



## *Temple Israel of South Merrick*

*Max Zaretz*

Hi! My name is Maxwell Zaretz. I am 13 years old and attend Merrick Avenue Middle School (MAMS) in Merrick. I am currently in eighth grade and am enrolled in all honors classes, with plans to attend John F. Kennedy High School next fall. I take my academics very seriously as I know it will serve me well in the future when applying to colleges and pursuing a career. I am the middle of three children and the son of two successful and hardworking doctors. I am very close with my family and am lucky to always have their support and guidance. I am the older brother to a very smart, sassy and beautiful dancer, Sadie, 10 years old. I am also the younger brother to a past Jewish Youth of the Year award winner, Maggie, 19 years old, who is currently attending Ohio State University pursuing her dreams of becoming a veterinarian.

I am a competitive hockey player and spend many days each week practicing and playing hockey. I have been playing hockey since I was 7 years old and joined a travel hockey team at the age of nine. I play hockey for my school district's team, the Bellmore-Merrick Bulldogs, as well as for a travel team. I absolutely love hockey and will continue to play for many years.

I am very involved with music as I play the drums in my school band, at drum lessons, and at really fun rehearsals with the School of Rock. Also, I have performed in NYSSMA for the past three years and will be performing again this year.

Last but definitely not least, I am very committed to my temple and my religion. I have been attending Hebrew school at Temple Israel of South Merrick since I was 3 years old and since last year I have been going to Hebrew high school every Tuesday night, which I plan on continuing to be a part of until my high school graduation. I hope to go to Israel in a few years with my Hebrew class. In November of 2017 I became a Bar Mitzvah and did an awesome job at my service. I made my family, myself and Temple Israel proud standing up on the bima. For my Bar Mitzvah, I did a mitzvah project to help raise money for my synagogue. I felt that, after all Temple Israel has given to my family and me, I wanted to give back. I raised a few thousand dollars and donated the money to rebuild the dairy kitchen at the temple.

I am so glad that Judaism has influenced my life and has brought me so many amazing experiences. Many of my values and much of how I view the world has been shaped by my religion and has made me into the young man I am today. I am very grateful for this incredible honor of being nominated "Jewish Youth of the Year."