

Ruach Reflections

October 2008

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Tishrei-Cheshvan 5769

Welcome back to school!

Important Dates

September 29	Inservice (No school)
September 30	Rosh Hashanah (No school)
October 1	Rosh Hashanah (No school)
October 6	Grades 8-12 Award @ 7pm
October 7	Alumni Meeting @ 7 pm
October 7	PAC Meeting @ 7:30 pm
October 8	Erev Yom Kippur (11:50 Dismissal)
October 9	Yom Kippur (No school)
October 13	Erev Sukkot (No school)
October 14-15	Sukkot (No school)
October 20	Erev Sh'mini Atzeret (No school)
October 21-22	Sh'mini Atzeret (No school)
October 23	Board Meeting @ 7 pm
October 24	Picture Re-Takes
October 28	PAC Meeting @ 7:30 pm
October 30	P2K Evening @ 7 pm

Grade 6 Farewell

On June 24, 2008, Vice-Principal Joyce Kerr welcomed family, friends, teachers and students to the Grade 6 Farewell held at Shaarey Zedek synagogue to celebrate the graduating class of 2008 from the Shore Program.

This past year the Grade 6 Shabbaton and year long theme was "**Trumah L'Killah**" – which loosely translated means "Donating to the Community".



In her speech that evening, Morah Joyce summed it up so eloquently: "As a student of Gray Academy of Jewish Education for many of you for the past nine years, you have had many opportunities to be a donor. Be it at Kabbalat Shabbat in your classrooms, Chanukah Toy Drives, packing Pesach Food Hampers for Jewish Child and Family Service, Singing to the Seniors, donating items, and giving money to various charities is what we are all about.

This year you were involved in 2 special projects. The ongoing *Tzedakah* project in honour of Israel's 60th and your Shabbaton project "**Cleaning with Kavanah**". As leaders in the elementary school, you came to classes to introduce each tzedakah project and relay the importance of supporting the various organizations in Israel. Your huge efforts were definitely noticed in your *Cleaning with Kavanah* project. Let's rewind to Grade 1 Chaggigat Ha-Siddur 2003. Do you remember the part 'When we really think about our prayers and we really mean what we say, then we have Kavanah.' Kavanah means Intention. You definitely took on this project with Good Intentions."

The following awards were also presented to students:

- Wanda Neil Tolboom Award for Highest Academic Achievement - General Studies: Roman Dascal
- Wanda Neil Tolboom Award for Highest Academic Achievement - General Studies: Shira Dveris
- Highest Academic Achievement - Judaic Studies: Gabriel Teichman
- Highest Academic Achievement - Judaic Studies: Alexa Hecht
- Raymond Pollock Memorial Sportsmanship and Leadership Award: Josh Glow
- Raymond Pollock Memorial Sportsmanship and Leadership Award: Mitchell Rabkin

Thank you to the following Parent Committee members for organizing this momentous evening: Brenda Tessler Donen, Becky Dveris and Laura Jaeger Pollock.





Welcome New Teachers

Rory Paul, Head of School and CEO is pleased to announce the appointment of new full and half time teachers: Andrew Kaplan, Marcelo Mohadeb, Danielle Appel, and Marina Risman.

Andrew Kaplan is a graduate from Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate (JWC) and attended University of Winnipeg where he received Business Administration and English degrees. Andrew received his teaching degree from the University of Manitoba, and has interests in literature, philosophy, film, theatre, camping, photography, painting and skiing. Andrew is teaching the following courses: English Language Arts, Social Studies, Jewish History and Jewish Film and Literature.

Marcelo Mohadeb has a Bachelor of Physical Education from General San Martin Institute in Buenos Aires and is presently obtaining a Masters in Guidance and Counseling from the University of Manitoba. Prior to working at Gray Academy, Marcelo was a familiar face at the Rady JCC where he worked as a Children, Youth and Family Program Coordinator and Day Camps Director. Marcelo is teaching Grade 1 Judaic Studies.

Danielle Appel attended JWC and graduated in 2002, followed by University of Winnipeg where she obtained an Integrated Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education degree. Danielle is teaching Grade 1 and Kindergarten.

