

Ruach Reflections

The Newsletter of Gray Academy of Jewish Education

January/February 2011 Shevat/Adar I 5771

Torah Celebration



It is the end of February 2011 and we are still in a deep freeze. But that is only the weather outside.

Our students, staff and parents have been involved in a variety of heart warming programs over the past two months that have warmed our hearts on the inside making it easy to forget the cold on the outside.

Shabbaton 2011 - Our Grade Six students spending a traditional Shabbat as a family from sundown on Friday to Havdallah with the parents on Saturday evening, only reconfirmed to everyone in the MPR on Saturday that yes my son/daughter can sleep out and they do feel safe and comfortable with their "School Family". This definitely warmed the hearts of our parents, students and staff.

Grade 2 Chaggigat Ha-Torah (picture above) in the Berney Theatre mid February was also a special evening. Preparation for a program like this takes dedication on the part of students, teachers and parents. This hard work of learning ones' part, reciting poems as a group, knowing when to get on and off the bleacher takes team work. When you see team work in action as parents, grandparents and family guests can attest to who were there, you cannot help but get a warm feeling inside. It was a "Kvell" evening no doubt.

Other activities that warmed the hearts of all and sent a buzz through the school over the past two months included Buck Pierce of the Blue Bombers coming to read for I Love To Read Month, Kindergarten students parading through the halls on "100 Day" and Noah Jacobson (famous Astronaut of the Maccabeats) coming for the Annual Gr. 10 – 12 Jewish Retreat at Cedarwood.

Don't let anyone fool you about "Winterpeg" and especially Gray Academy. What can be crazy cold on the outside sure can be warm and exciting on the inside. Enjoy this edition of Ruach Reflections. I am sure you will also feel warm on the inside after reading it.

L'Hitraot,
Joyce Kerr

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Gr. 10 - 12 Retreat

This year, just like every year, the grade tens, elevens, and twelves had the privilege of attending the Jewish Awareness Retreat out at Camp Cedarwood on Lac du Bonnet. Retreat this year was January 27 - 30, 2011. Each year, amazing advisors are flown in from New York to be with us for the weekend. Retreat started off on Thursday morning and the excitement on the bus could not be contained. The minute we arrived at Camp Cedarwood we knew it would be a great weekend.

The weekend was packed with many different activities. We had the opportunity to go outside, play football in the snow, skate, and go on the infamous toboggan slide. We also had many breakout sessions in groups with the advisors. The sessions included discussions about leadership, Judaism, love and relationships, God, and the classic discussion about why bad things happen to good people. During the discussions we did not only have the opportunity to hear the valuable opinions of our advisors, we had the rare opportunity to discuss the issues with our peers, some of which we rarely speak to. The discussions on retreat tend to be very enlightening, and this year was no exception.

The weekend was of course filled with a lot of praying and a lot of singing. The songs we sang over and over again this retreat were "Minyan Man" and "Candle Light" by the Maccabeats (one of the advisors is in the Maccabeats). To end the amazing retreat off on Saturday night we had the traditional retreat talent show. It's always fun to see your peers perform and show their talents.

On Sunday morning everyone was very sad to leave retreat. It was an enlightening spiritual weekend that will never be forgotten. As a grade twelve student I can say that I am very sad that I will not be going on another retreat because the retreats have been so valuable to me and a place for me to grow. We are all so fortunate to be at this school and to be able to take part in retreats year after year.

Sharna Nelko (Gr.12, Student Council President)



Top to Bottom:
All Smiles at Retreat
Workshop with Barry Bender
Varsity Boys Bball Team Sings at Retreat Talent Show
Gr. 12 Girls Sing at the Talent Show
Yeshiva University Staff: Roni, Noah and Nava

Dedication Of Interactive Torah Scroll

My Bobi Jen turned 100 years old last September! Her children decided to celebrate this very special milestone by having a party at Bobi's condo. The party began in the living room on a Sunday afternoon while Bobi was sleeping in the bedroom. We were not certain that she would have the energy to participate in the festivities but it felt important to celebrate anyway.

