

# Ruach Reflections

December 2007

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Kislev/Tevet 5768

## Upcoming Events

December 3	Asper Cup at the school
December 4	First night of Chanukah
December 5	High School Israel Day
December 6	Band Concert @ 6:30 pm in the Berney Theatre
December 7	Dismissal @ 2:15 pm
December 8	Gray Academy Shabbat @ Shaarey Zedek @ 9 am
December 10	Rosh Chodesh Tevet
December 11	Kindergarten sings with "Stay Young" @ 11:15 am in Berney
December 11	Board meeting @ 7 pm
Dec.13-18	Exams for Grades 8-12
December 14	Grade 7 Electives Begins
December 18	Alumni meeting @ 7 pm
December 21	Last Day of School before Break

## Leadership Conference

Gray Academy once again made a strong showing at the United Way Student Leadership Conference, counting among our students: delegates, presenters, and conference organizers.

The conference, which took place at the Canad Inns Polo Park on October 31, is an all-day experience that aims to foster leadership among high school students. Saul Shrom, Zev Faintuch, David Rubinfeld, and Jared Ackerman represented Gray Academy and took in sessions on topics including fundraising, leadership, and public speaking.

Michael Schwartz (of Krispy Kreme fame) led a workshop on fundraising while David Coodin organized the Urban Exchange Video Presentation, in which young people can make their voices heard to the United Way via video messages!

Schwartz and Coodin both served on the planning committee for the conference, along with GAJE Alumni Yael Shrom ('07) who was also overall co-chair for the conference.

- Michael Schwartz, Student Rep, Alumni Committee

## Spirit Weekend 2007

For the first time, Gray Academy put on a fun filled weekend for the Grade 8 & 9 students called *Spirit Weekend* that was led by Dr. Coodin and Grade 11 and 12 students that acted as *madrichim*. The event was held at Elkhorn Lodge and lasted two nights and three days, including Shabbat. For all students it was a chance to experience Shabbat in a manner that they had never before, whether this was because of the friend or religious aspect.



For *Minchah*, the Torah was unraveled around noon so that all students could have a "hands on" experience with the Torah

reading. The Torah was read while the students stood in a circle holding it very carefully. While this was happening, everyone attempted to find their Torah portion, it was an experience no one will forget!!

At the end of Shabbat, a beautiful Havdallah was shared with singing and prayer that could be heard from afar.



During their free time, students played energy games that were led by *madrichim*, went swimming, played football and enjoyed many other activities. After Shabbat had ended, everyone enjoyed the talent show and karaoke. It was a weekend to remember, full of new friendships and life long memories.

- Rebekah Rittberg, Grade 12 student



## Disability Awareness Days

The Persons with Disabilities Steering Committee hosted the 2nd Annual Disability Awareness program at Gray Academy at the end of October. This series was held for all students in the school and included several presentations from a variety of individuals with a disability, as well as several parents. The Persons with Disabilities Steering Committee co-sponsored this program along with Administration and staff from the school.



The purpose of the Persons with Disabilities Steering Committee is to identify the needs in our community, as well as to support new initiatives, while bringing together individuals who will help to integrate all people with disabilities in the Jewish Community. This committee advocates for the inclusion of people with special needs in all aspects of Jewish life in our community.

Programming for this year included:

- Visually Impaired
- Asperger Syndrome and Tourette Syndrome
- Hands on Sensory Awareness
- Physically Impaired with Wheelchair Athletes
- OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Physical Disabilities in the school

Gray Academy was pleased to once again be working together with the **Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's Persons with Disabilities Steering Committee** to make these two days come to life at our school. The committee chose to schedule the second annual Disability Awareness Days in the fall in order to start off the school year with more awareness and understanding.



## Jugglefest 2007

Gray Academy of Jewish Education's annual Jugglefest returned on November 14 in the Berney Theatre at the Asper Jewish Community Campus.

After a qualifying round, students who advanced to the competition this year included: Yitzchak Cohen, Reese Ratson, Ariel Melamedoff, Seth Baker and Yale Selchen.

Jugglefest 2007 promised to be yet another exciting show, with quality performers showcasing their stuff in juggling and diabolo - and it delivered!



Grade 8 student, Yale Selchen, the winner of Jugglefest 2007 was presented with a \$36 gift certificate for juggling equipment along with a trophy. Judges for this year's exciting competition included local juggling performer Myron Pauls who has over 20 years experience including juggling at Boo at the Zoo and The Forks, student teacher Ms. McDonald and Grade 12 student David Rubenfeld.

