

Ruach Reflections

The Newsletter of Gray Academy of Jewish Education

September/October 2010 Tishrei/Cheshvan 5771

Welcome Back!



Welcome back to what I am anticipating will be another Gray Academy school year filled with learning and sharing of group and personal successes.

We have only been in school 32 days and already we have travelled across the country to a debate tournament, proved that Gray Academy has volleyball teams that work hard to win, participated in the first ever Eco-Shift community wide program, collected food for Kapparot for the JCFS food cupboard and the list can go on and on.

We have 609 students at school this year. This means we have 609 individuals whose families have made the commitment to give their children a Jewish day school education. This also means that we have 609 students who learn in a variety of ways. The process of learning to reach the end product is what we need to celebrate every day.

Our doors are always open. Share in our learning.

The Gray Academy website is a great place to start. It gives you everything from day to day goings on to a photo gallery that will for sure make you smile as you look at the pictures.

What a fantastic start to a new school year.

L'Hitraot,

Joyce Kerr
Vice Principal

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Environment Awareness Week

On Sunday, September 26, 2010 I had the pleasure to attend Eco-Shift, an event coordinated by the Jewish Federation to bring environmental awareness to the Jewish community. There were two parts to this event: the morning / afternoon and the evening. During the morning and into the afternoon many booths were set up at the Asper Jewish Community Campus, including one that I participated in; the Carbon Footprint Booth. At this booth people were encouraged to calculate their Carbon Footprints – how much carbon they use and what affect it has on the environment. The program that we used would tell you how many earths would be needed to support the world's population if everyone lived like they did. Most people needed around 2.5 earths or more! There were many other booths there to teach people about being environmentally friendly and buying environmentally friendly products. There was a good turn out of people and I had a lot of fun doing it. I think it really taught people a lot about what we're doing to our environment and how they can help change things.

Then the main event came. In the evening, I was lucky enough to have been invited to go and hear Dr. David Suzuki speak at Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, but not only that, I was allowed to attend the pre-party and meet him! There were many people there, including Premier Greg Selinger and Mayor Sam Katz, however David Suzuki was, of course, the star. I was fortunate enough to have a few moments with Dr. Suzuki, however brief they may have been. He asked me about what initiatives I had taken to help our environment, and when I answered he really seemed to care and listen. It was an honour to speak to him.

The pre-party group was then invited upstairs to the sanctuary where Dr. Suzuki gave a motivating speech about changing the status quo. He is such an amazing speaker, and so inspiring as well. Sometimes I find it hard to imagine how doing simple things could slow down global warming. But after hearing Dr. Suzuki speak, it reminded me that if everyone thought that way, we wouldn't ever slow down or possibly stop global warming. But if everyone did just one little thing, maybe we really could make a difference. It's up to us to stand together and make a change. Dr. Suzuki does big things for the environment, like protesting with leaders of major corporations and government. But we don't all have to do that. Simple things, like using phosphate-free dishwasher detergents decrease our effect on the environment. Dr. Suzuki reminded his whole audience and me that it's not only the big things that can bring change; it's the little things. It's a call to action. We must all do our part.

Hannah Lank (Gr. 8)



Top to Bottom:

Hannah Lank and Dr. David Suzuki

Carbon Footprint Booth: Shira Devris and Ben Waldman

CIBC "Plant A Tree Project" - JK students

Gray Goes Green Bags: Haley & Lexie Yurman, Naomi Wolfe

"One Sight" Eye Glasses Donations - Ashlyn Gertenstein, Emily Putnan Kass, David Boqomolny

Gray Goes Green - Contest Winners

1st Place: Ryan Richters (JK)

About a year ago, our family made the decision to “go green” in a serious way. Our most exciting change this year (and the one that usually raises eyebrows) was the commitment we made to try to get rid of our car by the end of this winter. We have bought a bakfiets (literally “box bike” in Dutch), which allows us to transport our two small kids (ages 1 and 3 years) in relative comfort. Since the beginning of the summer, we have biked and bussed everywhere, with only very limited use of our car. Until recently, we were transporting the kids in our chariot trailer, but this is not adequate for extreme weather travel. We have had the bakfiets for a little over a month, but already it has transformed how we think about transportation. Yes, it takes us a bit longer to get from A to B, and we can’t just decide to go across town and arrive there essentially instantly like you would with a car. It takes about 45 minutes to get our son Ryan to his gymnastics class. It took us over an hour to take a family trip to the Mint over the summer long weekend. On the other hand, the journey itself becomes a part of the experience. We have found that it is not such a sacrifice to budget a little extra time into some of our trips, and we can decide to “make a day of it” when we go somewhere a bit further. This extra time is not “lost”, instead we find that we are appreciating the journey and the scenery a lot more than we used to when we were buffered in our car. And

sometimes we get there faster – yup, we’re that crazy family on a bike that sneaks past the long line of cars and minivans pulling up to drop their kids off at school. Riding a bike in winter isn’t for everyone (though we do encourage you to try it before you say “never”). But even choosing to ride bikes instead of driving only in warm weather can cut your fuel consumption in half. We would be happy to talk to other families who are interested in going “car free” (even seasonally or part-time) and/or would like to test drive the bakfiets. Please don’t hesitate to email us at manitoba@richters-family.org.