Marina Risman who is teaching high school Hebrew language, was a teacher of mathematics and physics at Kfar Silver High School in Israel for 7 years, and received her degrees in those respective fields from the Pedagogical Institute in Nikolayev, USSR. Marina also speaks Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian languages.

"I am incredibly pleased to have these talented enthusiastic teachers added to our staff. Not only are they wonderful teachers in their own right; they are willing to learn from an excellent group of experienced educators in our school," said Mr. Paul.

In addition, we also warmly welcome Sara Fonseca and Arlene Davis who are new Special Needs Educational Assistants working in elementary school; and Karin Clegg who is our new Library Technician working in our expanding library program.

An Interview with Dr. Ruth Ashrafi, Director of Judaic Studies

The last few years saw the introduction of three new Judaic programs at the elementary level. In Grades 3-6, **Chaverim B'Ivrit** simultaneously develops the students' Hebrew language skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking. The textbooks cover general subjects, texts about Israel and Judaism. We can see that students are more confident and participate actively in Hebrew in class. In Grades 3 and 4, a **Tanakh** program entitled **Matok** was introduced, while a similar approach to teaching Tanakh is used in Grades 5-6. It familiarizes students with the contents of the Torah, while at the same time teaching close reading skills. Students are very engaged in their studies. And students in Grades 5 and 6 had their critical thinking skills enhanced with their new **Mishna** program.

This year, in Grades 1-2, Hebrew is being taught using the new **Nitzanim** program, a precursor to **Chaverim B'Ivrit** for Grades 3-6. It uses the same approach to Hebrew language learning with a focus on the four language skills, and, like **Chaverim B'Ivrit**, contains diverse topics that speak to young children. We are expecting to see the similar improvements after introducing **Nitzanim** as we saw following the introduction of **Chaverim B'Ivrit**. It will also make the transition in Hebrew language learning from Grades 2 to 3 a lot easier.

For the **Tefilla** program in Grade 1, Morah Joyce has initiated a new exciting project that focuses on studying the underlying values and meaning of Tefillot through classroom discussion and personal projects. This project will also expand into the Tefilla courses in other grades so students can become more familiar with Tefillot and understand their meaning.

And on the heels of the new **Mishna** program, the Tefilla program in Grades 5 & 6 will also be upgraded. In Grade 5, there will be a large unit on the **Shema**, and in Grade 6 there will be a large unit on the **Amidah**. Further, there will be an upgraded **Chaggim** program for Grades JK-6 that will highlight different aspects of the same holiday every year, in a manner that is grade relevant and cognitively age appropriate.

Watch this space next month for exciting new Judaic Studies program highlights in High School.

School Hits a Home Run Winning a Third Award for Excellence in Teaching

Mazel Tov to Grade 5 & 6 Judaic Studies teacher Sherry Wolfe-Elazar who is the recent recipient of the prestigious Jewish Education Service of North America Inc.'s (JESNA) ninth annual national **Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards for Excellence in Jewish Education**.



Gray Academy has a strong history of winning this award for the last three consecutive years.

In nominating Sherry Wolfe-Elazar, Vice-Principal Lori Binder says that "Sherry is dedicated to her career as a Judaic Studies teacher and puts countless energy and love into everything she does. She has come forward to lead many extra-curricular programming in the school, including

most recently, co-chairing the Yom Ha'atzmaut committee celebrating Israel's 60th. Sherry is also very instrumental in many experiential educational programs, including the Grade 6 Leadership Shabbaton at Gray Academy, and has recognized the importance of developing leadership in students as they conclude elementary school. Students not only learn about leadership in her program, they find models for leadership in Jewish history and act upon it. This year, this culminated in a *Tzedakah* initiative to collect items to donate to two community camps for those unable to afford equipment for summer camp."

On personal reflection, Sherry notes that "for every lesson plan and every program that I create, teach or facilitate, I have one overall goal: Jewish Continuity. My passion is making Judaism relevant to young people. It is my daily challenge to look at a prayer, a piece of text from the Torah or Mishna or an aspect of a Jewish Holiday or ritual and ask myself: How can I make this meaningful and a desired part of my students' life? I feel that it is my role to impart not only knowledge but relevance to their Jewish souls. I hope that I nurture a love of learning in my classroom where questions are rewarded and thinking divergently and 'outside the box' is encouraged."

