

PRESS RELEASE

GRAY ACADEMY RECEIVES TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR THE 4TH STRAIGHT YEAR

September 14, 2009 - Rory Paul, Head of School and CEO for Gray Academy of Jewish Education and Marshall Stitz, President, Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education are pleased to announce that Michal Lavy is the recent recipient of the prestigious Jewish Education Service of North America Inc.'s (JESNA) tenth annual national **Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards for Excellence in Jewish Education**. Mrs. Lavy is a high school Judaic Studies teacher specializing in Hebrew language acquisition.

Gray Academy has a strong history of winning this award for the last four consecutive years. Ms. Binder, Vice-Principal, says "Michal deserves recognition for teaching 25 years worth of students and more importantly imparting a love of learning and proficiency in Hebrew to the youth of Winnipeg's Jewish community."

In nominating Michal Lavy, Lori Binder says that she "helped strengthen the Hebrew curriculum at Gray Academy of Jewish Education by taking on the challenge of integrating the NETA Hebrew program into our school curriculum. This process took the careful leadership of a master teacher and someone who always strives for the best for her students. Looking back on the past 5 years, we can measure the growth in Hebrew language learning in our students and the NETA program certainly has allowed our students to strengthen their skills."

On personal reflection, Michal notes that "when I came to Canada and was offered a position at the Jewish high school, I was ready for the challenge. I taught *Tanach*, Hebrew and Jewish history. It was at that time that I came to the realization that the task of the teacher is two-fold: to impart academic knowledge to one's students and also to provide them with opportunities for self-discovery and personal growth. Teaching a child means teaching the person in its entirety. On one hand, my attempt is to tap into the mind of the student, and at the same time to reach his/her soul. It is my desire and hope, that each student knows the narrative of the Jewish people so they can identify with it and feel proud of their heritage and have a desire to be part of this chain. This goal can be achieved only when the teacher opens up and shares of oneself with their students. ***In my opinion, the teacher of Jewish education becomes the crucial link in ensuring Jewish continuity.***"

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).

Mrs. Lavy will be receiving her award in Washington, D.C. in fall 2009.

For further information, please contact:

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