

Ruach Reflections

November 2008

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Cheshvan-Kislev 5769

Important Dates

November 5	Alumni Meeting @ 7 pm
November 6	Gr. 12 Israel Trip/Grad Meeting- 7pm
November 7	First Early Dismissal @ 2:30 pm
November 10	Remembrance Day & Kristallnacht Service
November 11	Remembrance Day - No School
Nov.14-16	Gr. 8/9 Spirit Weekend
November 17	Disability Awareness Week
November 18	Board AGM Meeting @ 7pm
November 20	Grad Pictures
November 20	Gr. 9 Washington Meeting @ 7pm
November 21	Reports Go Home
November 25	PAC Meeting @ 7:30 pm
Nov.26-27	Parent/Teacher Conferences
November 28	No School/SAG

On Rosh Hashanah, Google and Terry Fox

Google is turning 10 years old, and the owners have thought up a special birthday present: Project 10¹⁰⁰. They have issued a contest for big ideas that make this world a better place. The winners will be the five ideas that help as many people as possible. Each winner will receive a prize of \$ 10,000,000 to make his or her idea happen. This is a great way to change the world, and a great way to celebrate Google's tenth anniversary. For more details, go to www.google.com.

What is the connection with Rosh Hashanah? According to Judaism, Adam was created on Rosh Hashanah. It is the day on which we celebrate the birthday of the world. Just like on a regular birthday, we have a party and we should think of a present that we can bring. We want it to be something meaningful, something that will be valued and will make a contribution.

In order to find the right present for the special festival of Rosh Hashanah, each of us should think how he or she can contribute to making this world a better place. We can focus on our own lives: one habit that we will try to develop next year, one new cause that we will work for, one new mitzvah that we will do; or we can focus on the world at large: we may even enter the Google contest. Large or small, each one of these will

make this world a better place, each one will be a meaningful present.

Don't think that we can't change our habits or that it is beyond us to change the world. Especially today, on Terry Fox Day, we are reminded of the vision and determination of a terminally ill man with only one leg, who changed the lives of many people.

The Hebrew word shanah comes from the root *leshanot*. This root has two meanings: 1. to repeat, 2. to change. In the new year, there will be things that are similar to the previous year, but we also have an opportunity for change. To drop unhealthy and unconstructive habits, and to undertake new plans and new patterns of behaviour that will change our private world and the world at large. I wish everyone a shanah tova!

- Dr. Ruth Ashrafi, Director of Judaic Studies

Terry Fox Run

On September 26, students in JK-12 participated in the Terry Fox Walk/Run. Grades 5 and 6 students joined the high school designated walk/run route, and students in K-4 walked together with JK students meeting them near the end of their walk and escorting them back to the school. Everyone had a great time! All tzedakah collected on this day was given to the Terry Fox Foundation.





Celebrating our Local Heroes

On September 28, Grade 7 student Noah Palansky took part in CancerCare's **Challenge for Life 20 km Walk** to help raise money for cancer. He proudly joined family and friends on a team called S.O.S. (Save our Sisters), and along with thousands of other participants took part in a city-wide event that the city embraced with warmth. With sheer determination and a huge heart, Noah knocked on doors and approached as many people as he could.

His bravado, leadership and courage led him to not only raise an astounding \$13,876, but he captured the attention of an entire city where people read about him in the Winnipeg Sun and Winnipeg Free Press. When the walk was over, Noah ranked 4th highest single fundraiser, and the S.O.S. team ranked second out of the top 10 teams.



"I am taking the Challenge for Life with my 2 Aunties (Cindy & Brenda) to raise money to help all the people who have been faced with the battle of cancer. My mom, Naomi, was diagnosed with cancer within the last year and is battling courageously. I'm taking the CancerCare Manitoba Challenge for Life. I've made the commitment to raise money for CancerCare Manitoba AND make fundamental life changes to reduce my risk of cancer," Noah wrote on his Walker web page.

Noah also received an award and certificate for raising the most money in the "Under 16" category.

To join next year's June 2009 walk, go to the website: www.challengeforlife.ca for more details on how you can make a difference.

Congratulations Noah! The world needs more heroes like you!! And we celebrate your monumental achievement with admiration and awe! Kol Hakavod!

A *Continued* Interview with Dr. Ruth Ashrafi, Director of Judaic Studies

In our last issue, we talked to Dr. Ruth Ashrafi about the latest changes to the Judaic Studies curriculum for Grades JK-6, with the promise of covering all the exciting additions and changes to Grades 7-12 in this issue.



In Grade 7, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah course has undergone a name change to better reflect the curriculum being taught and is now called "Explorations in Judaism."

We are also pleased to announce that a new Judaic elective course is being offered this year to Grade 9 and 10 students: an introductory Yiddish course that focuses on an introduction to the Yiddish language, culture and the great books of Yiddish literature.

