

PRESS RELEASE

STUDENTS STUDY AFGHANISTAN'S EMERGING HUMAN RIGHTS ON RAOUL WALLENBERG DAY

January 15, 2008 - Raoul Wallenberg Day, a day set aside by the government of Canada to honour the legacy of the Swedish diplomat who saved over 100,000 Jewish lives during the Holocaust, is commemorated annually in Winnipeg. The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, in conjunction with Gray Academy of Jewish Education organizes an annual high school student conference centered on issues of human rights. This year's conference has as its theme "**Afghanistan – Emerging Rights**".

We hope that by exposing students to the history and challenges facing the country, they will gain a better understanding of the human rights issues involved. Moreover, Raoul Wallenberg demonstrated how one person can make a difference. With information at their finger tips, students will be empowered to develop action plans to help those in need in an area of the world where turmoil and human rights abuses have prevailed for so long.

A number of noted speakers will highlight Raoul Wallenberg Day: (see schedule p. 2):

- **Captain D.A. Muralt**, CD (17 wing) who was part of Canada's mission in Afghanistan from July 2006 to March 2007;
- **Alex Dobrota**, Globe and Mail journalist who was embedded with the troops in Kandahar for 3 weeks last summer;
- **Dr. Wassay Niazi** who was forced to leave Afghanistan by the Taliban;
- **Ariana Yaftali**, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, will discuss the challenges faced by Afghans in adapting to life in Manitoba
- **Meena Niazi**, currently at the U of M, who will talk about growing up in Afghanistan, its people, culture and hopes for the future
- **Daniel Ashrafi**, expert on security and terrorism, who will talk about terrorism, the Taliban and Afghanistan
- **Dr. Richard Gordon**, U of Manitoba on Manitoba-Afghanistan medical projects

During the closing session of the conference, students will honour the fallen soldiers from CFB Shilo and present a tribute to the Canadian government for its involvement in rebuilding Afghanistan.

For information contact:

Shelley Faintuch, Director Community Relations
477-7423 or sfaintuch@aspercampus.mb.ca

or

Lisa Abram, Director of Advancement, Gray Academy of Jewish Education
477-7514 or labram@aspercampus.mb.ca

Raoul Wallenberg Day Thursday, January 17, 2008

Conference Schedule

- 9:00 Welcome/Opening Remarks – Berney Theatre
Film Presentation: *Afghanistan Today* (photos courtesy of Alex Dobrota)
Dr. Ruth Ashrafi, Director of Judaic Studies, Gray Academy of Jewish Education
Shelley Faintuch, Community Relations Director, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg
- 9:15 Keynote Address: Canada's Mission in Afghanistan – Berney Theatre
Captain D.A. (Dave) Muralt CD (17 Wing)
- 10:15 "A day in the life of a Canadian soldier" – Capt. Muralt – Berney Theatre
- 11:00 *Breakout Session #1 (Rooms TBA)
- 11:45 Lunch Break
- 1:00 *Breakout session # 2 (Rooms TBA)
- 1:45 *Breakout Session #3 (Rooms TBA)
- 2:45 Closing Plenary - Berney Theatre
- Student Tribute to Canada - Student Steering Committee
 - Response: The Hon. Joy Smith, MP, Manitoba Conservative Caucus Chair
 - Student Reporting Sessions – Gray Academy Students
 - In Memory of Fallen Soldiers – film by Jorel Minuk (Grade 12)
 - Closing Remarks – Shelley Faintuch

*Meant to provide specific insights, the breakout Sessions are 40 minute workshops facilitated by the seven invited speakers to discuss specific issues with smaller groups of students. The Steering Committee will use the session reports to formulate plans of action for student projects to help in Afghanistan.

Student Steering Committee:

Tali Aziza (Grade 12)
Zev Faintuch (Grade 10)
David Rubinfeld (Grade 12)
Michael Schwartz (Grade 12)

Adult Advisory Committee:

Dr. Ruth Ashrafi, Gray Academy of Jewish Education
Shelley Faintuch, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg