

Welcome to the Gee-Burko Family!

Mutual friends introduced Jessica and Alex Gee-Burko at a party almost 15 years ago. Jessica, a visual artist, had moved to Boston in 1999 following graduate school in upstate New York, because of the Boston area's strong arts community. Alex, a native of Brookline, also had an artistic background; he had a business repairing and refurbishing vintage and antique furniture. The party was a success by the most important standard. Alex and Jessica married ten years ago. They had two children: Zachary, now six-and-a-half years old, and Naomi, now four years old. Two years ago, they moved to Roslindale. After "auditioning" several synagogues and trying out HBT at several Shakin' Shabbats, they joined HBT last fall. Another friend and fellow artist, member Martha Chason-Sokol, had urged them to look into HBT, as had others.

Alex now supervises a laboratory at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, where he has worked since 2005. He is particularly interested in experimental work the laboratory is doing on using sound waves, rather than medicine, to treat cancers. He still restores furniture a bit on the side and looks forward to doing it more often. Jessica creates mixed media art in her South End studio three days a week. Her work can be seen in exhibitions throughout New England and on her website, [jessicaburko.com](http://jessicaburko.com). In addition, Jessica mentors other artists and leads workshops in arts marketing through Mass MoCa, the Danforth Museum, and others. (In fact, Martha and Jessica met when Martha attended one of those workshops.) Jessica developed expertise in marketing while she was honing her artistic skills—first studying photography at the Rhode Island School of Design, and later managing the photography gallery at Rochester Institute of Technology. After moving to Boston she worked in galleries and directed the college gallery at Stonehill College. Jessica enjoys the variety of her braided careers.

Like their parents, Zachary, a K2 student at the Philbrick School in Roslindale, and Naomi, a preschooler at Hollow Reed in Jamaica Plain, are creative people with a variety of interests. They love helping in the family's garden— says Jessica, "the kids have the most fun picking and eating the carrots." Zachary and his dad recently learned how to ride bicycles, and the family looks forward to getting Naomi on a bike this summer too, and riding along the Charles River. Zachary and Naomi both love to read. (Naomi began reading before her fourth birthday.) Zachary loves to build complicated structures and Naomi has a fertile imagination which leads her to invent songs and stories. Both parents call their children creative and energetic. "They love each other and play together very well", says Jessica. "They're terrific kids, very smart." Jessica and Alex hope that Zachary, and possibly Naomi, will join the Chaverim School this fall.

The Gee-Burkos were initially drawn to Temple Hillel B'nai Torah because, even though they are a family with a blended heritage (Alex is Chinese and not Jewish), they felt comfortable with everyone they met at Shakin' Shabbats. They found Reconstructionism very appealing in general. As members, they continue to

appreciate the warmth, inclusiveness, and diversity of the HBT community, as well as the unexpected pleasure of seeing families they know at just about every HBT event they attend. HBT's welcome was exemplified for them last Purim when neighbor Keren Sammett dropped off a Shalech Manes plate to the Gee-Burko's home after the temple's celebration, which they hadn't been able to attend. "It was the best hamentaschen of the season!" says Jessica.

HBT is honored to have been chosen by the Gee-Burkos. Welcome!