

JEVS in the news...

PROGRAMS: Lasko College Prep Program

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# NORTHEAST TIMES

## Preparing for college during COVID

*JEVS Human Services' college preparation program helps students study for the SATs and get ready for college, and the program has only grown in the age of online learning.*



*Jessica Lvov, a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania, was a model student but unsure of her SAT score. Once she got help from JEVS, she was able to get into the school of her dreams.*

Jessica Lvov was a model high school student. She just didn't know it yet.

During her senior year at Central High School, the Bustleton resident was co-editor of the yearbook, volunteered at Jeanes Hospital, was a member of the National Honor Society, tutored fellow students and more. Amidst her activities, she decided she wanted to study biophysics at the University of Pennsylvania. Despite her impressive list of activities, she wasn't confident that her SAT score would be enough to get her in.

When she heard about the Dorothy M. Cohen College Prep Program being offered at her school by JEVS Human Services, she figured signing up would be a great way to boost her score. But she got much more out of the deal than she even expected.

"It forced me to spend time only focusing on the SAT, which I never got the chance to do with my classes and other activities," she said. "It was very valuable for me."

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Eight years in the running, the program began as a typical college prep course, but during the COVID-19 pandemic it evolved into something bigger. Sue Bilksy, a JEVS education consultant who has been with the program from the beginning, said the pandemic allowed the program to grow into a full college preparation course. It now includes everything from helping students fill out a common application, to essay writing, to help applying for financial aid.

"To go from an SAT class where I didn't really get to know the students, to this where I get to know them this well, is so personally rewarding," Bilksy said.

Amidst the pandemic Bilksy said she was able to adapt to make herself available via phone or Zoom at any time, sometimes even helping her students at 10 p.m.

JEVS board member Bob Cohen began the program to give low-income students help as they look to continue their education. Bilksy works with about 20 students each semester.

As for Lvov, she is currently in her freshman year studying neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania, her dream school. She hopes to get into medical school and study to become a dermatologist.

She'll take away not only the help she got on the SATs from the program, but a lifelong supporter in Bilksy.

"She took the hardest curriculum possible and never complained, and always had a smile on her face," Bilksy said.

JEVS is also offering college preparation help for rising Jewish juniors and seniors. The free summer courses will help students prepare for the college application process and the SAT and/or ACT. Contact [LaskoCollege@JEVS.org](mailto:LaskoCollege@JEVS.org) for more details.