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# JEWISH EXPONENT

— WHAT IT MEANS TO BE JEWISH IN PHILADELPHIA —

## Local Nonprofit Offers Day School Scholarships

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By: *Eric Berger*



*Students at Politz Hebrew Academy benefit from the scholarship program. Photo by Bryan Schwartzman*

Larry Bell, a father of five from Northeast Philadelphia, works a second job in sales for an energy company to supplement the income from his primary position as a tax collector for the Internal Revenue Service.

If it weren't for financial assistance from Politz Hebrew Academy in the Northeast, where his children attend, and from the Children's Scholarship Fund Philadelphia, Bell said he would be out looking for a third source of income.

"If we didn't have scholarships, it would come right out of our pockets," said Bell, who lives in Rhawnhurst. "It would be much tighter, and we would have to be much more creative."

The secular Children's Scholarship Fund, which describes itself as the largest provider of K-8th grade scholarships in the Philadelphia area, currently serves about 4,100 students. About 50 of those students attend local Jewish day schools, according to director Ina Lipman.

The organization uses a lottery system to provide need-based scholarships. About 40 percent of the funds come from companies donating through state tax credit programs, Lipman said.

"We find the long term success of our organization is real and measurable," Lipman said, citing a study showing that more than 96 percent of those who receive the group's assistance graduate from junior high — and they do so while testing at grade level.

Bell said he has benefited from the organization for seven years and has seen how the scholarships help other families at Politz and at Congregation Ahavas Torah, an Orthodox synagogue in the Northeast to which his family belongs.

With 23 years and counting at the IRS, Bell said he's gotten insight into the finances of people at various socioeconomic levels.

"It's tougher for everybody," he says. "Unless you're a zillionaire, it's a struggle."

**The deadline to apply for assistance from the Children’s Scholarship Fund Philadelphia is March 1. Find the details by visiting: [csfphiladelphia.org](http://csfphiladelphia.org) or calling 215-670-8411.**