

Sinai special needs institute opens local elementary school branch

Sinai Special Needs Institute, the region's leading educational program for Jewish children and young adults with special needs, opened its first full-time Jewish elementary school program in Northern New Jersey at Yavneh Academy, 155 Farview Ave., with the start of the new school year.

A total of 17 students from Bergen, Passaic and Rockland counties are enrolled in Sinai at Yavneh programs for children between the ages of five and nine. Grades are divided into three self-contained classes that cater to individual academic and developmental needs. In addition to the academics, Sinai students receive specialized support by professionals in the areas such as, occupational therapy, social skills training, and speech and language therapy. Sinai encourages its students to have as

much social and academic interaction as possible with Yavneh students, particularly in areas like prayer, lunch, gym, music and art.

The core curriculum includes English, math, science, social studies, Hebrew language, Jewish laws and customs, and Torah studies.

Sinai recently dedicated its Judaic studies program at Yavneh in memory of former Fair Lawn resident and Yavneh alumnus, Riva Blatt Weinstein, who passed away several years ago.

"For many years, parents in Northern New Jersey have been asking us to bring our program to Bergen County. Our area has become one of the nation's most dynamic Jewish community, yet, full-time Jewish special needs education has been lacking. Students with these requirements have had to travel long distances to be

served," said Laurette Rothwachs, dean of Sinai Special Needs Institute. "Thanks to the leadership and vision of Yavneh, we were able to bring a world-class special needs program to the region. Children can receive their education locally and by being integrated into Yavneh's programming, they can be part of a nurturing Jewish academic environment."

Before opening new program in Paramus, Sinai's closest elementary program was at Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy in Livingston.

Sinai also said that Stacy Katzwer is director and Miriam Nekritz is associate director of the new Yavneh program. Katzwer over-

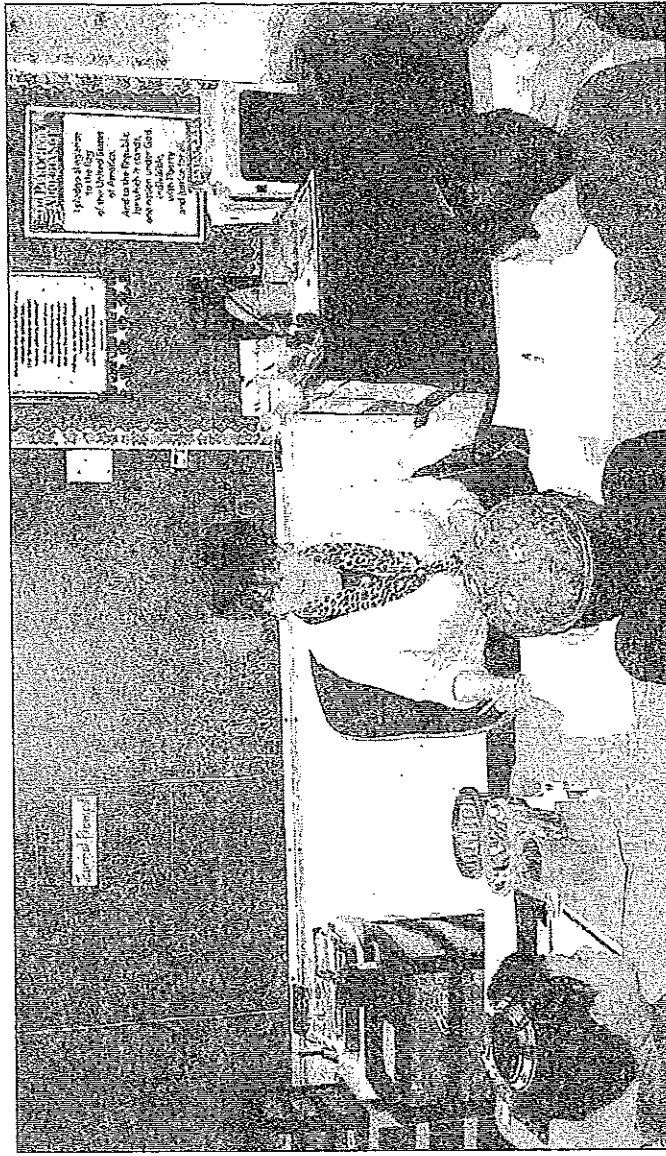
sees overall service and curriculum development and will manage the schools team of special educators and therapists. She will act as the liaison between Sinai and Yavneh, coordinating shared programs and activities. Nekritz will manage various aspects of curriculum development and work closely with both teachers and students to ensure educational goals are reached.

In addition to Katzwer and Nekritz, Sinai currently employs six teachers for the Yavneh program.

In October, Sinai will begin accepting applications for the 2007 school year.

Founded in 1982, Sinai Special

Needs Institute provides for the educational, psychological and emotional needs of Jewish children and young adults with varying types and degrees of learning and developmental disabilities through its elementary school, girls and boys high school programs. Additional programs such as Supervised Home Environment for Learning Independence, self-advocacy, Project 'SELF', life skills, college guidance and vocational training enable students to continue their education as they transition to adulthood. It is the only Jewish day school for special needs students to be accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools.



Sinai special needs institute recently opened a branch in Paramus.

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