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## Jewish day schools participate in Fairchild Challenge



At a launch last year for the Fairchild Challenge are Louise Enea, teacher at Lehrman Community Day School in Miami Beach, Carmen Montoya, director of Curriculum & Communications at Gordon Schools at Beth David, and Tym Bonilla and Nick Hinrichsen of Hillel Community Day School in North Miami Beach. (Submitted photo / September 14, 2010)

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Local Jewish day schools affiliated with The Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education-Miami have entered a challenge this year.

That challenge is the Fairchild Challenge, an annual, standards-based, environmental education outreach program of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in [Coral Gables](#).

"The Fairchild Challenge is extremely beneficial to both students and the faculty," said Nick Hinrichsen, principal for Hillel Community Day School's middle school in

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[North Miami Beach](#) that participated in the Challenge last year. "The challenges that students participate in are interdisciplinary in nature and create wonderful opportunities for faculty to team together and work collegially across different subject disciplines. For example, last year we had math teachers working with English teachers, Art teachers working with science teachers, just to name a few."

Through the Challenge, students research and critically evaluate environmental topics, become more actively engaged citizens, and come to appreciate more fully the beauty and value of nature. The Challenge promotes science literacy, civic engagement, creative expression, and lifelong learning in students and, by extension, in their respective circles of influence since it blends content areas to create activities, projects, and authentic experiences that use the environment as an integrating context for learning.

"I think this will benefit the students because they'll learn that they're part of a community and they're going to see the work of other schools," said Aliza Kadish, a teacher at Jacobson Sinai Academy in North [Miami Beach](#) that's participating in the Challenge for the first time this year. "We're participating with other kids from different walks of life but our goals are all the same — to learn and help the environment and do our part. Together, we can help preserve our environment and live among nature."

Schools earning a minimum number of points, as articulated by Fairchild, will be presented with the Fairchild Challenge Award at an awards ceremony that includes prizes for teachers and cash awards for students. Last year, Hillel's middle school won that award for amassing over 1,000 points.

It was very exciting for Hillel to become a winner of the Fairchild Challenge," Hinrichsen said. "The students and faculty truly appreciate being recognized for all of their hard work and dedication. Last year's success has truly motivated the faculty and the student body and we are all looking forward to participating actively in this year's challenges."

The other [Miami](#)-Dade County Jewish day schools affiliated with CAJE that are participating in the Challenge this year are Beis Chana High School for Girls, Gordon Schools of Beth David, Greenfield Day School, Hochberg Preparatory School, Lehrman Community Day School, Rabbi Alexander S. Gross Hebrew Academy, Temple Beth Am Day School, Toras Emes Elementary School, Toras Emes-Rohr Middle School and Yeshiva Elementary.

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