

Ruach Reflections

February 2009

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Shevat-Adar 5769

Important Dates

February 1	Jewish Awareness Retreat Returns
February 2	In-Service/No School
February 3	JK-Gr. 1 Open House @ 7pm
February 5	High School Open House @ 7pm
February 6	Gr. 6 Shabbaton
February 6	Report Cards Sent Home
February 6	Last 2:30 pm Dismissal
February 8	Gr. 9-12 Ski Trip Departs
February 9	Grade 8 Ski Trip Departs
February 9	Tu B'Shvat
February 10	Staff Meeting @ 4 pm
February 10	Gr. 5/6 Science Fair Parent Meeting
February 10	WBJE Exec. Meeting @ 6 pm
February 10	WBJE Board Meeting @ 7 pm
February 16	Riel Day/No School
February 17	Blood Drive
February 18	Alumni Meeting @ 7pm
February 21	Denim & Diamonds Social
February 24	Rosh Chodesh Adar
February 24	PAC Meeting @ 7:30 pm

Making the Case for Israel

On January 22, all members of the community were invited to an interactive presentation on effective techniques for Israel advocacy by presenter Lawrence Muscant (originally from Montreal, now Boston), a highly sought-after speaker, who is Deputy Director of the **David Project**.

What is The David Project? The David Project Center for Jewish Leadership is a non-profit educational organization that promotes a fact-based understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It



seeks to build a growing cadre of educated, skilled and confident supporters and advocates to stem the animus against Israel and her supporters that is growing on campuses, in high schools, churches, the media, and the general community. The David Project works to bolster the Jewish community's response

to the ideological assault on Israel with educational programs, advocacy training, easy to implement campaigns, and a spirit of collaboration with other community agencies. It does not endorse any political agenda beyond Israel's right to exist securely and peacefully among her Arab neighbours.



The goal of the David Project is to motivate through the education of three audiences: high school students, university students and adults.

The David Project has a long-term strategy – to populate the campuses with educated, trained, and confident college students, to prepare high school students and Jewish teens to become Israel advocates and to activate the Jewish community in response to the growing anti-Israel discourse. The strategy is based on a unique analysis for understanding and communicating to others the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This approach enables participants to understand the complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict by promoting critical thinking, historical accuracy, moral decision-making and activism.



Gray Academy is proud to be among the more than 100 high schools in North America and Israel who are currently teaching the new curriculum initiative, developed by the David Project, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Educating Ourselves – Educating Others*. This excellent curriculum enables our school to build and support intellectual leadership and activism in our Jewish students.





Interview with Miriam Bronstein, Music & Drama Teacher

Miriam Bronstein ('69) who has been teaching music and drama at Gray Academy since 1998, is no stranger to the world stage having picked up the acting bug when she was a student at Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate (JWC) and performed in *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Cindy* (the Jewish version of Cinderella). In fact, Mrs. Bronstein's acting talents came full circle in 2008 when she was seen in the MTC production of *Fiddler on the Roof* - this time playing the role of Grandma Tzeitel, and she performed at Rainbow Stage and Hollow Mug Dinner Theatre in years past.

Back in the JWC days, joined by fellow Gray Academy teachers Nancy Gliner ('69) and Rachelle Koffman ('69), Mrs. Bronstein also participated in the Israeli Drama Club and in a Hebrew translated version of *My Fair Lady*.

Fast forward to today at Gray Academy, and the range of performing arts courses offered are as diverse as the students taking them. Starting in Grades JK-6, students can take part in a general music program that exposes them to percussion instruments, drums and orff instruments like the xylophone. As an adjunct to the Hebrew program, the Music department also teaches songs in Hebrew for the Grade 1 and 2 students who perform in Chaggigat Ha-Sidur and Chaggigat Ha-Torah respectively. In fact, the Music program works very closely with teachers to incorporate music into all the Jewish holidays like Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Purim, and so on.

Students in Grades 3-5 can also volunteer to perform in a choir for the *Mammaloshen Festival* on May 13, and an upcoming concert at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Further, students in Grades 7 & 8 can take an elective course in music and drama exploration, and in their senior years, they can further their studies in Theatre.

And if students wish to take part in the annual school musical production, they can, with elementary and high school students performing in alternate years. This year's musical, *Pippin*, will be performed from **March 24-26** at the **Franco-Manitobain Cultural Centre**. Tickets are available soon. Watch this space for more details.

With Mrs. Bronstein at the helm directing, you know it will be another standing ovation! Break a leg and take a bow!

