

Gray Academy

OF JEWISH EDUCATION



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ELEMENTARY STUDENTS SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS IN MONTHLY JEWISH PUBLICATION

October 30, 2006 – Joyce Kerr, Vice-Principal, Gray Academy of Jewish Education, is proud to announce that elementary students are featured in the topical Jewish magazine called BabagaNewz, placing the school at the forefront of published newsworthy items for Jewish children across North America.

BabagaNewz is a monthly classroom magazine for grades 4-7 that accurately and thoughtfully analyzes major news stories, religious holidays, cultural events and youth trends that play an important part in our children's lives. Each issue of BabagaNewz is organized around a specific Jewish value.

The monthly *Torah Page*, an illustrated commentary of a classic Jewish text that helps readers personalize the month's theme, presents different verses to readers and invites schools to share their thoughts about its meaning. In the current issue, the text posed to students is "*Open for me the gates of justice*" (Psalms 118:19).

In the October issue, the verse: "*Don't judge people until you've been in their place*" (Pirkei Avot 2:5) was featured, and the magazine received and accepted editorial responses from three Gray Academy students.

Joyce Kerr would like to acknowledge the incredible efforts of Judaic Studies teacher Judi Shuster who spearheaded each student's submission to the magazine.

Baillie Shuster, grade 6, wrote: "Yesterday, a new girl in my class came to school wearing a babyish sweater. My friend said to me, 'What a freak!' I replied, 'What if she can't afford anything nice?' Because I wanted to experience what the new girl felt when

she judged harshly, I came to school the next day wearing a sweater similar to the one she wore. I learned an **important lesson**: Never judge someone before you have worn the ugly sweater yourself.”

Ariel Melamedoff, grade 6, wrote: “This quote teaches us to avoid judging people until we really understand them. For example, don’t think that South Americans have immigrated illegally or that they are drug dealers. **Nobody likes to be stereotyped**. Everyone should look at everyone else as an individual.”

Rachel Jones, grade 6, submitted: “I have a friend who has a learning disability, and people misjudge her because of her appearance and the way she thinks. She feels humiliated almost every day because people stare at and talk about her. Before you hurt anyone with misjudgments, **stop and think**.”

Also in the ***Kid Picks*** section of the magazine, Ariel Melamedoff’s review of the book, “Rebecca,” by Carol Matas was chosen for the November issue. “I like this book because it shows how anti-Semitism has been around for a very long time and how hard it is to adapt to a new place. I recommend this book because the content is very Jewish, and it explains some of the hardships Jewish people faced in Manitoba, Canada, in 1912.”

“We are very proud of our ‘published authors’ from last year’s grade 6 class. Their ideas represent the passionate discussions and meaningful activities about current events in the Jewish world that BabagaNewz has infused into our curriculum,” says Sherry Wolfe-Elazar, Judaic Studies teacher for grades 5 and 6.

BabagaNewz is initiated and funded by The Avi Chai Foundation and published in partnership with Jewish Family & Life.

Michael Benarroch, President of The Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education, congratulates Baillie Shuster, Rachel Jones and Ariel Melamedoff on their winning entries.

Gray Academy of Jewish Education is a JK-Grade 12 university preparatory school that places equal value on Jewish and General academic programs, and provides opportunities to nurture the emotional well-being and spiritual development of all students.

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