Gray Academy offers an elective course in Juggling in Grade 7 that is taught by Sheppy Coodin. The course is offered for one third of the school year, and provides many positive skill sets to students such as: hand-eye coordination, aerobics, social skills and cooperation between partners who must learn to work together for the end benefit of being able to pass juggling balls between themselves.

There is also a weekly Juggling Club where students can perfect their skills and hone their talents in the hopes of winning the Jugglefest title.

Mr. Coodin has been juggling since he was a student himself when he first signed up at the age of 18 along with older brother Shalom. He credits his passion for juggling to having had a great teacher and the rest, he says, is history.

To check out Jugglefest 2007, please go to the Winnipeg Free Press website and click on:  
<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/multimedia/video/story/4077437p-4677673c.html>

## Chesed Corner

### Chesed Shel Emes

Once in a while, there is a request to students at Gray Academy to assist with voluntary pallbearing in the community, and it is met with respect and dignity.

"On behalf of the families and the community, many thanks for your dedication. Your participation in 'making a minyan' is greatly appreciated by those obligated to recite the Kaddish at the graveside. Ya-sher Koach to David Rubinfeld, Ilya Vaslavskiy, Michael Schwartz, Damian Melamadoff, Shea Lerner, Dan Kempner, Boris Furman, Aden Benarroch, David Coodin, Benji Winestock and Steven Baker. Thank you all for your continued support and for your commitment to *Chesed Shel Emet*, acts of loving kindness."

- Rena Boroditsky, Executive Director, Chesed Shel Emes

### Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebrations

This year, we are celebrating Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence. In an effort to promote a sense of solidarity and unity with Jews in Israel and around the world, elementary students and their families are being asked to support five projects in Israel. In addition to the contributions to these worthwhile causes, we are also hoping to raise awareness of the many creative ways we can help each other.

The funds collected will come from the Tzedakah money that our students are accustomed to bringing in regularly. Any child or family who wishes to make additional donations is encouraged to do so. The first project that monies are being raised for in Rosh Chodesh Kislev from November 13-December 21, 2007 is called "Stand Together".



Standing Together is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting Israeli soldiers on active duty and it is funded by Jews around the world. *Standing Together* has recently included the residents of Sderot in its support as they are in as much or more danger than many soldiers on duty.

## Go Raiders Go!

### Volleyball

The volleyball season came to a successful conclusion for our school volleyball program. The Grade 9 boys' team captured the PTAA B Championship on November 27<sup>th</sup> at St. Paul's High School. The boys played an excellent match, narrowly defeating Charleswood Junior High 2 games to 0.



### Congratulations! Grade 9 boys won the Volleyball Pool B Champions for their conference!

Left back row: Mr. Abrahams, Asher Billinkoff, Jonathan Paterson, Jonah Brown, Max Erenberg, Zev Ripstein. Left Front: Josh Donen. Right Front: Avichai Stoller. Missing: Jesse Pollock. Mazel Tov!!

The Varsity girls' and boys' wrapped up their respective seasons earlier in the month. The Varsity girls improved over the season, but did not qualify for playoffs. The boys finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the league and entered their playoff game against Southeast College with high expectations. They lost in a close match on November 12<sup>th</sup> to end their season.

### Basketball

While volleyball season has concluded, the focus has shifted to basketball. Teams at all levels have or will be practicing in the weeks leading up to winter break.

Gray Academy hosts the Second Annual Runnin' Raiders Pre-Season Tournament on December 4-5. Games begin at 4:00 pm on both days.

Also, a collection of Grades 10-12 basketball players will travel to Toronto on December 12-16 for the CHAT tournament. Good luck!!

## Asper Foundation Lecture Series

What are the real distinctions between interrogation and torture in the context of counter-terrorism? Are they legal? Moral? Should we detain suspected terrorists? Is targeted killing a valid form of self-defence?

These are the types of issues that concern Professor Amos Guiora, an expert on global perspectives on counter terrorism. These are the issues that formed part of his talk on Saturday, December 1 in a lecture presented by The Asper Foundation Lecture Series and the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg.

Amos N. Guiora who is a professor of law at The S. J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah, is leading the school's efforts to provide cutting-edge research, innovative training, and public service initiatives in the prevention and mitigation of global conflict. CNN, The Washington Post, PBS, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, BBC, Fox TV, the New York Daily News, Chicago Sun Times, Wall Street Journal, and Associated Press, among others, have all used him as an expert commentator. He has consulted with governments and corporations on strategic, legal issues and policy making.

