

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Ruach Reflections

Bulletin

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MODEL U.N. PROGRAM

From February 11-18, students in grades 10 and 11 will have an opportunity to participate in a model U.N. program sponsored by Yeshiva University. This year's program takes place in Parsippany, New Jersey where ten of our students will have an opportunity to debate numerous resolutions and to experience first hand what it's like to sit on one of many U.N. councils.

Yeshiva University National Model United Nations (YUNMUN) is a simulation by students of the workings of the real United Nations. Its aim is to allow students to experience and learn about international diplomacy. Playing the roles of real UN delegates, students represent a variety of views, often ones with which they may not agree. They also have to research their countries' positions, adding both to their knowledge of world affairs and to their appreciation of the importance of preparation and critical evaluation.

Student delegates from Gray Academy will be representing Australia and Yemen on the following committees: World Food Program (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Security Council (SC), International Law Commission (ILC), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO), Committee for Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Economic & Finance Committee (EcoFin).

Gray Academy students involved with the Model U.N. Program will be representing their respective country below along with the associated U.N. sponsored program:

AUSTRALIA

Aaron Micflikier - WFP
Justin Lasker - WHO
Rachel Wolfe - UNCTAD
Tali Aziza - ILC
Samantha Shalom – CEDAW

YEMEN

Michael Schwartz - EcoFin
Maia Nelko - UNCTAD
Binyamin Cohen - ILC
Danit Hassan - UNESCO
Josh Morry - SC

The varieties of position papers from students cover a wide range of topics such as: Equality of Women, Crisis & Recovery, Third World Debt, Diplomatic Protection – More than Just a Parking Permit, International Criminal Law – Dream or Reality? Security Council Reform, Authoritarian Regimes in Central Asia, Development in Rwanda, Tropical Timber Protection and Production, Disaster Mitigation, Violence in Schools and Corporal Punishment, to name a few.

To read the position papers of High School students throughout Canada and the U.S., please go to <http://www.yu.edu/yunmun/page.asp?position>

“The trip has generated a lot of excitement amongst the students. They're going to meet new people, as well as reconnect with students from Yeshiva University whom they already know. There is a wealth of opportunities that the trip to New York provides,” Teacher Supervisor Judy Doctoroff said.

In addition to gaining incredible experience debating real-world resolutions, students will also have an opportunity to explore New York City, to see a Broadway play, visit the Empire State building and The Metropolitan Museum, tour the United Nations, walk Central Park and stay in the heart of Times Square.

This well-rounded trip will finish with teachers and students billeted with Jewish families in the Bronx area where they will have Shabbat and attend synagogue services.

This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet other Jewish students; to experience the energy and vibrancy of New York City; and to feel inspired to make a difference when they return home is made possible through the coordinated efforts of teachers Judy Doctoroff and Brenda Borzykowski! Good luck to our participants!

For further information on the Model U.N. Program please contact:

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URINETOWN: THE MUSICAL

Nominated for 10 Tony Awards on Broadway and winner of 3 awards, ***Urinetown: The Musical*** will be produced by Gray Academy of Jewish Education from March 5-8, 2007.

Urinetown began its genesis on Broadway in 2002 and Liz Smith, syndicated New York columnist, wrote at the time of its debut, "Like everyone else who first heard of a show called *Urinetown: The Musical*, I made a face and expressed disgust at the title. But so much has been written about this work that I risked it. I had the time of my life! *Urinetown* is one of the cleverest, most adroit, funniest evenings I've spent in many a season."

"**Better than *The Producers!***" proclaimed Richard Zoglin, Time Magazine. "Adventurous and ground-breaking musicals can provoke us, engage us in fresh ways, push the boundaries of the form, and make a real emotional connection with the people on stage. Musicals like 'Urinetown', the sell-out hit that aims for comic heights and keeps the audience soaring."

