

The Hillel Herald



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Hillel Day School of Boca Raton

Home of the Hillel Hornets

Fall 2008/5769

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Shana Tova 5769!

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**Back to
School
Issue**

Congratulations to Cherie Landa, 5th grade, winner of the Rosh Hashanah Card Design Competition (pictured below).



May the new year be filled with blessings of health, happiness and peace for your family and all of Klal Yisrael.

A Message from the Head of School



Respectful behavior and positive interpersonal relationships are essential values at Hillel Day School. As we begin the teaching/learning process anew, I believe it important to reiterate these values and to give some direction as to how they can be achieved. Although there is more Torah being studied today than ever before, I believe that there has not been concomitant growth in *Derech Eretz* and *Midot*. Our community, and along with it our children, have experienced considerable growth with regard to the observance of *Kashrut*, *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*. These ritual aspects of Judaism, as well as our connection to Israel, all are in the midst of a renaissance that could not have been imagined fifty years ago. The question is, why are we being successful in making these ritual observances relevant and enjoyable to our children even as their *Midot* and *Derech Eretz* skills lag behind?

The answer is to be found in the expectations of the significant adults in our children's lives. It is clear that children scrupulously adhere to those things upon which we truly insist. In fact these things become second nature to them. Every male student at Hillel Day School, for instance, knows that he must wear a *kippa*. No negotiation. No debate. No problem. You cannot refuse to wear a *kippa* and still attend HDS. The expectation is communicated clearly and the consequence for violating the rule is equally clear.

Our children sense what is really important to us. They intuit what can be negotiated and they can sense what constitutes an "over my dead body" issue. In great measure, we have succeeded in communicating the importance of *Kashrut*, *Shabbat* and Israel to our children. Children delight in observing *Shabbat* with family and friends. Our students pine away for the opportunity to visit Israel and follow developments in Medinat Yisrael with bated breath, thereby attesting to our success in imparting our Zionist values to our children. We must do better, however, in communicating that *Derech Eretz* and *Midot* are equally important values.

There is a story told about a Rosh Yeshiva who would tell his students, "I think it wants to rain." When his students asked him why he thought so, he would reply, "Because it's raining." He was teaching his students an important lesson in life. We can know with certainty that people actually want to do something when we observe them doing it. For instance, we know that someone really wants to be physically fit when we see that person working out. If we as educators, parents and communities want to demonstrate that we really want our children to have *Derech Eretz* and *Midot*, then we will act accordingly, setting proper role models of *Derech Eretz* and *Midot*. Furthermore, we will communicate our desires clearly and emphatically to our children, reward them when they act in consonance with our values and make certain that there are serious and consistent consequences when they do not live up to our expectations.

As the New Year begins, Hillel Day School commits itself to raising the bar with regard to *Derech Eretz* and *Midot*. We are certain that you will join us in also making these values an important priority in the year ahead. On behalf of the entire HDS family, please accept my best wishes for a blessed New Year.

Rabbi Samuel J. Levine, Head of School

Save These Dates:

Chanukah Fair/Open House - December 14, 2008

Annual Journal Event - January 8, 2009

Super Sunday - March 15, 2009

Annual Golf Tournament - March 30, 2009



The Hillel Day School Emergency Hotline number is 866-544-5535. Please keep this number handy so that you can access school opening or closing information in the event of any emergency, weather or otherwise.

New Faculty & Staff

A warm welcome to HDS' newest additions for the 2008-09 school year.
We wish them a successful year ahead!



Nicole Deutch can be found teaching 6th grade social studies and 7th/8th grade math at HDS. She was born in the Big Apple and has three children: Taylor, 7, Skylar, 5, and Aidan, 2. In her spare time, Nicole enjoys going to the beach and biking with her family. Her favorite foods are pizza and Japanese. Believe it or not, she started as a point guard for her high school basketball team!



Lorraine Marks, music teacher and String Program Coordinator, was born in New Jersey and has three children (Jessica, Allison and Jeremy) and one grandchild (Jared, 1). Her parents were from Europe and her father is a Holocaust survivor who never had a chance to study music. He was proud to give Lorraine and her two sisters viola and piano lessons. Lorraine is the founder/conductor of two orchestras. During her leisure time she enjoys playing chamber music with her string quartet and performing with the Sunrise Pops Orchestra.



Jessica DiGiulio, our new middle school science teacher, has a B.S. in marine biology. She has been working collaboratively with an association in Costa Rica studying the effects of human interactions on sea turtles, as well as the Ocean Conservatory's NESTS program along the Gulf Coast of Florida. Before finding her passion for sea turtles, she worked with the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation. She recently attended the Interational Sea Turtle Symposium in Baja, Mexico.



