

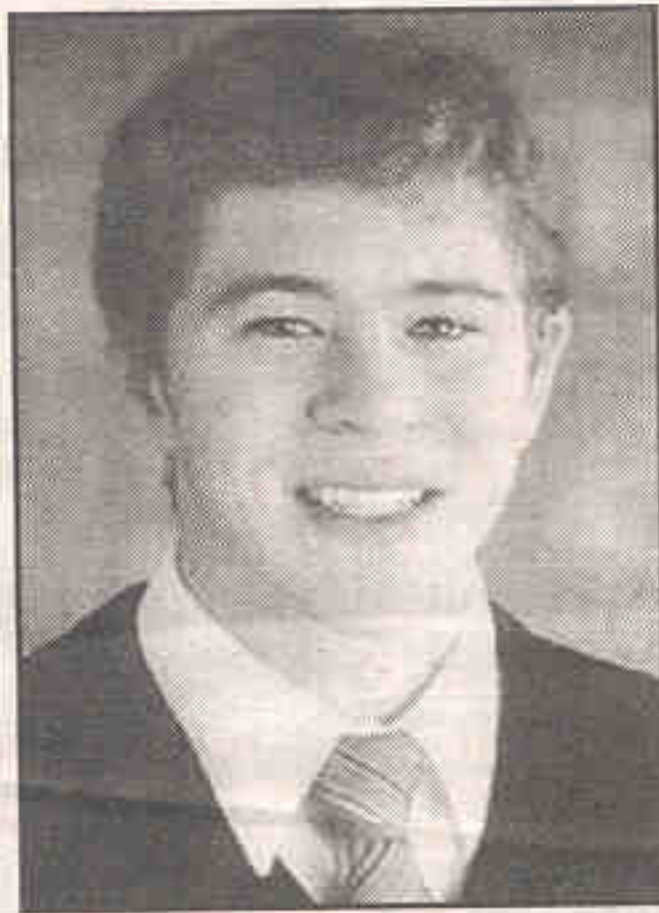
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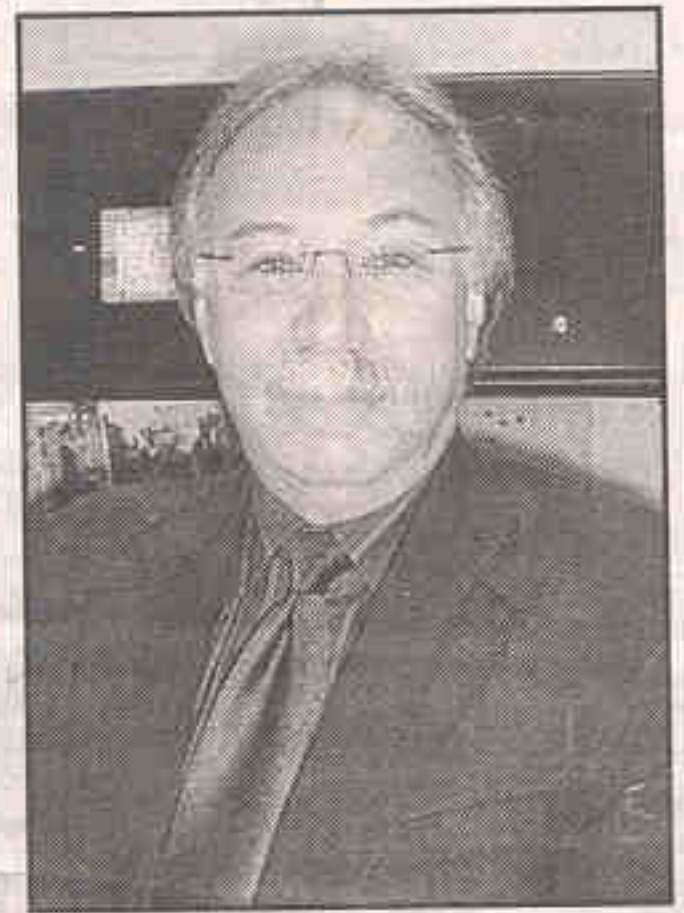
Community news

Gray Academy Launches International Student Program

Gray Academy of Jewish education has begun developing an International Student Program, which will enable high school students from outside of the city to learn at the school and live with a host Jewish family. The school appears to be breaking new



JOSEPH BADER
Brazilian student in 2nd year at Gray Academy



RORY PAUL
Head of School & CEO of Gray Academy

ground for Jewish schools in North America by offering international students a homestay environment.

Rory Paul, Head of School & CEO, states that "one of the driving forces in developing an International Student Program at Gray Academy of Jewish Education is that it provides current students with an opportunity to be exposed to a wide variety of cultures and languages that enhance the education they presently receive."

He says intercultural knowledge is increasingly important for students to develop in order to live and work in an increasingly interdependent world. Presently, the school has many children whose families have immigrated to the city from, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Ukraine, Russia, Israel, and the U.S.

Currently, there are two international students learning at the school, 17 year old Joseph Bader from Brazil and Noemi de Mayo, a 16 year old, from Chile. Each student is staying at the home of a local Jewish family.

This is Bader's second year as an international student and Noemi is the third member of her family from Chile to attend the school in as many years.

Bader, who is from Recife, Brazil, a city of 2 million people, says "Where I am from we don't have a Jewish high school or elementary school. There are 100 Jewish families there but St. Paulo nearly has about 700,000 Jewish people."

Since Bader was learning at a private English language school in Brazil, his parents began considering sending him to an English speaking country where he could develop his language skills even more.

"My parents thought I could come to Canada, develop a second language and learn a different culture. They researched schools in Canada and because Canada was receptive they decided to look into the Grey Academy. I didn't know anyone from Winnipeg when I came. But I have made lots of friends now"

Bader, who is in grade 11, didn't learn any Hebrew in Brazil. "I've been learning it now", he says.

"After grade 12, maybe my parents and my two 6 year old twin brothers will want to try to live in Winnipeg. If not, I may stay in Winnipeg or if I don't want to, I'd probably go elsewhere in Canada. I'm not coming back to Brazil," he says.

Noemi de Mayo, who is in grade 11 at the Grey Academy says she heard of the school "because my first cousin came last year to the school and she told me she had such a great experience. Since I had been going to an English private school I spoke English so it was easy for me to come."

She says that she came only for 5-6 months "just for the wonderful experience." She will be returning to Chile and says she won't be able to transfer her credits. "I will start grade 11 [again] in Chile in March," she says.

But Noemi says that she is appreciative of getting an opportunity to be immersed in an English speaking Jewish environment and "I would tell others to come."

Paul says the international student program is "in its infancy stages." In order to grow the program he says "We would probably need 30,000-50,000 dollars in a pot as start up money to do the things we need to do [to promote the program]."

As Paul says, "I'd like to be proactive and attend school fairs [in other countries] where you have a booth, and you promote your school, and lots of people attend. We've put together a film and print material on the school. But to attend these fairs involves an initial financial outlay for flights and accommodation and costs of registering at the fairs....We're in a bit of a catch 22, as we need money to expand the program...But that is my dream."