Urinetown begins with a friendly welcome from our narrator, Officer Lockstock who along with the adorable moppet Little Sally fills us in on the story. As the result of a terrible water shortage, private toilets have become unthinkable. All restroom activities are handled through a private corporation, the Urine Good Company. To control water consumption, people have to pay to use public toilets for their "private business." As Lockstock says, "That's the central conceit of the show."

Masses huddle in line, desperate to use Public Amenity Number 9, one of the poorest urinals in town, run by Penny Pennywise and her assistant, young everyman Bobby Strong. Trouble ensues when Bobby's father, Joseph "Old Man" Strong can't afford his urinal admission for the day. When Old Man Strong asks Pennywise to let him go for free just this once, Penny is forced to draw the line.

“The characters in *Urinetown: The Musical* are a real ‘interesting’ bunch and I am so delighted with the casting. This musical will give students a chance to shine. It is a musical of characters and will be fun to direct and perform in,” said Miriam Bronstein, Director.

Under the direction of teachers Miriam Bronstein, Brenda Borzykowski and Judy Doctoroff, the musical will be held at the **Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain from Monday March 5 – Thursday March 8 at 7 pm, with a 1 pm matinee on Wednesday March 7**. Ticket prices are \$10 for regular tickets, \$5 for the matinee and \$3 for students and will be available for sale in a few weeks. Please watch this space for further details.

WINNIPEG JEWISH COMMUNITY ORGANIZED WORKSHOPS FOR STUDENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

On **Raoul Wallenberg Day**, Wednesday, January 17, two hundred students participated in a day-long program to learn about human rights abuses in sub-Saharan Africa at Gray Academy of Jewish Education.

Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat, is credited with saving over 100,000 Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust. In 2001, Canada proclaimed that on January 17th we would commemorate Raoul Wallenberg Day to remember the brave individual who perished immediately after the war and whose courage serves as a model for us all. Wallenberg's legacy - to respect human dignity across national, ethnic and religious differences and to act courageously to combat hate and prejudice - is taken up by those who work to protect and promote human rights in Canada and around the world.

The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg and **Gray Academy of Jewish Education** developed a unique program to commemorate Raoul Wallenberg Day. The day-long conference had a double objective: to bring awareness to students about human rights issues and to empower students to undertake initiatives and action plans.

“Raoul Wallenberg Day, proclaimed by the Canadian Government in 2001, serves to remind all Canadians of the importance of standing up for the rights of others, especially those who are not strong enough to stand up for themselves. We must teach our children to respect human dignity across ethnic, religious and geographic lines. That’s what this day is all about,” said Shelley Faintuch, Community Relations Director, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg.

The morning program developed awareness of the history and issues in sub-Saharan Africa with Distinguished Visiting Professor of Conflict Resolution at Menno Simons College, (U of W) Dr. Hamdesa Tusu. Students also learned about real-life experiences of abuses through a series of workshops with facilitators from Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Congo.

During the afternoon, Judy Dueck of HURIDOCS (Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems) empowered students to develop action plans. Her session was

followed by student-led workshops to develop unique action plans and/or projects to respond to human rights issues in sub-Saharan Africa, including Darfur.

Gray Academy invited a number of local schools, including Balmoral Hall and Southeast Collegiate, with students in Grades 9-12 to join them for the day.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sewing Club: There are 12 keen “stitchers” (boys and girls) in grade 5 in our Sewing Club. This enthusiastic group is keen to learn everything from cross stitch and embroidery to knitting! Under the direction of Debra Nachtigall, the students are currently working on cross stitching their names to make a bookmark. They meet on Day 6 at lunch recess and Mrs. Nachtigall would be thrilled to have other adult coaches. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please contact Mrs. Nachtigall at 477-7501 x803.

Lunch ‘N Learn and Tefillin Club: Every other Tuesday at lunchtime, the clergy from Shaarey Zedek synagogue talk to high school students interested in furthering their knowledge about Judaism in Lunch ‘N Learn. Rabbi Green, Rabbi Pinsker or Cantor Mass discuss a variety of topics with students from Grade 7-12 such as: Does evil exist? Where does the world come from? How do Jews learn from such questions? Or they talk about G-d from a Jewish perspective. The discussions are lively and informative and the Shaarey Zedek also provides delicious pizza courtesy of the chef at the synagogue.

