



**And the Jewish Educator Awards Go To...**  
**Three Los Angeles Educators Surprised with \$15,000 Awards**  
*Milken Family Foundation honors excellence in the teaching profession  
at BJE-affiliated Jewish day schools*

**SANTA MONICA, Calif. (October 8, 2021)** – Three unsuspecting Los Angeles Jewish day school educators were each surprised with the prestigious [Jewish Educator Award](#) (JEA) and an individual \$15,000 financial prize during outdoor all-school assemblies. The annual awards are presented by the Milken Family Foundation (MFF) in partnership with Builders of Jewish Education (BJE). Cheered on by students and colleagues, the 2021 JEA recipients are:

- **Dr. Natalie Williams**, Principal, YULA High School girls' division
- **Chana Zauderer**, Principal General Studies, Yeshiva Rav Isacsohn
- **Cherie Friedman**, Associate Director, K-8, and Elementary School General Studies, Kadima Day School
- *A fourth recipient will be surprised later this fall.*

"It's not a job, it's a passion," said Cherie Friedman, immediately upon receiving her award presented by MFF Executive Vice President Richard Sandler. "I dedicate this to all my teachers and students who made this possible."

Learning is one of the Jewish tradition's highest values. "By surprising educators with their awards before their entire school communities, we say in a very public way that excellence in education should be rewarded," said Sandler, who has been involved with JEA since the foundation presented the first Awards in 1990. "And by capturing the imagination of students, we hope to encourage our next generation to consider careers in teaching—in particular, to strengthen the vital role of Jewish day schools to develop academic potential and cultivate lifelong respect for the values imparted by their Jewish heritage."

The 2021 Jewish Educator Award recipients will be celebrated, together with their families and community leaders, during an awards luncheon this spring. The inclusive event brings together leaders across LA's Jewish community, from the most secular to the most Orthodox.

The Jewish Educator Awards initiative was established by the [Milken Family Foundation](#), in cooperation with BJE: Builders of Jewish Education, to provide public recognition and unrestricted \$15,000 cash awards to teachers, administrators and other education professionals in the Greater Los Angeles area who have made significant contributions to excellence in BJE-affiliated day schools.

Award recipients are selected by a committee of educators, professional and lay leaders from the Jewish community, according to the following criteria:

- Exceptional educational talent and promise, as demonstrated by outstanding practices in the classroom, school and community.
- Evidence of originality, dedication and capacity for leadership and self-direction.
- Commitment to influencing policies that affect children, their families and schools.
- Strong long-range potential for even greater contribution to children, the profession and society.
- Distinguished achievement in developing innovative educational curricula, programs and/or teaching methods.
- Outstanding ability to instill in students character and self-confidence.
- Outstanding ability to develop Jewish children's understanding of the connections between their religion, their classroom activities, and their activities beyond the classroom.
- Commitment to professional development and excellence and the continuing Judaic and/or secular study necessary for it.
- Personal involvement in responding to the needs of the Jewish and secular communities.
- Criteria for administrators also include outstanding ability to attract, support and motivate committed education professionals.

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