The great grandchildren were excited to be there and they enjoyed all the treats that accompany a birthday celebration. Little did they know that Bobi Jen would actually get up and join us all in the living room. She was attracted by the idea of seeing all the "young fry" celebrating. Bobi joined us in singing Happy Birthday as well as her favourite Hebrew and Yiddish songs. I will always remember the look of joy on her face as she clapped & sang. There was nothing more dear to her than celebrating with family. It is a testament to the love her children felt for her that she still lived in her own home.

Friends and family wanted to mark this special occasion. Since Jewish education was very important to Bobi, her 4 children thought it would be nice to set up a scholarship at Gray Academy, where her son, Jerry, had been principal for 17 years, where all 3 Winnipeg grandchildren had gone to school, and where 9 great grandchildren are currently attending. Grandson (in law) Sheppy Coodin suggested that perhaps a piece of Jewish art could commemorate this special occasion.

As luck would have it, a beautifully illustrated Torah scroll was found by Jerry & Susan Cohen on a recent trip to Italy. Designed by Israeli artist Michal Meron, it was intended to be a hands-on interactive educational tool for teaching Torah to young children. Bobi's family, together with Rory Paul, decided that this was a terrific way to celebrate Bobi's love for Israel and her strong support of Jewish education. Arrangements were made to have the scroll shipped from Italy and it now hangs in the hallway next to the Art room where it can be used by teachers and students to study Torah.

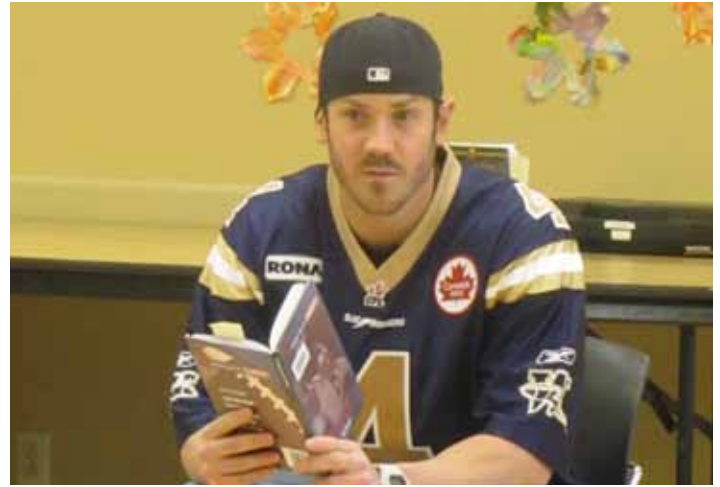
Bobi Jen died peacefully in late December, 2010. She is loved and remembered by her children Jerry & Susan Cohen, Em Cohen, Barbara & Robbie Hyman, Saralyn & Jim Greenblatt, brother Abe Simkin and many grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Naomi Coodin



Left: Cohen Family At Dedication in January
Right: Dedication Inscription

Look Who Came To Visit ...



I Love To Read Month

Winnipeg Blue Bomber quarterback Buck Pierce read to grades 4, 5, and 6 on Wednesday, February 9th to help us celebrate I Love to Read Month. Buck read from two books: a few pages on the Green Bay Packers from *Vince Lombardi* by Greg Roensch, from the series *Football Hall of Famers*, and the first pages from book one in the new series *The Heroes of Olympus* titled *The Lost Hero*. Students were spellbound as he read and answered questions like, 'does it hurt to be sacked?' To have someone our students admire so much read to them and be seen truly enjoying a book has made a lasting impact on our young people. Buck visited Mr. Abraham's grade 8 gym class for a few minutes before reading where he answered questions and signed autographs.

Other Activities in the Month included:

- **Grades 2 – 6: Read – A – Thon**
- **K- Gr. 2: Reading BINGO**
- **JK – Gr. 3: Buddy Reading**
- **Gr. 1 – 4: Musical Reading Game**
- **Gr. 5: Making Bookmarks for P2K Delegation to take to Israel**
- **JK – Gr. 6: Mystery Readers and Guest Readers including Buck Pierce** (Quarterback for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers), **Kathy Knowles** (director of the OSU Children's Library Fund), **Meira Cook-Libin** (Gray Academy parent and author), **Heather Stephanson** (MLA Tuxedo), **Resa Ostrove** (former Gray Academy Teacher and author)

and a whole bunch of JK parents, grandparents, siblings and aunts and uncles.