Professor Guiora served for nineteen years in the Israel Defense Forces Judge Advocate General's Corps (Lt. Col. Ret.) where he held a number of senior command positions, including Commander of the IDF School of Military Law, Judge Advocate for the Navy and Home Front Command, and the Legal Advisor to the Gaza Strip.

He also had command responsibility for the development of an interactive software program that teaches an eleven point code-of-conduct based on International Law, Israeli Law, and the IDF code. This internationally acclaimed program is used to teach IDF soldiers and commanders their obligations to civilian populations during an armed conflict. While in the military, Professor Guiora was involved in important legal and policy-making issues, including the capture of the PLO weapons ship Karine A.

Shelley Faintuch, Community Relations Director, for the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, noted during the Q&A following Professor Guiora's talk that the debating students, who formed part of the audience from the Asper Cup, asked the most incredible questions.

"They are unbelievable....," said Shelley Faintuch, Community Relations Director. "The questions from the debating students were profound. I've never heard such thought-provoking and insightful questions from an audience of this age."

Over 130 people attended the lecture, and Professor Guiora was thrilled with the exciting exchanges and proud to be part of such an exciting evening.

## An Interview with Debating Teacher Linda Martin

Phrases like interpretive reading, persuasive speaking and impromptu speaking are not common every day terms, but for student debaters and their coaches, this is the common language for those who have a love for words and their usage.

Linda Martin has been a debating teacher for many years at Gray Academy and comes by her passion for word play honestly.

"I love what I do and I take such pride in my students," Mrs. Martin states unequivocally. "They work very hard at perfecting their debating skills and it shows!!"

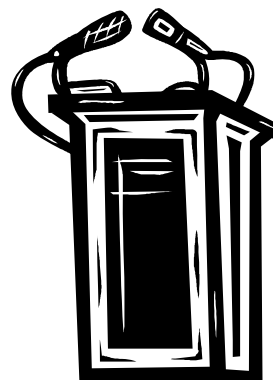
But explaining the world of debating and public speaking to a novice can be akin to learning a new language for the first time. It may be hard to grasp at first, but once you sit in on a couple of debates, you quickly become hooked on the energy, intelligence and enthusiasm of the students!



And this passion for debating has its perks too. Linda Martin has travelled to Cyprus, South Africa, England, Connecticut, and across the country, and hopes to be heading to the World Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championship in Germany in spring 2008.

She has also coached two of our senior students in the last three years to the Worlds which are considered to be the Olympics of debating, and Mrs. Martin is hoping to send one of our current senior students to the Worlds next year.

This week, she coordinated the third annual Asper Cup Debating Tournament at the school, an international competition which saw over 40 students from across Canada and Israel compete over two days. No small feat when you consider that Mrs. Martin also briefed over 120 volunteer judges!!



When asked how she maintains such stamina with this hectic pace, Mrs. Martin states, "I have the wonderful support of my husband, who has been my rock!"

The Asper Cup garnered great media coverage in the Free Press, and on CBC, CTV and Global TV.

## The Asper Cup

The **Third Annual Asper Cup International High School Debate Tournament** took place December 2-3, 2007 at Gray Academy. Proud sponsors of the Asper Cup include **The Asper Foundation, Investors Group and the Winnipeg Free Press.**

This year's tournament had teams from across the country and Israel coming to Gray Academy to compete for The Asper Cup. Debating teacher and coach Linda Martin, encouraged spectators and volunteer judges alike to "Come and experience the verbal thrust and parry of some of the best high school debaters in the country and, for the first time in Manitoba, the excitement of elimination debates in each of six rounds."



When the Asper Cup first made its debut, debating teams from around the globe arrived in Winnipeg to compete at Gray Academy. This prestigious event allowed our highly ranked students to not only perform on an international level, but to be introduced to a mosaic of people from different cultures. This year, we had 40 debating students from 11 schools across the country and including Israel, arrive for this prestigious event.

Our growth in debating as a participating school in the last three years has been phenomenal with our students qualifying for the Canadian Team. In April 2007, Shira Lerner, a Grade 12 student, qualified for the Worlds held in Cape Town, South Africa where she competed in four events, Debate, Persuasive Speaking, Impromptu Speaking, and Interpretive Reading and placed 15th overall in the combined areas.

