

Ruach Reflections

April, 2007

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Nisan/Iyar 5767

Upcoming Events

April 11	First Day of School P2K Students to Israel
April 12	S3 - Career Symposium
April 13	Reports go Home
April 16	Yom Hashoah Service
April 17	Grade 9 Booster Shots
April 18	Rosh Chodesh Iyar
April 19 & 20	Parent-Teacher Interviews
April 24	Yom Hazikaron Service JW Song Festival
April 25	Yom Ha-Atzmaut School Activities
April 26	Junior Provincial Debating Tournament
April 26 & 27	Disability Awareness Workshop

Haggigat Ha-Torah

On February 22, the annual celebration of Grade two students receiving their own personal Torah is always met with anticipation, jubilation and much celebration. Learning the 7-days of creation of the world involves learning songs, dances and incorporating artwork into the event.

Morah Rachelle says "This time of year is special for the students as they put a lot of work into preparing for this milestone in their young lives. They have a deeper understanding of what it means to be Jewish."

"The important thing about Chaggigat Ha'Torah was my partner Cari because I liked saying my part with her! I love the Torah! My family came. I love all the songs!" - Daniel,

"The important thing about Chaggigat Ha'Torah is that we all got to be in dances. I was in Orach Or. The best thing about my dance was the skipping part. I liked getting my Torah." - Maya

Come celebrate Haggigat Ha-Siddur in May with us with the Grade one students!

Urinetown: The Musical

It was a magical moment when Bobby Strong and Hope Cladwell finally kissed and proclaimed their undying love for each other amidst an uprising, as bad boss Caldwell B. Cladwell bribed city officials and police while insisting on a fee hike, forcing the good citizens to pay for the privilege to pee!



Urinetown: The Musical is part West Side Story, part Les Miserables and part Fiddler on the Roof. But the best part of all was watching the senior students of Gray Academy sing, dance and act for four straight nights at the Franco Manitobain Cultural Centre under the direction of music teacher Miriam Bronstein.

In reading bios of the cast, you get the impression our student body is not only very talented, but hard working after school hours in vocal training and dance and music lessons to ready themselves for the world stage. In fact, some students are also first time performers who have always had a burning desire to hit the stage.

Miriam Bronstein along with fellow teachers Judy Doctoroff and Brenda Borzykowski worked hard for six months behind the scenes, with the support of teachers, parents and students who sold ad space, put the programme book together, built sets, made costumes and ensured all was running on time and on budget.



Enhanced Learning Opportunities

Model U.N. Program

The students had a fabulous time. I had three ask if they could go again next year, so that shows what kind of a success it was. Unfortunately we did not win any awards, but we are looking to set up a mentorship of former delegates to help new delegates learn the ropes. We managed to do as much touring as possible, including a new tour to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. We had a late night visit to the Empire State Building, as well as Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum. There were many diverse activities for the students. We also attended a brief meeting after we toured the U.N. with Sybil Kessler, who is the Director of United Nations Affairs for B'nai B'rith International where she conducts advocacy and programming in order to advance B'nai B'rith policy on UN matters such as combating anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism at the UN, and promoting human rights and humanitarian affairs.

- Judy Doctoroff, Teacher Supervisor

P.A.R.T.Y Program (Prevent Alcohol Related Trauma in Youth)

The P.A.R.T.Y program was an extremely influential and emotional experience for me. The nurse who did the presentation explaining a personal story of a tragic death was my favourite part. She explained it in a way that touched my emotions and made it into reality. This presentation particularly impacted me a powerful way. The paramedic also informed the student body. The people who had experienced drunk-driving accidents that came to talk to us were so positive about life and went through such hardships. This made me see how I would never want anything to happen to myself, so I should be as careful as possible and never think it can't happen to me. This was a well organized and eye opening program, which was extremely educational.

- Haley Rabb (Grade 9 student)

Youth Detention Centre

When we went across to the youth center, I was very excited for what we would be seeing. As the trials began, I could not believe the crimes these teenagers committed! They were convicted of murder, theft and breaking curfews. I cannot believe how someone could commit a terrible crime like this, especially someone around my age.