Melanie, Michael, Ryan (JK) and Sarah Richters



2nd Place: Micah Grubert Van Iderstine (6B)



3rd Place - Hannah Lank (Gr. 8)

Whenever I attempt to do something to lessen my impact on the environment, I always wonder “How will this little thing that I am doing make ANY difference whatsoever on the environment?” And usually it takes me a little while, but in the end I realize that it’s not about making the whole country change, it’s about making little changes yourself. Small changes add up..... My family has numerous talks about what we can do to help stop global warming, and we have put many of our ideas into place around our house; we use almost only compact fluorescent light bulbs, shut of the lights when we leave a room, un-plug appliances when they’re not in use or put them into sleep mode, turn off the tap when we’re brushing our teeth, use only phosphate free dishwasher and washing-machine detergent and buy locally grown and organic foods. We also recycle. However there are also many things we wish to accomplish and are slowly starting, including: composting, less driving and eating fewer meat products. It’s our goal to make as little an impact on our frail environment as possible, because if not, who knows what will be left of our stunning earth for our children and grandchildren to enjoy? (If you are interested in reading Hannah’s full entry please email jkerr@grayacademy.ca)

Look Who Came To Visit ...



Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

On Wednesday October 13th, Gray Academy students were treated to an eye-opening hour-long concert, presented by WSO, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Our Grades 7 – 12 students and band students had the opportunity to listen to and be a part of a performance by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. This is the fourth year the WSO has presented this program. The full orchestra will be visiting seven different high schools over the next few weeks to give an hour long concert. Prior to our concert on Wednesday our students were introduced to the symphony through music over the PA, music in classes as well as some discussion as to the story that a song in a symphony can present. The orchestra played several familiar selections, plus a few new ones, including a work composed by a Manitoban composer. They performed everything from Beethoven's Fifth to a Beatles Medley to the theme from "Raiders of the Lost Ark". At one point during the symphony, Becky Frohlinger and I even got to perform alongside some of Winnipeg's finest musicians, playing the "champagne cork" in a symphonic work by the German composer Strauss. In addition to that, Zach Greenberg had the unbelievable opportunity to stand on the conductors' podium and direct all sixty musicians and – in my opinion – did a wonderful job. In addition to so many amazing group pieces, the concert also included a piece featuring last year's Young Musicians' Award on lead violin. The Symphony Orchestra's conductor offered many interesting facts in between the musical pieces, making the concert not only entertaining, but an educating and interactive experience for the students. I think that the main thing that students took away from the concert is a newfound appreciation for classical music and the extremely talented musicians who perform it.

Elliot Lazar (Gr. 11)



From Top to Bottom:
WSO Conductor Alexander Mickelthwate
Violinist Warming Up
WSO Plays

WSO Young Soloist Competition Winner - Heather Stewart
"Champagne Being Served" by Mr. Sera

Gr. 3 Postcard Exchange Program

The Grade 3 students are participating in a Canada Wide Postcard Exchange. There are 61 classroom participants from as far away as Nunavut, British Columbia and Newfoundland. Most of the postcards come from grade three classes. We were very excited to receive our first postcard at the end of September. We read all about Sylvan Lake and found it on our map of Canada. We are responsible for sending out postcards to 60 schools. We brainstormed ideas to include in the postcards that we are sending out this month. Feel free to drop by and see our Grade Three Discover Friends bulletin board. We will be posting new postcards throughout the year.



Sam Konig

On Tuesday, October 19, Sam Konig came to speak to the Grade 12 classes about university life in Canada. Sam is the national Director of Hillel Canada. He presented information about what is available “jewishly” on campuses, including everything from floor hockey to Israel Advocacy. He spoke about Hillel – what it is and why students want to get involved once they are in university. Sam also met with Dr. Ashrafi to discuss emerging trends in high schools across the country and how Hillel is working to provide educational resources for the students outside the classroom.



