

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Ruach Reflections

A Weekly Bulletin

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPT: KEVIN ABRAHAMS AND GRANT BUCKOSKI

It's not every day you come across a department in a school where the teachers can be referred to alphabetically! But the physical education department at Gray Academy can make such a claim in the guise of their two long-serving teachers, Kevin Abrahams and Grant Buckoski, or more warmly known as Mr. "A" and Mr. "B" respectively to legions of students, parents and peers.

Mr. Buckoski explains the history of the name Mr. B. "I have often been asked why everyone calls me Mr. B. Most believe that it as simply short for Mr. Buckoski. But that is incorrect. Twenty-one years ago, (Junior Kindergarten teacher) Carol Leszcz started calling me Mr. B. and it has stuck. Back in the days of Talmud Torah - I. L. Peretz Folk School, she had a JK student who couldn't pronounce Buckoski. But if you are interested in knowing how he mispronounced it, you will have to ask Carol for that," he says mischievously.

The aim of physical education at Gray Academy is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and positive attitude to be physically active and to make healthy lifestyle choices. Students from JK – 10 learn about healthy and active living through discussion and participation in activities promoting physical fitness and well-being. Activities such as soccer, basketball and volleyball

are introduced through lead up games and the practice of fundamental skills; skill development is promoted through progressively challenging activities.

Kevin Abrahams has been with the Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education (WBJE) since 1989 when he was first employed at Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate armed with both a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Physical Education. Grant Buckoski has been with the WBJE since 1985 and began his teaching career at Talmud Torah - I.L. Peretz Folk School, and has a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education.

Between them both, they possess over 40 years experience in their areas of expertise and have become a positive force for the athletic paths of our students. The camaraderie between the two teachers is self-evident, and Mr. Abrahams confirms this by commenting that “it’s great to share an office with Grant.”

Mr. Buckoski is the physical education teacher for the elementary students from JK-6 where the learning is on movement, jumping, skipping and running with a focus on lead-up games (i.e. modified volleyball) which call for a more difficult skill set. After a strong emphasis on the development on these skills, Grant Buckoski will then incorporate some of the rules of play in order to make it easier for younger students to be engaged and for them to develop an appreciation of sport.

Mr. B. says that while class time with younger students is spent on developing the tools to do structured activity, his colleague Kevin Abrahams (Mr. A) will then facilitate students in grades 7-10 by raising their cognitive level to receive more sport specific instructions in order to refine their skills with commands such as “shoot”, “pass” and “dribble” in the example of basketball.

There are also plenty of opportunities for students to participate in intramurals at lunch time as well as at extracurricular or interschool sporting events such as golf, curling, basketball, volleyball, badminton, soccer, track and field, cross country running and flag football. There are “friendship” tournaments for students in grade 7; and for students in grades 8-12 there are competitive leagues with other schools.

Last year in the Manitoba High School Athletic Association (MHSAA), the **boys curling team were the Zone 12 Champions**, while the **Varsity Girls volleyball team made it to the final four towards the Championship**, and the **grade 8 boys’ basketball team won the Pembina Trails Athletic Association Championship** – all thanks to the wonderful support of dedicated coaches some of whom are also community volunteers. Kudos to all!

“The greatest progress I have witnessed is the advancement of girls’ sports teams. In the days of JWC on Matheson Ave., we were often hard pressed to field a single team in girls’ athletics. Due to the dedication of teachers such as Mr. Robbie Scott and, later, Mr. Jamie Kagan, we have been well represented in major sports like volleyball, basketball and soccer. Generally speaking, the participation of students in sports continues to be encouraging,” says Kevin Abrahams.

Presently, the Province of Manitoba is examining the possibility that Physical Education will become a mandatory requirement for high school graduation by extending its current reach beyond grade 10. This could take effect in another year or so.

For further information on the Physical Education Department, please contact:

Kevin Abrahams
Department Head, Physical Education
Gray Academy of Jewish Education
(204) 477-7419

Grant Buckoski
Physical Education
Gray Academy of Jewish Education
(204) 477-7417

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

The main goals of English as an Additional Language (EAL) Education according to the Manitoba Curriculum Framework of the Ministry of Education are fivefold:

1. Assist learners in adding English to their linguistic repertoire and become proficient in English;
2. Provide learning opportunities for learners to continue to develop intellectually and as citizens;
3. Assist learners in successfully integrating into the school and classroom;
4. Enable learners to benefit from school programming and to achieve the learning outcomes identified in the provincial curriculum;
5. Enhance choices and opportunities for learners to access and benefit from adult and post-secondary learning experiences.

EAL Teacher Shelley Ross has been continually honing her skills since she began her teaching career over 22 years ago at the Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education with a Bachelor of Education in Geography and Social Studies. Mrs. Ross, who has a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate of Education (PBCE) in Computers from the University of Manitoba, will also be taking courses in 2007 towards completing a Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language.

In the EAL high school program at Gray Academy, there are currently 15 students who reap the benefits of a revolutionary program that makes learning a new language faster and easier than ever before. The *Rosetta Stone Language Library* is a combination of sights, sounds and words which represent a breakthrough in language learning; it can be viewed as a multi-media

individual language lab where the aid of computers, headsets and handbooks allow students to navigate through the material at their own pace, using their respective natural learning styles.