Overall, I think the experience was meaningful and that I learned a lot from sitting and watching the trials. I hope more students have the experience that I had and that they enjoy the experience and learn just as much as I did.

- Brittany Kessler (Grade 9 student)

Junior Kindergarten

Welcome to Junior Kindergarten! With over forty years combined teaching experience, Morah Carol, Morah Simone and Morah Johanna offer children a very busy and packed daily experience.



This learning experience occurs in a fun and energetic environment so when students are playing, experimenting, completing a craft or separating beads they never know they are constantly learning and preparing for Kindergarten!

A typical day begins with a Boker Tov and then students are informed of morning or afternoon activities; the ever important calendar is updated along with several simple math activities (counting numbers, number recognition, pattern sequencing); a review occurs of the craft activity for the day; and the teachers introduce new centers and activities.



As part of the curriculum, students also recite Tfillah, celebrate Shabbat and Havdallah services, and participate in French, Hebrew, Music, Gym, Computers, Art and Drama, and Library.

To sum it all up, Morah Carol says "JK is fabulous!"

An Interview with the Special Needs Department: Featuring Debra Nachtigall

There is something special about the Special Needs department at the school, and the source of that warm feeling comes in part from talking to Debra Nachtigall, Special Education Resource Teacher. Her voice is calm and steady but her eyes sparkle when she talks about the students under her supervision.

Presently there are seventeen students in the program, which has a number of Special Needs Educational Assistants and Educational Assistants who provide support to the students every day.

What is unique about the Special Needs program is its integration into the curriculum of the school and its emphasis on *menschlakeit*. On any given day, one can see the bonding between participating students with their fellow students and the teachers. Mrs. Nachtigall states that every effort is made to incorporate a feeling of inclusiveness at the school.

"It makes everyone feel accepted, not just the people in the Special Needs program," Mrs. Nachtigall notes. She further emphasizes the incredible support of the Administration which is crucial, and the only way to make an inclusive program work.

"I'm thrilled to be at Gray Academy. Everything I did before coming here was to prepare myself for this role. I feel very much at home here!", Mrs. Nachtigall beams. You can see that sparkle again in her eyes!

Special Guests

On February 27, Heather Stefanson, MLA for Tuxedo kept a class of Kindergarten students entranced as she read to them in the library. This event followed a month of "I Love to read" activities which included many guest readers, art projects, and a "Read My Shirt" day when almost everyone at the school wore a "readable" T Shirt. We are also proud of Matthew Gunn who read on CITY TV's breakfast program on February 19.



Go Raiders Go!

Basketball Season

The **Grade 7 PTAA** Friendship tournaments provided the participants with an excellent introductory experience. The girls and boys played on three separate dates and locations and allowed our teams to compete against a variety of opponents.

The Grade 9 boys played at Westdale Jr. High on March 12th for the S1 boys' B pool championship. Our boys prevailed over their hosts, 79-63, to win!

The Grade 8 girls' team played Westdale on March 7th in the B pool consolation game which would assure the winner 3rd place in the B league. The game went down to the wire with our girls losing a heart-breaker, 31-30.

The Varsity girls defeated University of Winnipeg 46-14 finishing the year with a 18-4 record.

Curling

The curling team of Justin Lasker, Steven Baker, Joey Frohlinger and Jonathan Ripstein won the Zone 12 Crosstown Conference Championship and qualified for the Provincials. Mazel Tov!

Chesed Corner

Passover Assistance

"Mois Chitim" is defined as "Wheat Money", which traditionally means a collection made before Passover to ensure a supply of flour for unleavened bread (matzah) for the needy. This is distributed to families who have requested the need for help from **Jewish Child and Family Service (JCFS)** to meet the financial burden of purchasing Passover goods. Students in Morah Carol's Junior Kindergarten class talk about the cooperative nature of helping people in the community, and learn the fundamentals of *chesed*.