Sam Konig - Director Of Hillel Canada

Celeste Waldman

Mrs. Celeste Waldman came to our school (Gray Academy) to talk to both grade five classes about diabetes. She told us what two types of diabetes there are.

We learned about carbohydrates and to be aware of how much we eat in a day. She showed us how to read the labels on some food wrappers that she handed out. We also learned some of the free foods that diabetics can eat without their sugar going up. We learned that exercising makes your sugar level low.

Mrs. Waldman is Josh Waldman's mom. Josh is in our grade. Joshua has Type One Diabetes and we now understand what he needs to do in a day to control his Diabetes. Thank you Mrs. Celeste Waldman for taking the time to talk to us.



Josh and Celeste Waldman

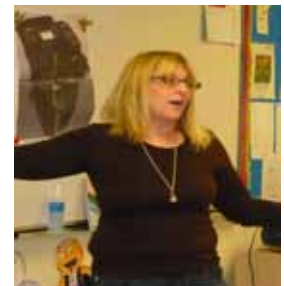
Hannah Levit (Gr. 5)

Lara Rykiss

Lara Rykiss came to the grade six classes on Tuesday, November 26 to talk about the Election. She told us what she was going to do on Election Day. We learned that Sam Katz's name is at the top of the ballot. We also learned that there are three different elections. We learned that you need a voting card to vote. We also learned that you need to go to the Clerk For Oaths booth if you just moved to Winnipeg in the last six months. They just got

this new high tech machine to count the ballots. We learned that S.V.O. stands for Senior Voting Officer. Lara brought great pictures and showed us what a ballot looks like. We asked a lot of questions. Now we have a better idea of what happens on Election Day.

Lexi Palansky and Michaela Rykiss (Gr. 6)



Lara Rykiss

Out and About

Gr. 11/12 Jewish Leadership Retreat

The Gray Academy, Jewish Leadership class left for Gimli on October 14th. We spent two nights out at the Lakeview Resort, taking part in the Shabbat activities and leadership games. Everyone learned some helpful tips on how to run a successful Shabbaton. Mr. Goldstine, Ms. Richter came along with our class and Dr. Coodin ran the Shabbaton. We all participated in different parts of the Shabbat services throughout the weekend. Before Shabbat began we were all encouraged to follow the rules of Shabbat and specifically encouraged to give away our cell phones for the weekend. This would allow us to have a meaningful Shabbat without any distractions. During the weekend we learned how to run opinion based discussion activities and fun competitive games. Dr. Coodin truly showed our class how to organize and run an interesting and exciting Shabbat weekend retreat. The Shabbat was meaningful and allowed for everybody to enjoy the weekend.



Havdallah Bonfire in Gimli

Meir Cohen (Gr. 11)

Gr. 11 Lifecycle Field Trip

I think that what I took away from the visit was the concept and reality of the whole situation of death. Learning about it in class felt almost as though what was discussed was very distant, but when everything stood before me, it became very real..." Elliot Lazar

"this was an all around very meaningful field trip....I honestly think that I am now fully aware of the whole process of the funeral and preparing the body, not that I really say that is something I wanted to know, but it is a good thing to know and I am glad that I was made aware. Most People do not fully understand what occurs, but I have had the privilege to understand and to have gotten an in-depth look at the whole process." Baillie Shuster

"...throughout this fieldtrip I learned the Jewish ways of burial as well as the rituals of other religions. Although it is interesting to know the beliefs of other religions, I agree with the concepts of the Jewish tradition. It was not until two weeks ago, that I discovered all the different principles of burial and I feel better now knowing them."

Yael Rudoy

"I am very glad that I attended, so thank you for opening this up for parents. My trepidation about coming was that like most people, I guess, it's hard to deal with death, so I was concerned about how I would feel being in the Chesed Shel Emes and seeing what really happens behind the scenes. As I told my husband, I got quite teary a number of times, especially when one of the students in the group I was in asked about how they deal with a baby or child (too sad to even fathom), but I found the whole session to be very interesting, informative and definitely worthwhile. While not surprising, it was good to see and hear that there is a lot of attention paid to giving the utmost respect to the deceased."