Liora Michaeli, EC3 teacher assistant, was born in Ramat Gan, Israel. She has two children: Teddy (19) and Tali (11). She recently moved here after living in Holland for 35 years.



Rabbi Mayer Englander, HDS' newest *Chumash* teacher, has a Masters in Special Education from Adelphi University. He studied for 12 years at Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim and also holds a *Semicha* from Mesivtah Torah Jerusalem. Rabbi Englander has two children: Perel, 5, and Shoshana, 3. He was born in New York and is still a huge Mets fan.



Gali Nadav, 5th grade religious studies teacher, was born in Israel and has 3 children: Ruth, 4, Sapir, 3, and Adi, 19 months old. Gali worked with the B'not Sherut in Israel and was in charge of 300 girls. Now, in Boca Raton, Gali is happy to see the B'not Sherut at HDS contribute to the Jewish education of our children.



Pamela Gene joins HDS as our new 1st grade teacher. Born and raised in Detroit, Pamela moved to Florida to attend Lynn University. She has a Shih Tzu named Charlie.



Rachel Vaknin, 1st grade religious studies assistant, has two children: Esther, 25, and Orly, 19. She is originally from Venezuela. There, she was in charge of a computer network for 6 years at a Jewish high school where she designed activities for the students to learn Hebrew subjects easily. She loves Israel, Judaism, her children and Hillel Day School.



Tova Gil, 1st grade teacher, was born in Israel and has four children: Shimon, Aaron, Bruria and Tzippi. Three years ago, she left HDS as a Kindergarten teacher and has finally moved up to the 1st grade. "Hillel is my home...I feel like I'm back to my Hillel family," she says.



We welcome back **Judy Zitton** as an ETGAR religious studies teacher. Judy was born in Buffalo, NY, and has three children: Amir, 29, Maya, 25, and Aryeh, 22. She loves spending time with her family and enjoys cooking and painting.



What's Happening in Judaic Studies?

By: Hadassah Smolarcik, Judaic Studies Coordinator

Baruch Hashem, the year has gotten off to a terrific start. We welcome new faculty members to our "all star faculty."

This year's B'not Sherut are Flor, Hadar, Michal and Esti. They have already expressed how welcome they feel here due to the kindness and hospitality that has been given to them so far. We look forward to their ruach and wonderful programs in the school. The B'not Sherut assist in many classes, and once a week, they give a *Shiur Tzionut*.



The students in Rabbi Gabi Snir's 3rd grade had a special visitor. Rabbi Efrem Goldberg, Rabbi at BRS, came to address the students on Friday, Erev Shabbat, on the topic of Elul and *Teshuva*.



They already performed a play in preparation for Elul, which the students enjoyed immensely.

Each morning, during the month of Elul, the shofar was blown after Tefillah. Many thanks to Mr. Chayim Dimont and Rabbi Gabi Snir for blowing the Shofar each morning.

The 4th grade students of Rabbi Shai Ovadia, have taken upon themselves to be in charge of inspecting *Mezuzot* throughout the building each month. This is in conjunction with their learning about the *Halachot* of *Mezuzot* in class.

This year, we have implemented a new *Middot* curriculum in 1st through 5th grades. You will hear more about this program after the *Chagim*. We are, also, very excited about a new Ivrit reading and language program in the 1st grade.

We wish everyone a *Ktivah V'Chatimah Tovah*.

Meet the B'not Sherut



Flor Bender is from Tivon, Israel, and loves traveling and playing the saxophone. She speaks Spanish fluently and loves art and nature. She has two brothers, a nephew and a niece.



Hadar Edry is from Karmei Yosef, Israel, and loves the water and traveling. She looks forward to teaching the children all about Eretz Yisrael (and Aliyah). She has three brothers and two sisters, two nieces and a nephew.



Michal Friedman is from Elkanah, Israel, and is happy to be here working with the children and teaching them about Israel. She loves to dance and has two brothers, two sisters and two nieces.



Esti Oved is from Hertziliyah, Israel, and loves children and drawing. She is looking forward to a great year in Boca and doing fun things with the students. She has two sisters, one brother and a nephew.



Please join us for a very special commemoration of 70 years of Kristallnacht

LIFE IN A JAR

A Moving Theatrical Presentation of the Courageous Story of Irena Sendler

Saturday, November 8 at 8pm

Sunday, November 9 at 10am & 1pm

Zinman Hall

Irena Sendler, a Polish Catholic woman, saved 2500 children from the Warsaw Ghetto, by placing them in orphanages, foster homes, convents and other safe houses.