We are looking forward to Winnipeg's Mayor Sam Katz, local award winning author Eva Wiseman, and a member of Jennifer Jones' Canada curling team who will be reading to our students over the next few weeks.



Top To Bottom:
Buck Pierce - Winnipeg Blue Bomber
Kathy Knowles
Resa Ostrove
Buddy Reading: Levi Garber, Michael London and Izzy Silver
Musical Books

Gr. 10 Lunch with JCFS Survivor's Group

On Thursday, February 17, 2011 the Grade 10 students at Gray Academy Of Jewish Education held a luncheon for the Holocaust Survivor's Group from the Gwen Sector. Considering how cold the day was, there was a good turn out of members who came to enjoy a lunch prepared by the Grade 9 Cooking class. Entertainment was provided by the Grade 10 students and we also did an arts and crafts project. The entertainment included a spectacular juggling show performed by Seth Baker. Morgan Shalom sang two wonderful songs. The seniors participated in a Trivia game based on "Jewish Winnipeg". After the meal, each table prepared picture frames with the students for the seniors to take home with them. Adi Farage took pictures of every table to put inside the picture frames for them to remember the enjoyable time they had with us. Overall the luncheon was a great success. We thank everyone who contributed to the day.

Meital Kraut & Ben Waldman (Gr. 10)



Shabbaton

This year's Grade 6 Shabbaton was a huge success! The theme this year was My Jewish Connection. The students explored the many windows and doorways into Judaism such as prayer, Jewish camp, dance, music, tzedakah, art, theatre, family, Shabbat, holidays and many more. The students created an art gallery using 10 different artistic medium, to express their "Window into their Jewish Connection". They wrote about their own Jewish identity. Following Havdallah, parents had the opportunity to view the gallery and were very impressed with the depth of thought and commitment that their children expressed. After the Shabbaton, the elementary classes had the opportunity to view the art gallery with the Grade 6 students serving as tour guides. The students also created a movie about our love for the land of Israel under the direction of Shirit Pais. During Shabbat itself, we were fortunate to hear the wisdom of many people, including Rabbi Lander, Erez Rotem, Machon Madrichim, and many teachers from our school community. Special thanks go out to our facilitators, Hart Jacobs and Ari Posen and their amazing Gray Academy high school Madrichim for their leadership and spirit. Sheri Winters led a most meaningful Shabbat Morning service and each student read from the Torah, an awesome moment for all present.



Top to Bottom:
Erez Rotem - JNF
Fivie Gunn - Challah Making
Rabbi Lander - Keynote Speaker

Out and About

Gr. 8 Global Connections Goes To St. Amant

On our Global Connections class field trip, we went to the St. Amant Centre. St. Amant Centre offers many resources such as a residence, a school, and a work place for many people. St. Amant is well-funded by various charities as well as the government. While we were there, we heard mostly about the school that is part of the Centre. The goal of St. Amant Centre is “to free each individual spirit in order to allow them to be themselves.” There are 200 people living at St. Amant and forty of these residents are children from the ages of five to twenty-one.

On the tour, we went through the school. We saw many different classes and students and learned that the school runs year round. Joyce Douglas, a teacher at the school, led us through the facility and explained all the different types of services offered. We saw the machines that assist the residents in learning how to stand. We also saw residents using exercise bikes in order to strengthen their leg muscles. We were shown the many classrooms in which the young residents and students with special needs from the community attend school. There was also a cooking class in progress during our tour in which we were able to observe the students eating a treat which they had prepared for themselves.

Before the tour of the general Centre, we sat in a seminar room. We got to see a number of toys that the students learn with on a daily basis. We were shown a communications aid that assists the students with talking. The teacher allowed us to experiment with these machines

by pushing the buttons that were part of the system.