With the *Rosetta Stone*, words become associated with objects and ideas because they are introduced in the context where meaning is clear and reinforcement is immediate. As this program uses carefully selected pictures to create its context of meaning, students work exclusively in the new language they are acquiring. The program uses the mind's innate ability to associate sounds to meaning, without translation into the native language of the learner.

"In the grade 9-12 EAL program, students receive classroom instruction including the computer program, *Rosetta Stone*, language enhancements, and curriculum assistance. However, the program goes far beyond the walls of the classroom and includes relevant real life experiences, which include shopping trips to the grocery store and the bank, and a visit to the museum and planetarium. These visits provide exposure to the students and enhance their knowledge about life in Canada," says Shelley Ross, EAL Teacher.

"The end result is that the high school EAL program is about the 'whole' student and provides experiences which will make them more confident regarding their new lives in Canada," Mrs. Ross said.

In addition to the EAL program, Mrs. Ross also teaches Social Studies for grades 7, 8 and 9, Consumer Math for grade 11 and 12 and cooking for grades 7 and 8.

Her passion for heritage buildings has also garnered attention in the city of Winnipeg, and in 2004 she was the recipient of the **Preservation Award for Excellence** "for the ongoing and outstanding commitment to educating her students about the built environment through the initiation of interesting research projects and presentations."

For further information on the EAL program for senior students, please contact:

Shelley Ross
EAL and Social Studies Teacher
Gray Academy of Jewish Education
(204) 477-7501 x853

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH PEER TUTORING

In one of the Judaic Studies courses offered at the school, ***Gemilut Chasidim***, grade 10 students learn that the world is sustained by three things: Torah (Teachings of the Scripture), Avodah (Worship of God) and Gemilut Chasidim (Acts of Kindness). This course combines an intellectual understanding of the moral values as taught in our traditions, with an emotional part of caring for oneself, our community and society and a practical aspect of charitable actions.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise there is also an elective course for students that allow them to gain experience in helping their peers on a weekly basis. The **Peer Tutoring** course, taught by Judaic Studies teacher Rochelle Gamliel, takes 17 students from grades 9-12 on a journey of academic enrichment and personal growth.

This full year credit course meets regularly at lunch whereby Mrs. Gamliel can review weekly reports and monthly responses on assignments, and discuss with students a wide range of topics from goal setting, guidelines for tutors and a code of ethics, to name a few.

At the beginning of the school year, all teachers at the school are surveyed and asked to identify students who can benefit from this one-on-one peer tutoring program. The peer tutors are then matched according to their subject of interest and age level preference with students ranging from JK to grade 10.

Mrs. Gamliel is delighted that students enrolled in the course find the experience rewarding and enjoy the positive feeling that comes from making a difference in the lives of their fellow students – whether they are new arrivals to the school, new immigrants to the city, special needs students or just in need of extra help in the classroom.

Some student peers have been so moved by the Peer Tutoring course they have even gone on to careers in Education!

For further information on the Peer Tutoring program, please contact:

Rochelle Gamliel
Peer Tutoring Program
Gray Academy of Jewish Education
(204) 477-7501 x846

VOLUNTEER FEATURE: PHIL KATZ

For five years, parent Phil Katz (Class of '72) has been a regular visitor to Morah Joyce's grade one class, teaching Hebrew to eager students who not only look forward to his arrival every week, but at the end of the school year, simply don't want to see him go! In fact, last June at the end of the school year, all the students gave Phil a goodbye group hug!

When asked what prompted his decision to volunteer amidst the usual busyness of running a dental practice, Phil Katz replied with a nonplussed response, "It's because of the children of course." But Phil confessed half-smiling, that "you just can't say no to Joyce. She is persistent."

Phil says he recognizes that the school is always looking for volunteers and it's a good place to spend your time. He chose grade one in particular because he thought it would be easy and fun and he had the time to do something worthwhile.

Phil enjoys spending one-on-one time with the students and arrives promptly every Thursday for his one-hour shift, keen to make a difference and help them with their Hebrew. He especially likes when each student comes by to his “little table” to spend a few minutes practicing their Hebrew with him.

Phil Katz explains the volunteer experience makes him feel good but “because Joyce is such an exceptional teacher, I have very little to do.”

Even though he maintains an active life by balancing work, family and working out at the Rady Centre, Phil has no immediate plans to retire from volunteering at the school. “The teachers can only provide so much individual attention to the kids,” he sums up. Truly a *mensch* we want to keep around!

For further information on volunteering with elementary students, please contact:

Joyce Kerr
Vice Principal
Gray Academy of Jewish Education
(204) 477-7409

DID YOU KNOW?

Manitoba Public Insurance sponsors the P.A.R.T.Y. Program (Prevent Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth). The P.A.R.T.Y program is an injury prevention program for teens to help educate them about the consequences of poor decision-making in relation to risk-taking behaviours such as drinking and driving, lack of seat belt use, not wearing a bike helmet and the effects of drug abuse.