For ticket information e-mail Stephanie Greenberg (seog@bellsouth.net) or Sandra Lilienthal (yeladot@aol.com).



Welcome back to another wonderful year at Hillel Day School! The Upper School (4th-8th grades) has gotten off to a strong start with many exciting enhancements to our overall program.

Our annual orientation and BBQ for the middle school was fun and informative. We improved the program by tailoring it to our incoming 6th grade students. After a detailed explanation of the typical middle school day and plenty of time to ask questions, they joined up with the 7th and 8th grade students for a KAR²E activity, which included the creation of a middle school survival guide.

Changes to the way we divide students into classes have greatly improved our ability to provide instruction that meets the needs of each individual learner. Subject linkages that once forced students to, at times, be placed in levels that were not necessarily ideal have now been eliminated. Additionally, most Judaic subjects are now separate gender.

The Ivrit, English and Math Labs that take place during lunch have been very well attended. Some students have been getting extra help while others are going for further enrichment. The 5th grade Science Lab Program has also been a tremendous success.

Of all the improvement initiatives that we have taken on this year, the most personally gratifying has been the "Lunch with the Principal" program. Each week I sit with a small group of students and listen to what they have to say about their middle school. While I routinely hear comments about the abundance of homework and too little free time, the overwhelming majority of students truly love their HDS experience.

By the time this publication goes to print we will have had several inspiring guest speakers, a *Yamim Noraim*-related KAR²E activity and the launch of our KAR²E program for our 4th and 5th grade students. I look forward to sharing the details of these events with you in future editions of the *Hillel Herald*.

May you and your family have a wonderful Sukkot holiday!

KAR²E Kolumn: An Orientation to "Surviving" Middle School

By: Emily Rosenstein



With sun-kissed cheeks and carefree, summer dispositions still lingering, middle school students slowly entered the Hillel cafetorium on August 24, for the annual orientation barbeque. Enthusiastically,



teachers gloved their hands to prepare themselves to serve the standard buffet of barbeque cuisine: sizzling hamburgers and hot dogs, crunchy French fries, and of course, sweet, red watermelon for dessert.



The 6th graders were abuzz. They were the first to arrive to the event this year since they spent the first hour on campus on their own, touring the Annex with Rabbi Englander and receiving a detailed explanation of the middle school schedule. When the 7th and 8th graders began to arrive, the sidewalk outside the cafetorium seemed to offer a comforting barrier between summer and the imminent start of school. Nevertheless, as the experienced middle schoolers eventually overcame their delusion that prolonging their entrance into the cafetorium might extend their summer days, they effortlessly folded back into their Hillel life. Friends reconnected with high-pitched zeal, sharing summer highlights and contemplating their classes for the coming year.



While clear evidence of our students' *midot tovot* and interclass mingling emanated throughout the first half of orientation, Rabbi Berman and I transitioned the evening into its main event—the KAR²E icebreaker. First, Rabbi Berman reviewed the tenets of KAR²E and the various elements of the KAR²E program in order to familiarize the rising 6th graders and to remind all students of the program's critical significance in the Hillel middle school. Then, I described the students' task; in small groups mixed among 6th, 7th, and 8th graders, the students would create a middle school survival guide, listing the top ten elements of advice for successfully surviving middle school. Students understood that the best guides would be created under conditions of kind cooperation, and contain suggestions that are reflective of respectful and responsible behaviors.



Once students broke up into their groups, their passion, creativity, and concentration for the task emerged instantaneously. The 7th and 8th graders shared experienced wisdom with 6th graders, such as, "Don't be late to Mrs. Vine's class" and "Don't touch Rabbi Smo's SmartBoard." Additionally, each group recognized many similar elements of survival fundamental to school and aligned with the components of KAR²E. For instance, nearly each group said, "Be nice to your peers," "Be respectful to your teachers," and "Be organized." Looking around the room, laughter and smiling faces certainly indicated that the program was very enjoyable, but the elements of these guides became a recognition for the students that they are empowered with the tools to lead a successful, KAR²E-ing middle school life.



A Bridge to My Zionism

By: Emily Rosenstein, English Department Chair

As I embark on a new school year, I remain irrevocably affected by my recent travels in Israel. What I learned, how I have grown, and the extensive impact my experiences will garner on my students make me so grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of the P2K teacher exchange. This exchange unites teachers from Boca Raton, Florida, and Kiryat Bialik, Israel; we explore American and Israeli historical perspectives and develop a deeper awareness for our distinct experiences as nations, yet our shared narrative as Jewish people. As educators participating in this program, we are charged with the task of developing parallel curricula focused on one of our core themes – leadership, conflict, and government—and implementing that lesson into a 7th, 8th, or 9th grade classroom in both Boca Raton and Kiryat Bialik. To this end, we tour historical sites in Washington D.C. and Israel, visit our respective schools, galvanize ourselves in each other's homes and lives, and dialogue with intense emotion and insight during our educational workshops in the joint effort to build a living bridge of shared Jewish identity for ourselves and for our students.

