

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Ruach Reflections

A Weekly Bulletin

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GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES “ROOTS OF EMPATHY” PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

Established in 1996, the ***Roots of Empathy*** (ROE) program is an award-winning evidence-based classroom program that has shown positive dramatic effect in reducing levels of aggression and violence among school children, while raising social and emotional competence and increasing empathy.

The ROE curriculum is specifically designed for each of four age ranges: Kindergarten, Grades 1-3, Grades 4-6 and Grades 7-8.

The program's mission is to build caring, peaceful and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults. Throughout the school year, there are 27 scheduled classroom visits with a certified ROE instructor and ROE parent and their baby. This program helps children to learn about a baby's needs and development and lets children see a loving relationship between parent and child.

The goals of *Roots of Empathy* are fivefold: to foster the development of empathy; to develop emotional literacy; to reduce levels of bullying, aggression and violence and promote children's pro-social behaviours; to increase knowledge of human development, learning and infant safety; and to prepare students for responsible citizenship and responsive parenting.

"It is truly amazing to observe and facilitate this rich program where the students develop integral skills through the parent-baby relationship; our students are very enthusiastic participants, learning compassion and empathy through the wisdom of babies," says Mara Barsky, Guidance Counsellor.

Another program that Mrs. Barsky is introducing to the elementary students is called ***Kids in the Know***. This is an interactive safety program designed for children and youth from Kindergarten to High School. The purpose of this program is to reduce child/youth victimization by teaching effective personal safety strategies.

There are seven Root Safety Strategies that form the foundation of this program:

1. Shout No! Run-Tell Someone
2. Keep and Speak Secrets
3. Buddy System
4. Trust your Instincts
5. Dignity and Respect
6. If asked to go and your parents don't know – Shout No!
7. If asked to share and your parents aren't aware, Say No!

Kids in the Know is a sequential program of instruction that allows lessons to evolve at increasing levels of complexity and comprehension by recognizing the various stages of child/youth development.

For further information on "Roots of Empathy" and "Kids in the Know", please contact:

Mara Barsky
Guidance Counsellor
Gray Academy of Jewish Education
(204) 477-7501 x806

ENHANCED GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT FOR SENIOR STUDENTS PROVIDES ONE-STOP SETTING

With the arrival last year of Guidance Counsellor Diane Peters, students in grades 7 -12 now have an opportunity to be exposed to a myriad of resources available to them in the guidance department.

Whether browsing through literature on a range of social issues in between classes and on lunch or seeking information on University scholarships, Ms. Peters has made it her *raison d'être* to turn the guidance area into a relaxed, informative and welcoming environment for all senior students.

She also teaches *Life Skills* classes to all grade 7 and 8 students where they learn about study skills, conflict resolution, family life, alcohol and other drugs, healthy relationships, mental health and healthy body image.

"I want to de-stigmatize the counselling role for students and parents. Many students who come to the counselling office are coming to register for conferences and look into opportunities to volunteer or to tell me about something great that has happened in their lives. A few come to do volunteer work in my office on their free and some eat lunch with me and visit. My point is that you do not need to worry about being seen talking to the counsellor! It does not mean you have personal problems. However, more and more students are coming to talk about very serious issues in their lives and I am very happy to see that happening. We all need someone to talk to and I am here to listen," says Diane Peters.

Recently, some Gray Academy students attended offsite events at University of Manitoba to further explore career choices. Both the University of Manitoba Engineering Society and The Canadian Medical Hall of Fame held outreach days to give students the opportunity to participate in activities to assist them in making informed decisions.

Examples of some scholarships that have been highlighted in the daily school bulletin are from ***Rainbow Stage*** for students seeking to continue their education in musical theatre; ***University of Manitoba's Leaders of Tomorrow*** is designed to recognize and encourage exceptional Manitoba high school graduates who combine outstanding leadership potential with academic giftedness; and the ***Province of Manitoba's Youth Leadership Scholarship Program*** for students who have engaged in meaningful leadership and citizenship volunteer activities that are targeted at promoting healthy living in the community and at school.

Ms. Peters spends class time in the senior grades talking to students about post secondary planning with respect to university choices, scholarships and applications. Her step-by-step handout guides senior 4 students through the necessary requirements in taking control of their future. She is also available for one-on-one appointments, and encourages students to visit the Gray Academy website for valuable links to University information.