"We are very excited to once again host this international debating tournament, and are appreciative of the ongoing support of our sponsors, The Asper Foundation, Investors Group and the Winnipeg Free Press, all of whom have been with us since The Asper Cup made its debut in 2004," said Rory Paul, Head of School & C.E.O

We congratulate this year's winner:

- Top Debate Team: Ian Literovich & Ethan Pollock (St. John's-Ravenscourt - SJR)
- Top Speaker: Ian Literovich
- Top Canadian Debate Team: SJR
- Top International Debate Team: Israel

## Judaic Studies Corner

### Shaarey Zedek Shabbat

On Saturday, December 8, Gray Academy will be leading the Shabbat morning services at Shaarey Zedek Synagogue. This is the first Gray Academy Shabbat of the year and will be followed by three more throughout the year. Students in Grades 7-12 will be given the opportunity to volunteer for a variety of roles in the service include leading prayers, Torah readings, Haftorah, reciting special prayers, having an aliyah to the torah etc. Cantor Mass has been working with the students to help them prepare for the service and all students involved in the Shabbat will have an opportunity to take part in a learning session at the Synagogue on December 6. Everyone is welcome to the December 8 service.



### Jewish Awareness Retreat

It's that time of year again - the annual Jewish Awareness Retreat, one of the highlight programs for our students, is fast approaching. Students in Grades 10 -12 will be going together to Camp Cedarwood in Lac du Bonnet on January 31 and returning on February 3.

Thanks to generous grants from the Scholarship Fund, PAC, the Avichai Foundation and other scholarship sources, we are once again able to bring in a team of resource people from New York to accompany and assist Barry Bender, an outstanding informal Jewish Educator. Mr. Bender has been running our retreat program for many years, and he has conducted similar seminars in England, Australia and throughout North America.

The program provides a different kind of learning experience for students. The experience encourages bonding among the students. They will be exposed to a variety of Jewish issues and concerns through experiential programming, discussions, and films. Interspersed throughout the retreat will be recreational activities - cross country skiing, tobogganing, skating, hockey, wall climbing, and even a talent show!!



## Extracurricular Activities

### Debating and Public Speaking

From November 9-11, at the UBC Debating Tournament in Vancouver, our students did exceptionally well. High schools from across Western Canada competed over two days. The results for the Senior Team are: 3rd - Josh Fineblit and Jonathan Ripstein; 5th - Josh Morry and Sam Fineblit, with Individual ranking: 4th - Josh Fineblit, 7th - Sam Fineblit, 8th - Josh Morry; 13th - Jonathan Ripstein. The Junior team placed 8th with Sarah Levy and Asher Billinkoff, with Sarah Levy placing 2nd in the Individuals.

On November 14, at the St. Mary's Debating Tournament, Gray Academy Top Debater was Jonah Brown. The top teams ranked the following: 3rd place: Zev Ripstein and Blake Lerner, 4th place: Jonah Brown and Asher Billinkoff and 5th place: Josh Donen and Max Erenberg. The Overall Placement in Debate was: 5th Jonah Brown; 6th Zev Ripstein; 7th Blake Lerner; 9th Josh Donen and 10th Max Erenberg.

Josh Fineblit placed third overall at Rupert's Land and won a spot on the Manitoba Team for the National Public Speaking Championships to be held in February. This is a qualifying Tournament for the World Individual Debate and Public Speaking Championship to be held in Germany in March. Also, Josh Morry was recently on the Manitoba Team in Vancouver to try out for the Canadian Team to the World Schools Debate Championships to be held in Athens in 2008. And Jonathan Ripstein was at the National Debate Seminar in Vancouver and placed Top Manitoban. Great work. Congratulations to all debaters!

### Ruach Running Club

Well, the Ruach Running Club has been up and, of course, running. Our first major event this year was to lead our third Annual Terry Fox Run. All high school students and staff participated in the run, which went from the campus to Assiniboine Park and back. We raised over \$200 for the Terry Fox Foundation. The Running Club has moved indoors on the Rady track for the winter months. All students are encouraged to meet us at the Main Street entrance to the school every Tuesday and Thursday morning (excluding Day 5) at 8 am. We are preparing for the Cargill Indoor Track meet and, if there is interest, the Minneapolis Track Meet. Our final event of the year will be the Manitoba Marathon. *Please contact Mrs. Connor for more information.*

## Did you Know?

**Wedding News!** - Congratulations to Math and Physics teacher Nicole Kohut who got married on July 7, 2007 to Jeff Boch.