Ms. Wolfe-Elazar will be receiving her award in New York City in fall 2008. Kol Ha'Kavod!

Plaque Honours Past & Present Teachers and Administration

On March 30, 2008, Clara Roy, President of the Winnipeg Jewish Schools Teachers Association (WJSTA) announced at the 100th anniversary gala that the WJSTA would be mounting a plaque in the school to honour past and present teachers and administrators.

At the gala, Mrs. Roy said that the plaque "symbolizes the past, in that it honours the dedication and commitment of former principals, teaching staff and support staff, many are no longer living, but whose names are permanently inscribed."

Mrs. Roy told the audience of over 470 guests, that "presenting this plaque symbolizes continuity which will forever bind the past, the present and the future successes of our beloved Jewish day schools."

"The present is what we see around us tonight as we recognize the role that Jewish education plays in our lives. We continue to instill a love of learning in our students, thus providing many varied opportunities for them to obtain knowledge, to develop pride in their heritage, their history and their traditions. This is our legacy."



So the next time you walk into the school office area on the main floor, please check out this beautiful testament to the "rare and unique nature of our school's history over the past 100 years."



Technology Arrives at the School

We would like to extend our personal thanks for the generous support we received at the Gray Academy gala **Celebrating 100 Years of Jewish Education in Winnipeg** that was held March 30, 2008 at The Fairmont Winnipeg.

Our goal to enrich the educational experience for every child was not only met, but it surpassed our greatest hopes, raising **over \$100,000** towards the school's Technology Fund. Planning has already begun to use these funds in the areas of **Technology, Judaic Studies** and **Special Needs**.

Smart Boards and a mobile laptop lab will create new learning possibilities for our teachers and students. In the Special Needs Learning Centre we will provide an enhanced experience with new life skills materials, interactive software and a smart board. *Tanachim* will provide the written word while an interactive wireless mimio will bring history and technology together to create excitement in the area of Judaic Studies.

Thank you for helping us build for our future and continue providing the finest Jewish education for our children. An Open House will be held in the fall so we can proudly show you the latest technology purchases. Please stay tuned for a date announcement.

Launch of New Interactive Website

Check out our new school website that has formally launched this month.

The website is complete with interactive school calendar that helps you find exactly what you are looking for, whether it's dates of sporting events, PAC and Alumni meetings or school activities. You can customize the calendar every day to suit your needs. We also have a photo gallery, a new video showcasing our beautiful school, and the current need-to-know information from the Daily Announcements.

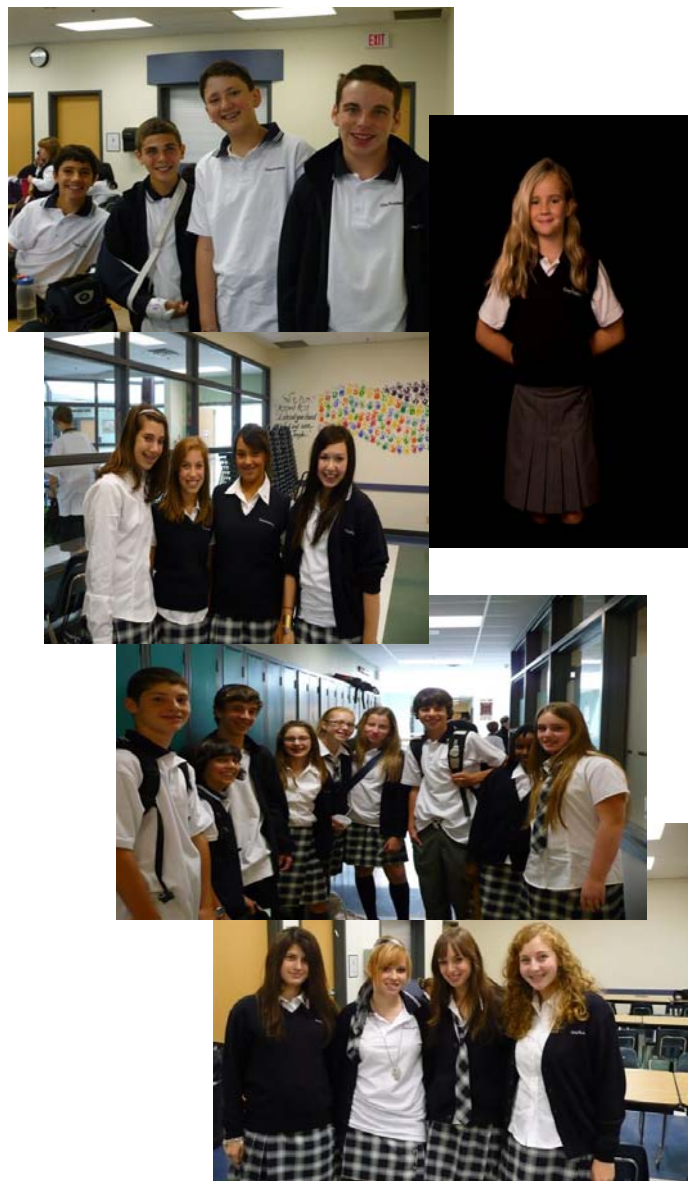
Please go to www.grayacademy.ca and explore all that the school has to offer...and so much more!