For further information on scholarships and resource material, please contact:

Diane Peters
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VISITING ISRAELI STUDENTS SHARE THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES ABOUT THE WAR IN LEBANON

Gray Academy of Jewish Education welcomes six students from Kiryat Shmona, Israel for our Partnership 2000 (P2K) program with Danciger High School. From November 26 to December 6, these visiting students will be participating in a variety of activities over the course of 10 days along with their teacher.

Please join the community in welcoming students from Kiryat, Shmona, Israel as they recount their personal experiences from the war in Lebanon, and present a video on their school that was filmed only weeks after the ceasefire:

**Wednesday, November 29, 2006
7:30 p.m.
Berney Theatre
Asper Jewish Community Campus
123 Doncaster Street**

Since 1997, the Canadian "Coast to Coast" communities (Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Ottawa and the Atlantic Region) have been matched with the five municipalities in Israel's Galilee Panhandle. P2K involves a variety of *Living Bridge* programs developed to strengthen Jewish values and to foster a connection among elementary and high school students and teachers in the Galilee Panhandle and in Canada. This is achieved through innovative educational projects, video conferencing and reciprocal visits.

"The participants in this program are selected through certain criteria some of which are their leadership skills and community service, and ultimately what the Jewish Federation hopes to achieve is to build strong relationships and the leaders of tomorrow for the future of our community and Israel's community," says Elaine Goldstine, Director, Financial Resources Development, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg.

"Succession is important and these students are the leaders of tomorrow. As the Diaspora is a key factor in the survival of the state of Israel, this program builds a visceral link and ensures its connection."

Co-sponsored by the 2006 Combined Jewish Appeal/Women's Campaign and the Partnership 2000 committee, ***this emotional and engaging evening will present a side of the war in Lebanon not seen or heard before in the media – the perspective from students.***

Limited seating so please RSVP to 477-7424. A dessert reception will follow.

The P2K Student Committee is devoted to keeping the Partnership 2000 program active and maintaining strong ties with Israel and is chaired by students Cara Katz (grade 12) and David Coodin (grade 11).

“After learning the history and geography of Israel for our entire high school careers, P2K gave us an opportunity to put a face on Israel. We have a personal connection to the students at Danciger and to Kiryat Shmona, and we have developed a passion to further the goals of the P2K program. As involved high school students at Gray Academy, we see the benefits of this program,” Cara and David enthused at a recent P2K planning meeting.

Funding for Partnership 2000 (P2K) is supported by the **Jewish Federation of Winnipeg**.

For further information on the arrival of Danciger High School students and/or to help out, please contact:

Lori Binder
Vice Principal
Gray Academy of Jewish Education
(204) 477-7485

CANADIAN JUGGLING CHAMPION PERFORMS AT JW JUGGLEFEST 2006

With 14 year's experience, Canadian Juggling Champion Robin Chestnut will be a judge at Gray Academy of Jewish Education in the school's annual JW Jugglefest on November 30 at noon in the Berney Theatre at the Asper Jewish Community Campus. Students in grade 7-12 will be attending the performances.

JW Jugglefest 2006 promises to be an exciting opportunity for the audience to see students strut their stuff in juggling, unicycling and performing with diabolo.

Students who qualified for the competition are Asher Billinkoff, Ross Book, Yitzchak Cohen, Yavniel Field and Reese Ratson.

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.

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.

A school-wide rally will also take place on November 30 at 3:00 p.m. where the winner of JW Jugglefest 2006 will be announced and presented with a \$50 Future Shop gift certificate. Robin Chestnut will also be performing at 3:00 p.m. in the gym

SHOW YOUR SCHOOL PRIDE WITH GRAY WEAR – GO RAIDERS GO!

We are once again pleased to announce that Gray Academy of Jewish Education has apparel available with our logo on it. Samples of many of these items were available for viewing during parent-teacher interviews this week.

A sizing day will take place on Tuesday, November 28th in the MPR from 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. and from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

In an attempt to continue to foster school pride we hope that students and parents will consider buying our apparel with the Gray Academy logo. **Completed order forms are to be handed into the office with a cheque (payable to Gray Academy) no later than Friday, December 1st.** If you have any questions please call the school office.

For further information on the weekly bulletin, please contact:

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