Debating & Public Speaking

The Junior Debate Tournament was held at SJR on January 14, 2009, with the following results:

Novice Results (Grade 7 and 8*)

Teams

- 1 - Shira Dveris and Samantha Morry
 - 4- Dor Kleinmann and Zach Donen
 - 8- Oren Binnun and Talia Ripstein
 - 10 - Natasha Brown and Jana Elazar
 - 11- Josh Glow and Jonathan Corobow
- *includes competitors who have not competed before

Individual

- 1- Shira Dveris
- 3- Dor Kleinmann
- 5- Samantha Morry
- 8- TIE - Zach Donen and Talia Ripstein and Jonathan Corobow
- 9- TIE -- Natasha Brown and William pitch
- 13 - Oren Binnun

Open Results (Grade 8 and 9)

Team

- 2- Josh Kerr and Jeremy Hecht
- 4 - Ariel Melamedoff and JJ Gerstein
- 5 - Ben Meyers and Jordan Gertenstein
- 9 - Gil Binnun and Josh Lieberman

Individual

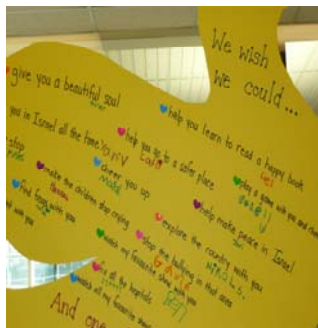
- 3 - Josh Kerr
- 4 - Jeremy Hecht
- 7 - Ariel Melamedoff
- 8 - Ben Meyers
- 9 - JJ Gerstein
- 13 - Jordan Gertenstein

Upcoming Debating Tournaments:

- February 6-9 - National Public Speaking at SJR - Qualifier for World Public Speaking Championship
- February 11 - Senior Angus Reid at St. Paul's
- February 8 (tbc) - Juniors at SJR
- March 1 - Senior Qualifier for National Debate Championship at SJR
- March 12 - Junior Provincials at BH
- March 17 - Senior Provincials at St. Mary's Academy



T'fillah in Support of Israel



Two very important assemblies took place at school this month. Students in Grades K-2 sang T'fillot, watched a short powerpoint called "Places in Israel," and Morah Mara spoke to the students about her recent phone conversation with Rachel Bar Maoz (principal at Nachshonai Ha-Hulah) and how the staff and students are doing at her school. In the afternoon

students in Grades 3-6 were assembled in the MPR to watch the video "15 Seconds The Countdown"; sing T'fillot; have class representatives read their "Hopes and Wishes" for Israel; and hear personal wishes from various teachers in the room. These two assemblies, following classes discussions throughout the week about the situation in Israel at the moment, allowed us the opportunity to focus our T'fillot (prayers) and express our concerns, wishes and hopes for Israel.

The assemblies were videotaped and can be viewed on our website at: http://www.grayacademy.ca/students_co-curricular_p2k.html.



Go Raiders Go!

The Gray Academy basketball program is up and running on all fronts. The season got off to a great start when our Varsity teams attended the **CHAT tournament** in Toronto. Also, the school hosted the first annual **Michael Rosenberg Tournament** on December 17-19, 2008. This event saw a field of 6 Varsity girls teams compete in two pools of a round robin. Spectators were treated to excellent basketball action and witnessed the Gray Academy Raiders prevail as champions. The girls have continued their winning ways in the regular season and are the team to beat in Zone 12.

The Varsity boys have met some tough competition and are improving with every game.

The JV girls and boys have played very well and continue to impress their coaches with determined play. The girls have a roster that includes Grades 8-10 girls. This has been a learning experience for many of the players. The JV boys have shown promise as a contender. The nucleus from last season with the addition of the Grade 9's provide the team with many weapons.

The Grade 8 boys have not been challenged severely so far. They are in the B pool of the Pembina Trails league. The boys have shown great strides in development as the growth of some new players is evident. The Grade 7 Friendship tournaments are starting on January 29th. Both the girls and boys teams are eagerly awaiting their first action.

- Kevin Abrahams, Physical Education

Reach for the Top

The Intermediate team has a two and two record after our first tournament held at Shaftesbury High School. With two wins, they are now in fourth spot in terms of total points accumulated, trailing very closely to two other schools with a two and two record. The next intermediate tournament will be held at Gray Academy on February 26. Come cheer us on!

The Senior team played a tournament on November 18, and with 1250 total points scored, was ranked number one in their region. The Senior team will compete in their next tournament in Gimli on February 9.

Attention Aspiring Chess Masters! Upcoming Chess Championship

The **Manitoba Provincial Chess Championships** are coming soon. Don't miss the opportunity to represent your school and Manitoba for your grade at the Canadian Chess Challenge National Championships in Toronto, Ontario!

The competition in Manitoba will begin with provincial qualification tournaments in Winnipeg. Students in Grades 1 to 4 will compete at the Asper Jewish Community Centre on Sunday March 22, 2009, from 9:30am: to about 4:00 pm. Grades 5 to 12 will play on Sunday March 15, 2009 at the University of Winnipeg at 10 am.