When I departed for Tel Aviv on June 17, I left as an enthusiastic Jewish tourist, at least hindsight provides me with the self-awareness to label myself such— a tourist. Though I did not board the El Al flight as a first-timer to Israel, I, with reluctant yet unabashed honesty, admit to finding myself electrified by somewhat trite, trivial, even shallow features of an imminent trip to Israel. As the flight attendants walked the aisles, I became roused by an eagerness to taste authentic Israeli hummus and pita, to saunter down Ben Yehuda street in search of that classic Hebrew Coca Cola t-shirt, and to *daven* at the Kotel and acquire one of those little red bracelets, which with its trendiness screams, "I was there." Yes, I sat on the plane that early summer evening with these thoughts making my cheeks a rosy shade of happy; however, my actual experiences proved far and away more grand, more authentic, and more meaningful than any tourist manual or any young mind could ever conceive.

With two itineraries, that of Washington D.C. and Israel, so parallel in thematic focus and skilled in the ability to juxtapose sites of powerfully comparative proportion, my days were replete with a supreme sensory awareness for every surrounding and an emotional connection to each encounter. For me, as a participant of P2K, Israel became more than a place one visits as a Jew, because of a Jewish identity. While I still dipped my pita into hummus countless times and visited tourist identified "must-see" spots, my connection to each site amassed a uniquely poignant, personal meaning for two profoundly important reasons.

First of all, when visiting the Kotel or observing Shabbat, I became palpably cognizant of the newly infused levels of spiritual awareness and sensibility I adopted as a result of my past three years teaching at Hillel. For the first time in my life, I turned to prayer in reciting the Travelers' Prayer on the plane, dutifully practiced my Hebrew language skills that for so long lay dormant, and keenly developed a new pathway to understand my students, especially their Zionism. Not only have I gained a vivid image of historically significant places in Israel that will undoubtedly enrich our conversations, but now I also have a personalized appreciation for the heritage and history of our shared homeland— this country we honor, celebrate, and study on so many days throughout the school year. This appreciation will unequivocally penetrate my interactions with students and my re-immersion into our Hillel community as we share in another year of learning and commemorations.

Additionally, the ability to share each moment along the P2K itinerary with not only my American colleagues, but also with the delegation of teachers and administrators from Kiryat Bialik inculcated an undeniably privileged, learned, and authentic perspective on Israel into my panorama of the country and the overall experience. One moment that remains vividly present in my mind is our visit to Har Herzl. Going to Har Herzl, with past visits to Arlington Cemetery at the forefront of my mind, I became serenely attentive to the pristine quality of these memorial grounds, to the abundance of graves, yet their individualized capacity to rehumanize each life lost, and to the poignant signs of attentive mourners whose stones and flowers beautified the headstones. As our group walked through Har Herzl with the sight of throngs of Israeli troops appropriately punctuating each turn, I was overwhelmed by a significant, enduring message. Being at Har Herzl with my Israeli friends and listening to them describe through hardened, tear-filled throats their zealous, unwavering commitment to serving in the army, I experienced a moment that exposed the depth of an Israeli's love for country. In that moment, I reflected on their dedication to the army, their innovative and holistic instruction of Israeli history, and their own knowledge of Israel from its geographic to historical roots. I realized my awe derived not from what they do, but the passion and heart they apply to all that they do,

story continued on the back page...

FALL SPORTS

Hornets Flag Football Wins Opening Game

The Hornets opened their season on September 4 with an impressive win over visiting Parkway (36-6).

"Everyone played and contributed towards the team's victory," said Coach **Brian Domenico**. On defensive, **Evan Dolgow** and **Andrew Fixler** were outstanding; they combined for five interceptions. This provided the offense with great field position early in the game.

Offensively, the Hornets were led by quarterback, **Adam Matheson**. Matheson threw the ball extremely well throughout the game. **Aaron Rose** and **Andy Agus** each had a touchdown reception.