On Tuesday December 19, Guidance Counsellor Ms. Peters will be taking grade 9 students to Seven Oaks General Hospital to experience a full day session following the path of an injury survivor, and meeting the people who care for them such as paramedics, emergency physicians, nurses and therapists. These dedicated professionals will describe for the visiting students the painful journey of a trauma patient, as well as provide our students with hands-on experience with the equipment and devices used in trauma care and during rehabilitation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Student Honour: We are proud to announce that grade 11 student Albert Cohen and grade 12 student Erica Lasker will represent our school at the Manitoba Youth Parliament from Dec. 26 until Dec 29. Albert has been assigned as the Honourable Member from Crowfoot and Erica will be the Honourable Member from Manicouagan; both will be speaking in the Manitoba Legislature at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 28. The public is welcome to sit in the visitor's

gallery during all of the Youth Parliament sessions. Come cheer on our Honourable Ministers Albert Cohen and Erica Lasker!

Challenge Your Principal: Student Council President Yael Shrom and Social Committee student members Gabi Kneller and Ellie Tennenhouse are pleased to announce they raised \$600 in the “Challenge Your Principal” event. As a result of fundraising dollars raised by the student body, they are now in a position to “challenge” Principal Sera to a series of activities.

“Every year the social committee is in charge of raising money for a charity, and as a reward for the students, our Principal has to perform all kinds of crazy stunts. Once we reach a certain level on the money pyramid Mr. Sera has to do that stunt and as the money grows, so do the stunts. It's great to see what a charitable school we have, they all jumped at the opportunity to help a cause and we're glad we can make it fun for them to do.

“We chose to donate our proceeds to Make A Wish Foundation because its something new. Our school always gives to CancerCare and a Jewish organization, but we wanted to try something different. Two of the stunts are actually old classics. Pie in the face and jump in the pool are *Challenge Your Principal* staples. This year we decided that we wanted to make the Principal feel exactly what we feel every year when we write exams. We raised enough money so he will get a pie in the face, jump in the pool and write four exams. Mr. Sera is also such a good sport about all of this and is more than willing to do everything without any complaints,” says Gabi Kneller and Ellie Tennenhouse, Social Committee Heads for student council.

This week, Mr. Sera had to write four different exams (math, science, English and history) and will have his marks posted soon. Mazel Tov to the Social Committee for another successful event!

Tzedekah: Mrs. Richter's grade 8 Tanach classes have been busy collecting canned goods and other food staples for the ***Jewish Child and Family Service*** in order to “adopt” four families and provide them with food hampers and treats for the Chanukah season. So far they have gathered approximately 40 cans of food and numerous boxes of cereal, macaroni and cheese, pasta and a few surprises. They hope to assemble the hampers early next week and help provide some smiles for Chanukah. Todah Rabah to the students involved!

Band Concert and Family Chanukah Program: Celebrate on Wednesday December 20 at 6:30 p.m. in the Berney Theatre with the student band under the direction of David Hasselfield, and the grade 4-6 choir under the musical direction of teacher Miriam Bronstein.

Students in grades 4-6 that will be performing in the choir are:

Sam Shuster (pianist)
Gavin Adelman
Jenna Adelman

Melissa Minuk
Dafna Schultz
Samantha Palay
Estee Katz
Sydney Chochinov
Julia Kroft
Alexa Smith
Shayna Wilhelmer
Arielle Block
Cassie Ackerman
Zack Greenberg
Claire Chochinov
Sari Cohen
Jana Elazar
Micah Sommer

Students who will be performing in the Beginner Band are:

Flute - Michael Newman
Clarinet - Noah Gall, Zach Baron, Jonah Posner
Trombone - Zach Greenberg
Alto Saxophone - Skyler Shnier, Jarod Standil Margovski
Euphonium - Jonathan Corobow
Bass - Will Levy, Gavin Adelman
Drums - Yael Borovich, Juan Mohadeb

Students who will be performing in the Senior Band are:

Flute - Shiri Berkowitz
Clarinet - Melanie Skiarski, Juan Mohadeb, Yael Borovich
Trombone - Shea Lerner
Alto Saxophone - Josh Kerr, Jonathon Peters, Blake Lerner
Trumpet - Jordyn Lerner
Tenor Saxophone - David Rubinfeld
Bass - Ian Baruch

Community Chanukah Celebration: Celebrate the Festival of Lights with family and friends on Sunday, December 17th from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Asper Jewish Community Campus, 123 Doncaster St. Come for fun at a Family Carnival with mega inflatable bouncers, games, crafts, prizes, and much more! Community Lighting of the Giant Chanukah Menorah, music by Three Times Chai, and Chanukah treats capped off with a Fantastic Fireworks display! Free admission, everyone is welcome! A program brought to you by *Rose and Max Rady Jewish Community Centre, the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, and Chabad-Lubavitch*. For further information please call 477-7510 or 477-7404.

Have a safe and enjoyable holiday season! We will return in January 2007.

Chag Sameach!

For further information on the bulletin, please contact:

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