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more aware of some ways we can act to improve our departmental programs.

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Weizmann Day's "Math Night" Brings Parents to their Knees

*Jewish Community News
Covina, CA*

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It didn't approach the scale of the Atlanta train yard scene in *Gone with the Wind*, but a visitor entering the long assembly hall a Weizmann Day School in Pasadena on the evening of February 1 would have witnessed the kneeling, sitting or reclining bodies of dozens of children and their parents scattered across the carpeted floor.

It was Weizmann's first annual "Math Night" and everyone was busy, very, very busy counting, measuring, estimating, spinning, stacking, building to the hum of voices and delighted laughter. Weizmann parents were receiving a hands-on demonstration of the activities generated by the school's new math program, and everyone had something to do. "This isn't math as I remember it," one parent remarked as his daughter carefully slipped a tape measure around his head. "It's not just math, Daddy. It's fun." The smiling faces around the room offered this assessment their clear and enthusiastic support.

Approached as a sequenced series of games and involving tasks, each appropriate to the grade level engaged, Weizmann's new math curriculum draws students into the pleasures and challenges of quantitative analysis. This innovative program, pursued in progressive steps from kindergarten through sixth

grade, employs the student's natural curiosity and delight with problem solving to generate the enthusiasm so central to successful learning. In kindergarten, toothpicks and marshmallows become a creative gateway to geometric form. In third grade the length of the big toes and the circumference of the neck give insight into measurement and proportion. In fifth grade estimating games, such as "How many beans in the jar?" and "How many rubber ducks in the frog pond?" illustrate new approaches to volume and spatial relationships.

Progressing from simple activities in the early grades to the more complex skills required by "Top It," a uniquely designed series of card games in the higher grades, students are invited into a process geared toward making "math anxiety" an oddity of the distant past.

On "Math Night" parents were invited to the school to join their children in this process not simply to involve the parents in their children's education—Weizmann parents are well-known for their eager and very active support of the school's mission—but also to give everyone a fun night out learning new ways of looking at traditional studies. By all estimates, from the 80% attendance record to the 100% consumption of the cookies and ice cream provided for dessert, the event was a un-compromised success no matter how you add it up.