

Meet the Purim Ball Honorees... John and Kimberly Hasenberg



As Kimberly and John Hasenberg tell it, their love for JPDS (MILTON) developed not over months or years, but instantaneously. John recalls leaning over to Kimberly at their first Back to School Night back in 2009 and saying, "I never thought my kids would go to a school like this, and I never imagined how happy I'd be about it." Those pinch-me moments became almost commonplace over the nearly ten years that their kids, Ellie ('16) and Benny ('20), were at the school, and continue now even as the Hasenbergs have joined the ranks of alumni families.

Kimberly and John speak movingly about a journey they have shared with the school. They reminisce on Benny's enthusiasm when, as a kindergartener, he and his classmates played

the part of entrepreneurs, bringing the famous Cuties to life. They recall the moment not all that long ago when Ellie stood confidently on the *bimah* at Adas Israel for her bat mitzvah, a culmination of years of learning and developing a strong Jewish identity at the school. And they describe with awe and gratitude how fortunate they are to have joined the school at a time of tremendous growth and success. John describes with a gleam in his eye the feeling of being involved as the school has matured and come into its own – "it's like catching a wave, you've got to be there!"

In their house, Kimberly and John say, it is not a question of whether you get involved, but of how involved you get – and both Kimberly and John have gotten very, very involved. Individually and together, they have played pivotal roles in the school's growth, focusing always on strengthening the school and bringing its mission to life. Early on, they made JPDS-NC their philanthropic priority, and they continue to inspire giving throughout the community. Kimberly volunteered for and then chaired the Purim Ball, and then went on to lead the Annual *Ru'ach* Campaign, achieving the highest parent participation rate since the campaign began. Together, Kimberly and John chaired phase two of the Building Our Future Campaign, which brought the South Campus to life. Over the past six years, John has served in multiple capacities on the Board, including as Treasurer on the Executive Committee, and, currently, as Chair of the Endowment Committee. Asked about the legacy of his board service, John points to the work he did to modify and update the school's investment policies. Indeed, John's championing of this effort has resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars of additional revenue for the school.

In between the major projects, Kimberly and John have also made the time to take on roles that keep them connected to what makes the school so special – the children. Through the years, you could find Kimberly handing out pizza and corn at Birthday Lunch and John coaching the school's basketball team (Go Pandas!) to victories at home and away. Taking on roles both big and small is emblematic of who the Hasenbergs are. Kimberly notes how inspired she has been by other parents, and that she feels a sense of responsibility to carry forward what others have built. For her, the lessons of Pirkei Avot – "If not us, who?" and "If not now, when?" – are a meaningful call to action and a reminder of the school's roots. Now, as alumni parents, she says, "our hearts will always be at this school and we will always be ready to help."

So, what does it mean to Kimberly and John to be a hero? "A hero," they say almost in unison, "inspires and leads by example. A hero has a good soul and uses it to do good."