In conclusion, my reflections on visiting St. Amant Centre are as follows. I discovered by watching the staff work with the residents that there is great empathy for people living with physical and cognitive challenges. I was in awe of the staff’s patience and determination to ensure that their residents and the individuals from the community are educated through the best possible methods. I feel that this was an eye-opening experience for me because I have a younger brother on the autism spectrum, and, after observing some of the residents at the Centre, I realized that there are people with far worse problems than my brother. This gave me a new appreciation for my brother’s strengths. Often, it becomes quite discouraging to live with someone who is so limited in his abilities. However, discovering that my brother does not need to live in a residential facility gave me a significant sense of relief.

Jeremy Morantz (Gr. 8)



Ignite the Passion - Adam Beach

On February 16th, Ms. Buffie accompanied eleven grade eight and ten students to a unique event which focused upon the concept of social justice through the eyes of youth. This event was organized by the *Council of School Learners* and Grammy Award nominee, Adam Beach, a Winnipeg First Nations person, was on hand to share his personal story and explain how he uses his notoriety to promote social change.

Our students were exposed to First Nations’ concerns from an Aboriginal perspective. The main teaching was that social justice must begin with the medicine wheel philosophies of honoring our emotional, physical, spiritual and mental selves. Change must initially come from within each person.



Yeshiva University National Model U.N. 2011

Model UN a two-night three-day conference where Jewish schools from across North America send delegations of students who represent different countries in the UN. This year was the first year there were students from Brazil, South Africa and United Kingdom representing the Red Cross. Each student is placed in a committee of approximately thirty countries, with two topics that we have done research and written a position paper about. During the conference, each committee attempts to come to a resolution about their topics.

During Model UN, we had the opportunity to meet and talk to other Jewish students from across the globe and compare schools, communities and lifestyles being Jewish teenagers. It was extremely interesting to learn how teens from other places in Canada and the US incorporate Judaism into their lives.

Overall, Model UN was an amazing experience. Not only

did we have the chance to see New York City, spend a wonderful Shabbat with Barry Bender, and meet other Jewish teens from around the world, we also had the chance to resolve world issues, develop our skills and make lasting connections.

Adi Farage, Dina Haber & Jana Elazar (Gr. 10)



Festival du Voyageur: Gr. 4, 5 and HS French



Gr. 3 Goes To Winnipeg Harvest

We brought donations to Winnipeg Harvest to help other people. Now I know how much people need help from us. We checked potatoes and put the good ones in a box and the bad ones in the garbage. I saw many seniors volunteering at Winnipeg Harvest, too. I saw how much food Winnipeg Harvest gives to families in need. It hurt me when I found out how many families don't have enough money to buy food.

Maya Polevoi (3-122)

Winnipeg Harvest was a field trip that made me appreciate what I have. It was fun and sad at the same time. It was sad because all the food there was for people in need and it was fun because we got to weigh ourselves and put potatoes in a crate. I thought the information they told us was very interesting including how many people come there every month. Winnipeg Harvest was interesting, sad, and most of all so much fun!

Jonah Perlmutter (3-122)



We Are The Champions



Top Left: JV Boys Basketball:

- 1st Place SBDCenturion Challenge
- 1st Place Westwood Warriors Invitational
- 3rd Place Kildonana East Collegiate Tournament
- 2nd Place Shaftesbury Titians Tournament
- 1st Place Portage La Prairie Tournament

Top Right Varsity Boys Basketball:

- 1st Place Ed Schreyer Invitational (Beausejour)
- 1st Place Portage La Prairie Invitational
- B Side Winner Nelson Mac "Mac Attack"
- 2nd Place Windsor Park Invitational
- B Side Winner Churchill Tournament

Reach For The Top:

- Senior Team 1st Place Warren Tournament
- Intermediate Team 1st Place Shaftesbury Tournament

What's Coming Up...

Mar. 6 & 7: Asper Cup

Mar. 13 - 23: P2K Delegation of Israel @ Gray Academy

Mar. 18: Purim Activities

Mar. 28 - Apr. 1: Celebration of Science Week

Alumni Happenings...

Mazel Tov...

Yael Kaplan (class of '10) for being chosen U of W's Wesman Player of The Week (Feb. 22)

Todah Rabah...

Shane Marmel (class of '06) for taking the WBJE Board picture this year. shanemarmel@gmail.com

Alumni news to share... email jkerr@grayacademy.ca

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