Please note that this tournament is played strictly by grade, which is Grade 1's play against Grade 1's, Grade 2's against Grade 2's, etc. The winners from each grade at the Provincial tournament will then move on to play at the Canadian National finals in Toronto.

Manitoba has always had a strong showing at the National Chess Championships, so we hope to have as many entries as possible from Gray Academy of Jewish Education.

Please complete and return the registration form to Mrs. Roy along with a cheque for \$20.00 payable to **Manitoba Scholastic Chess Association no later than January 31, 2009.**

Fern Shawna Rykiss Literary Award

This literary award is in memory of Fern, a 1988 graduate from our school, who was tragically killed in Israel when a terrorist attacked a bus on which she was a passenger.

Any students interested in submitting a short story, poem, etc. for the Fern Shawna Rykiss Literary competition are to see their English teacher for submission guidelines by January 18.

All entries must be submitted to Mrs. Connor in room 300 by February 13.

Watch out Mark Spitz! Here comes the 2009 JCC Maccabi Games

The Rady JCC is now accepting applications for the 2009 JCC Maccabi Games. We are excited to announce that Team Winnipeg will be attending the Maccabi Games in Mid-Westchester, New York from August 16th - 21st, 2009.

The JCC Maccabi Games are an international Olympic style competition with a variety of events for Jewish teens ages 13 - 16. The sports being offered at these Games include Bowling, Dance, Golf, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, Boys & Girls Basketball, Boys & Girls Soccer, Boys Baseball, Girls Volleyball, and Boys In-Line Hockey.

In addition to athletic events, the Games feature opportunities for Jewish youth to engage in social events with other Jewish teens from around the world. Cultural connection with Jewish heritage and strengthening ties with Israel are also part of the JCC Maccabi Games experience. Application forms are available at the Rady JCC Track Desk or by calling Lori at 477-7459. The deadline to submit applications is Friday, February 20, 2009.

Music to Our Ears!

On January 9, Cantor Len Udow from Temple Shalom visited the Grade 6 classes as part of their Shabbaton program. The students and teachers experienced an interactive Kabbalat Shabbat together. Cantor Len introduced new music while playing his guitar which enhanced the Kabbalat Shabbat experience. Todah Rabah Cantor Len!

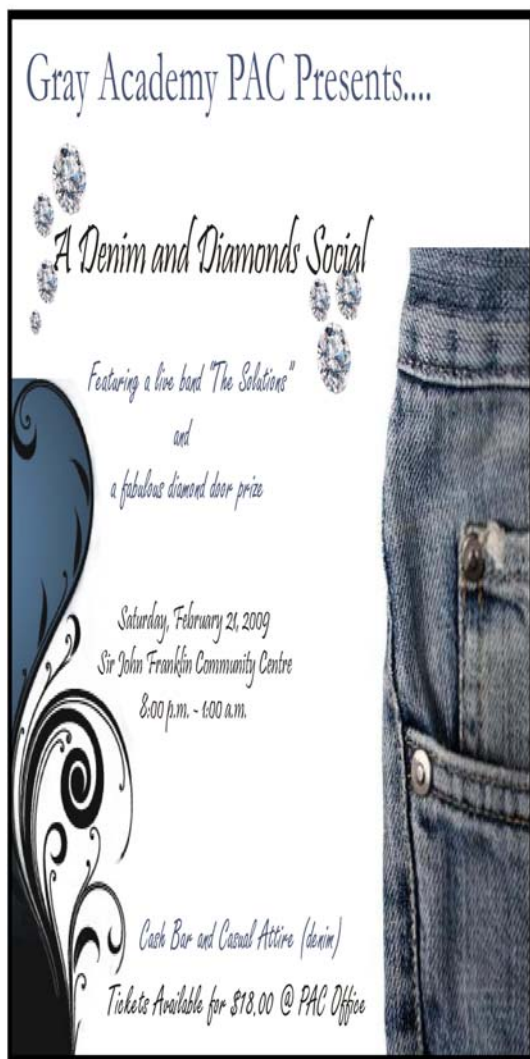




Denim & Diamonds Social

Gray Academy PAC presents: "A Denim and Diamonds Social" featuring Live Band, "The Solutions." Join us on Saturday, February 21, 2009 @ 8pm at the Sir John Franklin Community Centre in your denim and have a chance to win a fabulous diamond door prize!

Please go to our website to print out an order form at: http://www.grayacademy.ca/events_social.html.



Blood Donor Clinic

Save one.
Save the world.



GIVE IT UP for the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg and the Gray Academy of Jewish Education.



