

# PRESS RELEASE

## STUDENT COUNCIL RAISES AWARENESS AND FUNDS FOR DIVERSE HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECTS

January 18, 2007 - Students participated in a program to learn about human rights abuses in Sub-Saharan Africa at Gray Academy of Jewish Education, along with students in Grades 9-12 from Balmoral Hall and Southeast Collegiate who participated in workshops for the day.

Yesterday, the **Jewish Federation of Winnipeg** and **Gray Academy of Jewish Education** developed a day-long conference that had a double objective: to bring awareness to students about human rights issues and to empower students to undertake initiatives and action plans.

Student Council at Gray Academy produced four student-led workshops to develop unique action plans and/or projects to respond to human rights issues in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Darfur: Information Networking; Bring Them Home; Partnership with an African School/Institution; and Activism and Advocacy

Over 200 students listened to guest speakers and learned from facilitators from Manitoba Somali Association, African Canadian Culture Heritage Centre (Sudan and Sierra Leone respectively), African Students Association, University of Winnipeg (Sudan), International African Child Relief and Peace Foundation of Canada (Congo) and University of Manitoba Students' Union (Rwanda).

In addition, participating students raised funds for a number of important projects:

1. **"Bring Them Home" Campaign** – students can purchase dog tags to bring awareness to the three Israeli soldiers who were kidnapped this summer
2. **Canadian Museum for Human Rights** – students can support the museum to be built in Winnipeg by buying a "star"
3. **The Stephen Lewis Foundation** – donations will be given to the organization run by the former U.N. Special Envoy to AIDS in Africa whose focus is to help ease the pain of HIV/AIDS in Africa at the grassroots level.
4. **"Little Travellers"** – spearheaded by the World Issues class at Gray Academy, students can support Ilan Schwartz (currently in second year medicine at University of Manitoba) with the purchase of miniature handmade dolls made by women in South Africa. All monies raised goes to the Hillcrest AIDS Centre.
5. **AIDS Research** – donations go to the Wilt Foundation who funds University of Manitoba graduate students in medicine to conduct AIDS research in Africa.

"I was very impressed with this outpouring of support for human rights. The entire day was spent learning about human rights issues and how we can solve them. As a result, we are beginning several initiatives in the school and the fact we raised \$485.80 for human rights is really a great achievement. As we learned yesterday, we can truly make a difference!" student coordinator Eyal Kraut stated today.

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.

Accredited by the Canadian Educational Standards Institute (CESI), Gray Academy is one of three schools in Winnipeg to receive this distinctive honour.

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