### JESNA Award Winners!

Mazel Tov to teachers Anat Ekhoiz and Carol Leszcz who returned from the UJC General Assembly in Nashville, Tennessee where they received the Grin-spoon-Steinhardt Awards for Excellence in Jewish Education.

**New Website Coming!** - Watch for further news regarding the unveiling of a new website for the school. This exciting web space will allow visitors to search specifically for what they want; it will allow Alumni to upload their profiles; and parents/students can use the interactive school calendar to suit their needs. Funding for this new website was made possible from **The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba**. Thank you!!

### Raffle Draw Winner!

Congratulations to parent Lori Zimmer who entered the recent Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) draw to win a parking spot close to the school doors for the month of December. Brrrr....we know you will make good use of the prize at this time of the year!



## Community Announcements

### CELEBRATE CHANUKAH WITH THE RADY JCC!

**Anakhnu – Jewish GLBT Chanukah Party** – Friday, December 7 @ 7:00 p.m. – Program Fee: \$10. To confirm attendance and the location for this program, please call Tamar Barr at 477-7537 for details.

**Chanukah Family Day** – Sunday, December 9 @ 2:00 p.m. at the Rady JCC. Celebrate the Festival of Lights with your friends and family at this fabulous Chanukah carnival! Following the party, the lighting of the giant Chanukah Menorah will take place (presented by the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg and Chabad Lubavitch) *Free Admission – Everyone is Welcome!*

**Chanukah Luncheon and Celebration** – Tuesday, December 11 at 11:00 a.m. at the Rady JCC – join the Stay Young club for a festive Chanukah event. Tickets: \$10. Advance registration is required.

### RADY JCC WINTER BREAK DAY CAMPS 2008

Registration is now on for the Rady JCC Winter Break Day Camps. Camp programs are available for ages 3 – 12, and include sports, games, arts & crafts, swimming, and more. For details and registration, call 477-7510 or drop-by the Membership Desk.

**SENIORS' SHABBAT DINNER** - Friday, December 21 at 6:00 p.m.- Join other individuals for a spirited and warm Shabbat dinner experience. Call 477-7545 for details.

### JEWISH PARENT SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT

**GROUP** - Tanya Loewen, a Music Therapist from Motivating Sounds will be speaking on Music Therapy and how it can improve behaviours on December 12 at 7:00 p.m. in the Kroft Boardroom at the Asper Campus. For more information, please call 477-7496.

### ISRAELI CONCERT SERIES 07/08 SEASON

On Saturday, January 19, at 8:00 pm, the irreverent Brillaner Duo, featuring Shirley Brill, clarinet, and Jonathan Aner, piano, performs an evening of classical and Israeli music. Concert takes place at the Rady Jewish Community Centre in the Berney Theatre, Asper Jewish Community Campus, 123 Doncaster Street. Subscription packages are \$67 Rady JCC members, \$72 non-members, \$48 students. Order on-line at [www.radyjcc.com](http://www.radyjcc.com) by clicking Ticket Central or call the Rady JCC at 477-7510.

## School Gala Fundraiser

### SCHOOL GALA FUNDRAISER

Co-Chairs Nona Leibl and Sharon Delbridge invite you to join us on the evening of **Sunday, March 30, 2008** at The Fairmont Winnipeg as we **Celebrate One Hundred Years of Jewish Education in Winnipeg.**

Funds raised at the gala will establish a new **Technology Fund** to purchase new laptops, LCD projectors and software, and provide professional training for our faculty. Our goal is to provide a mobile laptop lab for classroom use, to have interactive Smart Boards in our classrooms, to upgrade our computer labs, and to enable students to use technology for learning that also connects their home with the school.



The evening will be hosted by Kinzey Posen with entertainment provided by famous Alumni and keynote speaker, Dr. Marc Kramer, Executive Director of RAVSAK, The Jewish Community Day School Network, along with a sumptuous three course meal, dancing and a live auction.

Single tickets are \$118 per person or \$236 per couple. Patron tickets are \$180 per person or \$360 per couple. Corporate tables will also be available soon for tables of ten for \$1,800 (or for tables of 8 when requested). Tickets can be purchased in January 2008.

If you are interested in volunteering on the gala, contact us at [advancement@aspercampus.mb.ca](mailto:advancement@aspercampus.mb.ca).

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