Dr. Lloyd Axworthy

On Tuesday, March 6, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy spoke to Grade 7, 9, and 11 students about the importance of social activism in our city and the world. Dr. Axworthy has led many successful campaigns in support of human rights, such as the Ottawa Treaty which the Grade 7's studied this year.

Our school supports and encourages students to be involved in the community, and throughout the year there are many opportunities for them to hear first-hand from individuals who have made an impact in the world. In fact, the Grade 9 students will soon travel to Washington to visit the Holocaust Memorial and other human rights related monuments.

- Heidi Crowley, Social Studies Teacher



Extracurricular Activities

Theatre Arts 2006/07

Senior students in the Theatre Arts program will be performing *Passacaglia* on Thursday April 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the Berney Theatre. Admission is free.

Provincial Canadian Chess Challenge

The Manitoba provincial chess tournament was held at the University of Winnipeg on Sunday March 18. Two Gray Academy students, who qualified at an earlier regional tournament, faced strong competition. Ariel Glikman tied for 5th in grade three with 2.5 points and was only half a point out of third place. Noah Lieberman was in one of the most competitive grades at the provincials this year. He finished 12th in grade two with 1.5 points. Mazel Tov to Ariel and Noah for being excellent competitors as they played in their first provincial tournament.

Debating & Public Speaking

Canadian National Debate Championship - Cara Katz and Shira Lerner competed in the Canadian National Debate Championships held at Upper Canada College, Toronto from March 1 to 3. They placed 8th as team. There were 6 teams from each province, except PEI and New Brunswick, who competed against each other for six rounds. After the 6 rounds, the 8 top teams competed for the title as Canadian Champion. The final 8 teams consisted of three from Ontario, two from Quebec and one team each from Manitoba, B.C. and Nova Scotia. Shira and Cara were the Manitoba team.

Junior Provincial Debate Championship at Balmoral Hall on March 8 had all our 7 competitors placed in the top 12 individuals: 3rd place team - Josh Donen and Zev Ripstein; 4th place team - Blake Lerner and Jonah Brown; 5th place team - Avi Stoller and Yavniel Field. Josh Donen will go on to the Nationals in Montreal May 9 -11.

At the Senior Provincial Debate Championship on March 13, the team of Josh Fineblit and Jonathan Ripstein came in 2nd place. For individual results: Josh Fineblit (2nd place: Silver Medalist); Jessica Donen (5th place); and Jonathan Ripstein (9th place). Josh Fineblit will compete at the National Debate Seminar in Ottawa in April, and Jessica Donen will compete at the National Seminar in Vancouver in November.

Did you Know?

Mazel Tov to Science and Math Department Head Jamie Kagan and wife Kori on the birth of their daughter, Talia Wynne, 7 lbs, 14 ozs. Big Brother Dylan is thrilled!

Congratulations to Grade 8 student Jonathan Pateron for winning best costume in high school for Purim.

Community Announcements!

ALUMNI SHABBAT SERVICE

This special Shabbat service for family and friends will take place **Saturday March 31**, 9:00 a.m., Gray Academy of Jewish Education, Spiritual Space, Room 232, with a Kiddush following the service. If you would like to participate in this egalitarian service, please call Steven Hyman at (204) 589-9007.

ANNUAL COMMUNITY PESACH SEDER

Rady JCC and the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg are pleased to present the Annual Community Pesach Seder on **Tuesday, April 3rd** at 6:30 pm at Congregation Etz Chayim, 123 Matheson Ave. E. This year's Seder will be lead by Chazzan Daniel Markus. For tickets call Rady JCC at 477-7510 or on-line at www.radyjcc.com - click on Ticket Central.

JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

The Winnipeg International Jewish Film Festival presented by The Asper Foundation Performances and Rady Jewish Community Centre returns for another extraordinary program of award-winning and highly acclaimed films from **March 21 to April 1** at the Berney Theatre. The festival will once again screen compelling features and moving documentaries. For information please call the Rady JCC at 477-7510 or visit www.radyjcc.com -Click on Ticket Central.

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