Marla Shragge (Gr.11 Parent)

Kindergarten and Gr. 3 Visits Fort Whyte

Fort Whyte is so cool! I felt dizzy when we were walking. It was cool when I saw the mole outside. It was cool when we saw the catfish. The burrowing owl was my favourite part. I loved the big pond and the geese. When we were in the "cold hut" I was scared. Bye, Fort Whyte!
Michael Karasick (3A)

On October 13th we went to Fort Whyte. At Fort Whyte we saw fish-like turtles, mini fish and catfish. We also went on a scavenger hunt to find things like bison, prairie dogs and tipis. We saw a burrowing owl that flew over us. We also found things called galls with bugs in them. Fort Whyte was awesome.
Josh Stoller (Gr. 3A)

I went to Fort Whyte Nature Center with my class. I saw a swamp with a dead bee in it. I learned that there's such a thing as a "wind traveler and a tummy traveler. I was very excited to see a cloud of geese above us. Did I mention that I also saw a prairie dog. I had an amazing time at Fort Whyte!
Ruth Seyoum (3B)

I saw and learned many things at Fort Whyte Nature Center. I saw a cloud of geese coming back from getting food. I went in a teepee. It was really cool. I also learned that bison poo helps the soil. I learned what a grassland was and about different plants and seeds. I had a great time.
Denise Levi (3B)

Fort Whyte Alive is where everyone can get close to nature and learn and explore new things. You can touch the animals at the touch museum. You can also take a lot of pictures. You can also see live animals like skunks, snakes, deer and raccoons. Fort Whyte Alive is in the country. It's also a place to call home.
Misha Cook Libin (3C)

My class went to Fort Whyte. Prairie dogs, fish, owls and other animals live in Fort Whyte. We guessed animals' footprints in a sandbox. I had fun.
Ben Goldstein (3C)



Top Left: Gr. 3 Scavenger Hunt
Top Right: Kindergarten's Tal S. and a Cougar
Bottom Left: Looking at Insects in the Microscope
Bottom Right: Resting in a Teepee

Gr. 12 Mock Car Crash

On the morning of September 22nd, the Grade 12's departed to Chapel Lawn to witness a mock car crash demonstrated by a group of volunteers consisting of ordinary Winnipeggers, RCMPs, paramedics, and police. As we arrived, being in a cemetery brought out the realism of what we were about to witness. Although the car crash was to be "fake", the location gave an eerie vibe that allowed us all to realize how serious and deadly a real car crash can become. We sat down and were given a presentation on the risks of driving under the influence and were shown videos of various accidents, some driving accidents and other more minor accidents. After the presentation we went outside to bleachers set up in the parking lot. Soon enough, the mock car crash started and two cars were in view, one small car that was smashed in to by a large truck. As paramedics, police, and firefighters arrived on the "scene", the crash became more realistic. It was easy to see that if this were to be real, someone would have lost their life all because of the mistake of the other driver texting while driving. Someone in the back seat of the car was crying uncontrollably, and once she was taken in the ambulance, the scene became hauntingly quiet. It was obvious that the front seat passenger was presumed "dead". The woman's body was wrapped up and sent off in a funeral car, and from there we were told to return to the chapel to attend her funeral.

Later on in the day survivors of car accidents spoke us to, one woman who lost her leg because she was driving drunk. The experience as a whole was eye opening, especially for the majority of us in the grade who have our license. It is safe to say that the experience will stick with us for the rest of our lives. Any day one of us could be in the situation we witnessed if we are not careful and safe drivers.

Brittany Silverstein (Gr. 12)

Winnipeg Board Of Jewish Education

Annual General Meeting

*Opening Our Doors
Technology: Showcasing Robotics*

Tuesday, November 9, 2010 2 Kislev 5771
123 Doncaster Street

7:00 pm - Business Portion (Berney Theatre)
7:30 pm - Robotics Showcase (MPR)

Gray Academy of Jewish Education Presents

THIR¹³TEEN The Musical

Tues., Nov. 30 – Thurs., Dec. 2, 2010
7:00pm
Franco-Manitobain Cultural Centre
340 Provencher Blvd.
\$13.00

Tickets can be purchased from the school office
beginning Monday, November 15

Gerald Gray z"l



The Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education, staff and students mourn the passing of Gerald Gray.

Gerry Gray, after whom our school is named, was a community leader, visionary, and philanthropist. At a time when Jewish community pluralistic day school education enrolment was waning in the city of Winnipeg, Gerry, as an integral member of our community, envisioned a thriving campus where all children, regardless of background, would have an opportunity to study and learn at an educational institution that upheld Jewish values, Jewish learning and a have a General Studies program of excellence.

We are fortunate today to benefit from Gerry's vision and philanthropy by having a wonderful facility in which to educate a thriving and growing student population.

What's Coming Up...

Nov. 12 - 14 - Gr. 9 Spirit Weekend

Nov. 22 - 24 - Disability Awareness Week

Nov. 30 - Dec. 2 - Musical "13"

Dec. 4 - Gray Academy Shabbat @ Etz Chayim

Dec. 8 - Band Concert @ 7 pm Berney Theatre

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Gray Academy
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