

Meet RRC's Incoming Students - Fall 2016



DONNA SISSELMAN CEPHAS

Donna Sisselman Cephas holds a Master's Degree in Urban Policy Analysis, and in 2008 received a Master's Degree in Jewish Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Since 2009, she has taught workshops and chronicled the personal narratives of a cross section of non-Jewish adults committed to raising Jewish children. At Congregation Rodeph Sholom in New York City, she helped develop and co-facilitate a learning and support group for non-Jewish adults raising Jewish children. Currently, she is co-president of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, a nationwide network of Muslim and Jewish women dedicated to fostering relationships, interfaith learning and social justice initiatives. She also teaches in a family-based religious school program at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in South Orange, N.J. Donna was born and raised in New York City, where she lives with her husband Derrick and daughters Daisy and Sashie.



RACHEL DAVIDSON

Rachel Davidson graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Oberlin College, where she was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Society. She served as the residential assistant in Oberlin's Hebrew Heritage House, while engaging in interfaith work and LGBT leadership. Rachel worked at the Cleveland Domestic Violence and Child Advocacy Center as a Women's Advocate, serving in the shelter for women and families. She later worked at Oberlin's Hillel as a Jewish Student Life Coordinator, engaging a diverse group of students in Jewish life and support students during difficult times. She enjoys creating simple fiber art, cooking delicious meals and taking walks. Rachel is passionate about helping people in crisis and fostering love in the face of trauma.



MIRIAM GERONIMUS

Miriam Geronimus graduated *cum laude* from Princeton in 2012 with a Bachelor of Arts in ecology and evolutionary biology. Her senior thesis detailed the effects of climate change on coral reefs. During college, Miriam spent three summers studying Yiddish language and culture, and it was during one of these summer programs that she met her husband, Itsik Kittila. At Princeton, she founded LGBTQ*J, a student group dedicated to creating space for LGBTQ Jews to explore the intersection of their sexual, gender and religious identities. For this effort, she was awarded the Alberto Santos-Dumont Prize for Innovation, honoring students who create a program with a wide-ranging impact. Miriam has lived in Cleveland, working as an aide for a Middle School student with cerebral palsy. She was active with Kol HaLev, Cleveland's Reconstructionist Community, where she led Torah Studies, taught in the religious school, and coordinated the lay service leader training program. She also was involved in Greater Cleveland Congregations, an interfaith congregation-based community-organizing group. Miriam is passionate about Judaism's ability to foster individual and social healing.



BENJAMIN GREENFIELD

Benjamin Greenfield is from Annapolis, Md. and holds a Bachelor's degree in music performance from Baldwin Wallace University in Ohio. He pursued graduate studies at both the Peabody Institute in music and later Baltimore Hebrew Institute. He was the part-time Cantor and a Hebrew school teacher at Temple B'nai Abraham in Elyria, Ohio, before to Maryland and continues to serve as their high holiday cantor. Benjamin is an active performer in opera, musical theatre, and as an oratorio soloist. He is a jack of all trades, having worked in manufacturing, catering, and organ tuning. He is also a life-long member of Mishkan Torah Synagogue in Greenbelt, Md., where his father is the Cantor and where he met his wife Rachel.



REBECCA HORNSTEIN

Rebecca Hornstein holds a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn.; her honors thesis was titled "When Kashrut is not 'Kosher': The Post Postville Struggle Over Eating, Ethics and American Jewish Identity." Rebecca has lived in the Boston area for the past three years, working as a union organizer with the North Shore Labor Council (AFL-CIO). She came to Boston to take part in the Jewish Organizing Initiative and Network's (JOIN) Jewish Organizing Fellowship where she explored the relationship between Jewish text, tradition, history and social justice. Previously, she has held community organizing internships with Minnesotans for a Fair Economy, a community-faith-labor coalition, and with ISALAH, a faith-based racial and economic Justice organization. Rebecca also served as co-chair of the Macalester Jewish Organization. In her free time she enjoys painting and drawing, cooking, eating, music, yoga, running, and exploring new places.



MIKEY HESS-WEBER

Mikey Hess Webber holds a Bachelor of Arts in archaeology from Hood College. Although trained as an archaeologist, the evolution of her professional life has been based heavily in the mentorship and advocacy of Jewish teens. She was the founding member of the Jewish Student Union at Hood College. After college, she worked for six years as a chapter advisor for BBYO. After moving to Israel, Mikey lived on Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael, working part-time raising koi and goldfish and part-time as a travelling pizza maker for a year and a half. Upon her return to the States, Mikey developed and directed the congregational teen leadership group, TeenConnect, at Oseh Shalom in Laurel, Md. In her free time, Mikey loves nurturing plants, playing tennis, painting monsters and spending time with her cat, Reuben. She is currently learning to play the harmonica.



JONATHAN JACKSON

Jonathan Jackson is a native Bostonian, most recently from Cooperstown, N.Y. Jonathan earned a Bachelor of Arts in religion at Hendrix College, with a focus on the ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible. He later earned a master's degree in world religions at Harvard Divinity School, with a focus on Judaism and Buddhism, and he is working to complete his doctorate in cultural anthropology at the Maxwell School at Syracuse. His work examines Jewish kinship and explores "who counts as a Jew?" after the Holocaust, when LGBT rabbis became possible. Jonathan was a lecturer of world religions at Ithaca College, and he has also taught religion, Islamic studies, anthropology, and LGBT studies at Syracuse University. He taught natural sciences in public schools around Philly and world languages at Girard College. Previously, he served as an HIV counselor and a managing academic editor. Jonathan worked most recently as rabbinic intern to Temple Beth El in Oneonta, N.Y. In his free time, he runs, walks his dog, plays viola and violin, and sings countertenor.



EMET TAUBER

Emet Tauber is from New York, N.Y. where he graduated from SUNY Purchase in 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts in liberal studies. He wrote his thesis on American Jewry in the 19th century, specifically focused on the Civil War. Emet was the religious chair of his Hillel, successfully launching many faith-based programs. Before college, Emet attended the Heschel School where he became the first out transgender student to attend a tri-state area day school. Emet is an advocate in the trans community, serving on the boards of both GLSEN and TSER. He also previously served on the programming committee of the trans health conference. Emet is disabled and uses a wheelchair. He has Ehlers Danlos Syndrome, a rare genetic disease which weakens collagen and causes joint subluxations and dislocations, cardiac problems, autonomic nervous system dysfunction, GI failure and other issues. Emet is a disability advocate and works with organizations like NCIL and ADAPT to better fight for the rights of disabled people. In his free time, Emet enjoys writing, traveling, making YouTube videos, and getting together with family and friends.