In Grade 10, our school is proud to have been chosen by RAVSAK (the North American Jewish Community Day School Network) as a pilot school for a new program called **ROPE** (Roots of Philanthropy Education) that focuses on Philanthropy, and will be included in our current Grade 10 *Gemilut Chasadim* course.

And for Grades 11-12 students, we are currently working on an enhanced program for the Arab/Israeli Conflict elective course. In addition to explaining the historical background of the Arab/Israeli conflict, this course also includes a component on Israel Advocacy which will give our students adequate tools to respond to hostile remarks about Israel, which they may encounter on University and College campuses. This course will take place utilizing the High School curriculum created by the **David Project** that is used in more than 60 Jewish High Schools in North America.

"We want our graduates to be well informed and sophisticated Jews who can communicate confidently with people from other backgrounds," said Dr. Ashrafi.

We couldn't agree more!



High Holiday Celebrations



On September 26, students in Grade 4 led a Rosh Hashanah assembly for students in JK and Kindergarten with parents and grandparents in attendance. The shofar was blown in the morning by our very own Shlomo Benarroch and in the afternoon by Grade 4 student Geoffrey Pitch.



On October 8, students in Grade 5 took part in hosting a Yom Kippur assembly that was beautifully choreographed by Morah Ruti, as students in Grades 3-6 and proud family members watched on. Students were encouraged to bring a non perishable food item for the **Jewish Child & Family Service** bin.



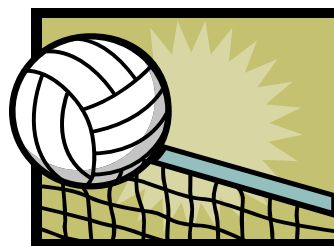
Go Raiders Go!

The Gray Academy sports season is well underway. Our school competes in two interschool athletic conferences. Our Varsity (Grades 11 and 12) and Junior Varsity (Grades 9 and 10) teams compete in the Cross-town Conference, or Zone 12, as it is also known. The Grades 7-9 athletes play in the Pembina Trails Athletic Association.

Congratulations to our Junior High Cross Country runners who raced in the Pembina Trails meet in September. Lexi Zimmer, Anna Binder and Gil Binnun placed in the top 20. Congratulations also to Noah Palansky, Yoni Coodin and Adam Stoller.

The teams were off to an early start as the Zone 12 golf championships were held on Friday Sept. 12th. Two teams comprised of Grade 10, 11 and 12 boys represented our school. Aden Benarroch posted the low score in our group.

Also, beginning in September, the Ruach Running Club, led by Mrs. Connor, held regular morning practices. Several Grade 7 and 8 members of the club entered cross country meets in the P.T.A.A. We had several top 20 results. Way to go runners!



The volleyball season is in full swing as the varsity girls and boys are entering a busy stretch that will see our teams play 5 games between October 27th and November 5th.

Mr. Sera has worked the girls hard in early season practices, while Mr. Hammell and Mr. Abrahams have the boys striving to improve every outing. Both teams opened their seasons on September 24th with victories against Immanuel Christian School. The playoffs are looming in mid-November. Good luck to both teams.

The basketball season is on the horizon. Preparations are taking place as the girls' and boys' team plan to attend the C.H.A.T. tournament in Toronto in December 2008. Good luck!

- Kevin Abrahams, Physical Education



Upcoming Wine & Cheese Evening

Please mark your calendar for the **Opening Our Doors** evening that will take place on **Tuesday, November 18 at 7:30 pm in the Berney Theatre**. This first time event will feature a number of student and teacher led presentations that will entertain, inform and inspire you! The business portion of the Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education's AGM will take place at 7:00 pm.

Highlights of the evening include presentations on:

- Spirit Weekend experiences from students
- The latest in Biotechnology from our award-winning biology teacher, Dr. Sheppy Coodin
- A musical excerpt from the upcoming high school musical **Pippin**
- Smart Board usage from IT Department Head Judy Doctoroff

If you wish to attend, please RSVP by November 7 to advancement@grayacademy.ca or 477-7514.

Volunteer Call for Asper Cup

Gray Academy is hosting the annual Asper Cup International High School Debate on Sunday, November 30th and Monday, December 1st, 2008. This event provides an opportunity for all of our students to participate in, and observe debate of the highest quality. There will be six rounds of debate – two prepared and four impromptu rounds. We need approximately 225 judges over the two days. No experience is necessary, just a willingness to listen to the students present their arguments.

