

PRESS RELEASE

GRAY ACADEMY HITS A HOME RUN WITH A 'THREE-PEAT' WINNING A THIRD AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

September 3, 2008 - Rory Paul, Head of School and CEO for Gray Academy of Jewish Education and Anita Wortzman, President, Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education are pleased to announce that Sherry Wolfe-Elazar is the recent recipient of the prestigious Jewish Education Service of North America Inc.'s (JESNA) ninth annual national **Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards for Excellence in Jewish Education**. Sherry Wolfe-Elazar is a Judaic Studies teacher for Grades 5 & 6.

The Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards for Excellence in Jewish Education are designed to recognize teachers in communities across North America that make a commitment and demonstrate exceptional achievement in the field of Jewish education. The awards honour outstanding classroom-based teachers in formal Jewish educational settings (early childhood through Grade 12).

Gray Academy has a strong history of winning this award for the last three consecutive years starting with teachers Rochelle Gamliel and Joyce Kerr who were the honoured recipients in 2006, along with award-winning teachers Anat Ekhoiz and Carol Leszcz in 2007. In acknowledging this recent recognition, Ms. Binder, Vice-Principal, (who received the award in 2001) says "Sherry is an extremely dedicated educator who came to Gray Academy as a Judaic Studies teacher with a wealth of knowledge. She is a gifted teacher with many talents including her artistic and music ability that is infused into her teaching."

In nominating Sherry Wolfe-Elazar, Lori Binder says that "Sherry is dedicated to her career as a Judaic Studies teacher and puts countless energy and love into everything she does. She has come forward to lead many extra-curricular programming in the school, including most recently, co-chairing the Yom Ha'atzmaut committee celebrating Israel's 60th. Sherry is also very instrumental in many experiential educational programs, including the Grade 6 Leadership Shabbaton at Gray Academy, and has recognized the importance of developing leadership in students as they conclude elementary school. Students not only learn about leadership in her program, they find models for leadership in Jewish history and act upon it. This year, this culminated in a *Tzedakah* (charity) initiative to collect items to donate to two community camps for those unable to afford equipment for summer camp."

On personal reflection, Sherry notes that "for every lesson plan and every program that I create, teach or facilitate, I have one overall goal: Jewish Continuity. My passion is making Judaism relevant to young people. It is my daily challenge to look at a prayer, a piece of text from the Torah or Mishna or an aspect of a Jewish Holiday or ritual and ask myself: How can I make this meaningful and a desired part of my students' life? I feel that it is my role to impart not only knowledge but relevance to their Jewish souls. I hope

that I nurture a love of learning in my classroom where questions are rewarded and thinking divergently and 'outside the box' is encouraged.”

Ms. Wolfe-Elazar will be receiving her award in New York City in fall 2008.

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For further information, please contact:

Lisa Abram
Director of Advancement
Gray Academy of Jewish Education
(204) 477-7514
labram@grayacademy.ca