<sup>th</sup> graders to choose creative projects, and not just complete ‘yet another assignment,’ which they already do. And they really invested, even from home; they were incredibly disciplined and motivated and—you can see the results for yourself.”*