The Tefillin Club meets every other Wednesday with the dynamic and enthusiastic rabbis of Chabad – Rabbi Baruch and Rabbi Simmonds - for high school students in Grades 7-12. This lunch time program shows students how to put on tefillin and they discuss laws about tefillin and tefillah. Lunch is also served.

Blogging: Teachers at Gray Academy are not only at the forefront of the latest technology, but they are also using it as a teaching tool for their students. But what is “blogging”?

Blogging is a frequent, chronological publication of personal thoughts and web links. A blog is often a mixture of what is happening in a person's life and what is happening on the web, a kind of hybrid diary/guide site, although there are as many unique types of blogs as there are people. However, people maintained blogs long before the term was coined, but the trend gained momentum with the introduction of automated published systems.

A number of teachers such as Dr. Sheppy Coodin, Bonnie Rafaeli, Nicole Kohut and Judy Doctoroff use blogs as a communication tool to provide homework assignments (in case you missed class!), uplinks to recent stories relevant to their topic for a quiz, an avenue for students to give feedback on certain assignments, or simply to let their family and friends know what they are studying at school.

Dr. Coodin provides blogs for all his courses (Grade 7 Bar/Mitzvah, Grade 9/10 Science and Religion, Grade 10, 11 and 12 Biology) and if you happen to be in BIO40S, for example, there are sections called "Previous Posts" and "Archives", an article from Discover magazine that discusses a new use for DNA identification, and an interesting article about the amazing properties of spider silk, and much more for students to digest.

"The blog has become a useful way for teachers to communicate with students and parents. Because we can access our blogs from home, they are easy to update. The blogs are used for posting homework, providing a forum for online discussion, providing links to useful websites, etc," says Judy Doctoroff, Department Head, Information, Communication and Technology.

Ms. Doctoroff made several observations, namely that blogs are very user-friendly, and there is a simple step-by-step process in getting one started; several of her students use her blog to check for homework updates; parents she is in touch with also refer to the blog; and students can read each other's comments and post their own.

"I think they enjoy the whole experience because it's in familiar territory for them (using the Internet and text messaging)," Ms. Doctoroff emphasizes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Imperial Oil Academy – Teacher Innovation Grant - the Kindergarten Department was selected by the Committee of the Teacher Grant Initiative to receive a competitive grant from the Imperial Oil Academy (IOA), University of Manitoba, Faculty of Education, and Imperial Oil Academy for The Learning of Mathematics, Science and Technology.

The kindergarten area will be looking to improve science education in the classroom with this grant by encouraging students to develop an interest in science at a young age, and in doing so they will establish a foundation of knowledge and curiosity that will facilitate their learning about science throughout the remainder of their education.

With this grant, the kindergarten staff will be able to build portable science stations to be used in each of the two classrooms. They would each be made of wood, semi-enclosed and adapted to exhibit a variety of themes such as space and nature. These stations will also be created in collaboration with the high school mentoring program and adaptable to many grade levels.

Congratulations to teachers Nancy Margolis, Sandi Malamud, Ethel Amihude and Department Head for Science and Math, Jamie Kagan, at Gray Academy of Jewish Education.

Youth Employment Network – Jewish Federation of Winnipeg is pleased to announce they will be holding their 2nd annual Youth Employment Network. This Network is designed to help young people between the ages of 17 and 35 find summer/full time employment, mentoring

relationships, and career options. If you are between these ages, or know someone who is, and would like help, register to attend as soon as possible. The event will take place February 15 from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room at the Asper Jewish Community Campus, 123 Doncaster Street. For further details please call Cliff Huot at 480-7559 or via email at chuot@aspercampus.mb.ca.

For further information on the bulletin, please contact:

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