Thank you very much to the **Jewish Foundation of Manitoba** for funding this very exciting project!

NEW! Student Uniforms

With the start of school comes the excitement of new beginnings for students, and this year is no exception. Students are now sporting their new school uniforms in the latest school cool colours of grey, white and navy.

The Student Uniform Implementation Committee has been working very hard over the last year to bring a variety of clothing apparel to meet the needs of all students from kilts to skorts to work-out wear, hoodies and pants.



Did You Know?

Another Graduate of A Graduate -



Mazel Tov to another 2nd generation graduate from the Class of '08, Sam Shuster, whose father Joel ('76) watched proudly as his son took the bimah and received his diplomas!

Stars of Tomorrow - The Red River Exhibition Association presented the Finalists in the Stars of Tomorrow this summer and Grade 9 student Becky Frohlinger and sibling Joey Frohlinger (Grade 12) were honoured to be finalists; Becky will represent Manitoba at the Nationals in Saskatoon in November. Good luck!

Maccabi Games - Congratulations to the following students who proudly represented Winnipeg at the Maccabi Games in Detroit in August: Saul Shrom (tennis), Brayden Bernstein (baseball), David Thompson (baseball), Becky Frohlinger (dance), Yael Kaplan (basketball), Jonathan Gerstein (tennis), Yale Selchen (tennis), Haley Rabb (track), Galia Pollock (tennis), and Igal Mostkov (tennis).



Young Leaders - Former JWC students Sari Levi ('03) and Nicole Freed ('96) as well as Ezra Eskin and Stephanie Levine are sponsored executives for the United Way's 2008 Campaign which launches this month.

Did You Know?

Baby News - Congratulations to Chemistry teacher Bob Knight who became a first time grandfather to Kaiden Knight Almonte born August 26, and Mazel Tov to Judaic Studies teacher Karen Richter on becoming a savta again, her daughter Miri ('99) gave birth to Avraham Nachman; and Mazel Tov to Sharon Bernstein who became a grandmother again to Benjamin Noah.

Academic News - Congratulations to Michael Benarroch ('77) on his recent appointment as Dean, Faculty of Business & Economics at University of Winnipeg. Mr. Benarroch is a widely published author on topics such as The Impact of Technology on International Trade and the Relationship Between International Trade and the Environment.

Judaic News - Mazel Tov to Morah Joyce Kerr, Vice-Principal, who participated this past summer in Israel in the 10th annual Principal's Program hosted by Bar-Ilan University's Lookstein Center for Jewish Education. Only 18 educators hailing from the top Jewish day schools in the U.S. and Canada were selected.

Community Announcements

SUKKOT SUNDAY

Celebrate Sukkot at the Rady JCC with an amazing family event on **Sunday, October 19 @ 1:00 p.m.** The program will include a special guest who will entertain families with stories, music and songs. This special program is sure to be enjoyable for children & families, and will also include other activities such as Sukkot crafts and visiting the Sukkah, followed by some tasty refreshments for everyone.

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