BLOOD DONOR CLINIC

Tuesday, February 17th

12-3 pm | 4-6 pm

Gymnasium, Asper Jewish Community Campus
123 Doncaster Street



Call 1 888 2 DONATE

for more info or to book an appointment.

www.blood.ca





CanSPELL Spelling Competition



On January 15 students in Grades 5-8 participated in our fifth annual CanSPELL competition. Kol Ha'Kavod to all the participants and Mazel Tov to the following top three contestants: 1st place: Mitchell Rabkin (Grade 7); 2nd place: Kass Kuropatwa

(Grade 7); and 3rd place: Melissa Minuk (Grade 6).

Mitchell will now go on to compete against other Manitoba schools in March. The winner of the Provincial CanSPELL competition will represent our province at the national spelling bee in Ottawa in April. Good luck!

Chaggigat Ha-Torah

On January 14 in the afternoon and January 15 in the evening, our Grade 2 students beamed on stage in the Berney Theatre during their Chaggigat Ha-Torah. The story of Creation was told through art, music, dance and Torah text. This celebration showcased what they have learned over the past three months in their introduction to Torah Studies at Gray Academy. The evening concluded with each student receiving the book "In the Beginning," and a Torah followed by juice and cookies in the Berney Foyer. Yasher Koach to all!



New Library Programs at Lunch

The Library has launched two new noon hour programs this school year. The Craft and Book clubs started after the fall holidays and have been very well received.



On Tuesday's and Thursday's, the Book Club runs from 12:05 to 12:40. The Tuesday club features a new book every month for 20 kindergarten to Grade 4 students. Thursday's club features a new book every other month for

20 students in Grades 5 and up. The librarian reads while students relax and listen.



Wednesday's Craft Club has run for the last several weeks and is featuring simple beading. Students made bookmarks and bracelets that were sold at Parent Teacher interviews on November 27. The funds raised went to Siloam Mission, the charity chose by the crafters. A new session

started December 3rd and will run for 3 weeks. Beading will continue after winter break until everyone has had a chance to participate; then we will change to another craft.

Students of all ages are welcome at these new noon hour clubs as participants and volunteers.



- Linda Goodbrandson, Librarian

Did you Know?

MVP Award - Grade 11 student Yael Kaplan won the MVP award at The Michael Rosenberg Invitational Basketball Tournament held just before Winter Break. Mazel Tov!!



Grant Recipient - Gray Academy has been awarded a full *Green Schools Manitoba* initiative grant to help support the further development of environmentally responsible programs within the school. Students will be taking on a leadership role in the implementation of these programs so that they are able to take a pro-active approach to our environment and gain valuable experience in leadership and planning.

Open House - On February 3 @ 7 pm (for Grades JK, K and 1) and on February 5 @ 7 pm (for High School), there will be a school Open House. Both events take place in the MPR. We look forward to see you then!

Big Thank You! -



Todah Rabah to parent volunteers Debby Brown and Judy Elliott for coordinating the volunteer judges at the 2008 Asper Cup, and to Ronda Erenberg for organizing all the yummy food for the 2 day event. We can't thank you enough for all your hard work!

New Library Acquisitions - The library announces new book acquisitions every month and you can read the latest book list by going to our website:

<http://www.grayacademy.ca/library.html>.

Dress for a Cause Day - On Friday, December 5, high school students and staff took part in helping to support the United Way. Upon donating \$2.00 each, participants then had permission to wear jeans/casual wear for the day. Congratulations - \$440 was raised!

Community Announcements

TU B'SHEVAT AT FORT WHYTE ALIVE

Congregation Etz Chayim invites you to celebrate with a child-friendly Tu B'Shevav seder, and then moves outside to toboggan and ice skate. Snowshoeing and sleigh rides will also be available. The afternoon will conclude with a bonfire and snacks. To register and for fee information, please call 589-6305 by February 4th.

PANIMWORKS: DC JAM

On the campus of The George Washington University, is a leadership training program for teens passionate about politics, community service, activism, and Judaism. Become a leader in the political world and the Jewish community today! Learn about key issues impacting the U.S. and the world through interactions with leading U.S. policymakers and experts, while exploring the connection between Judaism and advocacy. Two 2-week sessions or a four week session (including a bonus opportunity of a placement in DC agency) will be offered for students currently in Grades 10-12. www.dccjam.org. Contact: Reisa Shanaman 301-770-5070, x 217 or dcjam@panim.org.

PANIMWORKS: SOUTHWEST

This is a cultural exchange and community service program on a Native American Reservation in the American Southwest. Make a difference as you live in rustic accommodations on a Native American reservation, interacting with members of the Zuni and Hopi Nations while working together to promote positive change. Make lifelong friends and learn about the ethical values that define Jewish life while earning up to 45 community service-learning hours. Three sessions will be offered for students currently in Grades 9-12. www.panimworks.org. Contact: Hershel Cohen 301-770-5070 x209 or panimworks@panim.org.

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