To sign up as a volunteer please contact:
Debby Brown at debbybrown@shaw.ca
or **Judy Elliott at fineblit@shaw.ca**

Awards Ceremony

On October 6 in the Berney Theatre, Gray Academy honoured major school award winners from the 2007-2008 school year with awards in the major academic, sports and extracurricular areas. Earlier in the day at the school, students were honoured who achieved both Honour Roll and Honour Roll with Excellence as well as Sports Participation and Achievement Awards. Yasher Koach to all!

Extracurricular Activities

Debating and Public Speaking

Recently Grade 12 students Josh Fineblit, Jonathan Ripstein and Sam Fineblit competed at the Internationals at Trinity College school in Port Hope, Ontario. This debating tournament is a qualifier for the **World Public Speaking Championship that takes place in March 2009 in England**. Overall, Gray Academy placed 8th out of 48 schools and 4th in Canada; while Josh Fineblit ranked 10th overall out of 144 competitors and 5th in Canada. Congratulations to Josh Fineblit who will now be heading to the Worlds for the second time!

Mazel Tov to Grade 10 student Sarah Levy who will be on the Manitoba team for the tryouts in Calgary for the Canadian team competing at the World Schools Debate.

And last month, our Junior debating team did very well at the SJR Jr. Debate where Grade 9 students Jeremy Hecht and Ariel Melamedoff placed fourth team in the Open category, and Grade 8 students Gil Binun and Josh Lieberman were Top Novice Team. Congratulations!

Writing Contest

The winners of the JNF writing contest "At 60: What Does Israel Mean to Me" are: Grades 7-8: Noah Palansky; Grades 9-12: Zev Faintuch and runners-up in Grades 9-12: Galia Pollock and Shira Tennenhouse. Mazel Tov!

Wall of Athletic Excellence

The next time you walk by the corridor that passes by the Music and Art room, take a look at the latest installation on our Wall of Athletic Excellence. We now have the 2007-2008 athletic team photos adorning our walls! Thank you to **Western Scrap Metals** for your continued support!





Did you Know?

New Beit Midrash! - The next time you are at the school, please drop into the Beit Midrash on the second floor at the top of the stairs to see breathtaking images that showcase synagogues around the world. Todah Ra-bah to **Keith and Linda Levit** for donating their time in producing and installing this remarkable exhibit!



Alumni - Mazel Tov to Michael Schwartz ('08) who was featured in University of Manitoba's recent issue of *The Bulletin* for being one of six students chosen as **Leaders of Tomorrow** and will be awarded a \$5,000 entrance scholarship. Selection was based on leadership qualities, academic performance in high school, and involvement in student affairs, intramural activities and community.

Student Council - Congratulations to the following students who form this year's Student Council: Josh Morry - President, Blake Lerner - Vice President, Jessica Donen - Treasurer and Jonah Brown - Secretary. Watch next month's issue for a feature story on their vision.

School Website - The school's new website is your place to go to for all the latest updates on the school. You can catch same day photo uploads on school events like Partnership 2000, read about the latest school activities on the events/calendar page, or see the monthly calendar for updates. Just go to www.grayacademy.ca

Conference Call - The Director of Advancement, Lisa Abram, will be a "hot topic" speaker at the upcoming CAISAP (Canadian Association of Independent Schools Advancement Professionals) conference in early 2009. This bi-annual event attracts independent schools from across the country.

Next issue: P2K events, Sukkot, and much more!

Community Announcements

JEWISH FOUNDATION OF MANITOBA - BAR/BAT MITZVAH FUNDS

Are you planning a Bar or Bat Mitzvah? Bar and Bat Mitzvah endowment funds help young people understand the importance of *tzedakah* and giving back to their community, setting them on a path to life-long giving. Each year in our community, over 100 young people have fun choosing which charity should receive the income from their fund! For more information or to establish a fund, contact the Jewish Foundation at (204) 477-7528 and speak with Brenda Gurvey, Director of Donor Relations, or visit www.jewishfoundation.org.

COMMUNITY WIDE MUSICAL YOUTH KABBALAT SHABBAT & DINNER

Friday, November 14, 2008 - This special Shabbat Program with Israeli Musician Mattan Klein is presented by the Rady JCC, Congregation Etz Chayim, Madrichim Program, BBYO and other community organizations. For students in Grades 9-11. For more information, please contact Tamar Barr at 477-7537.

ISRAELI CONCERT SERIES

"Seeds of the Sun" - Saturday, November 15 @ 8:00 pm. Jazz with an Israeli Twist with Mattan Klein (Flute), Meytal Muallem (Vocals) and Manu Koch (Piano). Don't miss this wonderful evening of Israeli Culture! Tickets: \$28M / \$30 NM

SHABBAT DINNER FOR INTERFAITH/ INTERCULTURAL COUPLES AND FAMILIES

Friday, November 28, 2008 - Join us for delicious food, music and fun! For more information, please contact Tamar Barr at 477-7537. The support of the Jewish Foundation is acknowledged.

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