2008 Boys Flag Football Team

TRYOUTS SCHEDULE

Girls Basketball Tryouts
and Boys Soccer Tryouts

Day 1

Tuesday, Oct. 28th
4pm-5:30pm @ Hillel

Girls Basketball Tryouts
and Boys Soccer Tryouts

Day 2

Thursday, Oct. 30th
4pm-5:30pm @ Hillel

New Parent Orientation



On August 26, Hillel Board Members and PTA Board Members had the opportunity to meet many of our new Hillel families. Thanks to the **5th Avenue Bakery's** generous sponsorship, the event started with a variety of tasty bakery treats while people had some time to introduce themselves to one another. Then we gathered in the Beit Midrash where **Rabbi Levine** welcomed the new Hillel parents and spoke of his determination to continue Hillel's quest to become the best Jewish Day School in North America. **Daniel Katz** elaborated on some of Rabbi Levine's ideas, and stressed that he feels that Hillel's success can be measured, in large part, by the wonderful students with Jewish values that Hillel produces each and every year. **Janice Marriott** then shared some information on the role the PTA plays at Hillel and encouraged new parents to get involved in some of the many PTA activities. After our time in the Beit Midrash, we all walked through Hillel, where **Mr. Dimont** talked about the early childhood program, and the foundation it lays for children's later development and skills. **Rabbi Englander** and **Mrs. Smolarcik** shared information on some of the most exciting middle school programs, and both **Mr. Moran** and **Rabbi Berman** treated the parents to a demonstration of some of the many uses of the SmartBoards. Finally, each new family was given a gift sponsored by the PTA to welcome them to our school. Special thanks to **Lori Landa** for planning such a warm welcome for our new Hillel families.



Welcome Back, Teachers

Teachers were welcomed back to Hillel on the first day of teacher orientation with delicious breakfast bags provided by the PTA. Again, thanks to our hard working **Lori Landa** for organizing these gifts.

Save the Date

Tuesday, November 11, 2008
Hillel Day School's 6th Annual Cooking Demonstration

Join **Karen Abir, Lowil Stoller and Lauren Bakst**
as they present:
An Extreme Thanksgiving Makeover

Our P.T.A. benefits from this truly unbelievable, delicious and fun event. Naturally, you and your loved ones will benefit too.

All parents were greeted on the first two days of school by the PTA's Back to School Welcome and Refreshments. This is yet another opportunity for new parents, particularly of early childhood students phasing in, to meet PTA members and other parents. Everyone enjoyed coffee, juice and yummy pastries – a welcome break during these busy days! Thank you to Ana Haar for organizing the annual "welcome wagon."

We All Scream for Ice Cream

There was a feeling of great excitement in the air at this year's **Ice Cream Social**, held on Sunday, August 24, in the Loewenstern Cafetorium. New and returning families mingled with teachers and administrators as students excitedly greeted and hugged their friends. Of course, everyone had a wonderful time filling their ice cream cups with lots of delicious toppings! We are so grateful to the **Bensmihen family**, **Boca Home Care, Inc.** and **Carvel's Chuck Keller** for sponsoring this event. Special thanks also to **Simone Broide**, **Sabrina Romano**, and **Dana Petrover** for making this program such a big success.



New Mothers' Breakfast



On Sunday, September 7, the PTA hosted its annual New Mothers' Breakfast to welcome all moms who are new to the Hillel family. It was a wonderful opportunity to mingle with all of the new mothers who come from various communities throughout South Florida, from Boynton Beach to Weston. **Janice Marriott, PTA President**, gave an inspiring introduction to the PTA and its activities and goals. She welcomed all those in attendance to become involved with Hillel Day School and explained the multiple opportunities for doing so. We gratefully thank **Liora Adler** and **Sharona Kay** for organizing this event and Liora Adler for being such a gracious hostess! If you are interested in becoming involved with the PTA, please contact Janice Marriott at (561) 470-5000 ext. 295.



HDS Happenings

HDS EMET CLUB WINNERS

Excellent
Midot
Every
Time

KINDERGARTEN

Leora Bakst
Diana Brizel
Joseph Cohen
Ariella Gross
Dovid Lanner
Alex Lurie
David Matheson
Yosef Scher
Aleksandra Shapiro
Talya Shapiro



Mazal Tov to all of the winners!

LOWER SCHOOL

Kayla Bensmihen
Isabella Berkeley
Atara Goldberg
Ayelet Gross
Paulette Hartman
Pearl Katz
Binny Krawatsky
Tamar Lillienthal
Yoni Louis
Daniel Prince
Elana Silkin
Jonah Tripp

Hillel's Campus Officially Named



It gives us great pleasure to announce that our campus has been named for Milton B. Katz, of blessed memory, father of Daniel J. Katz. Mr. Milton B. Katz was an ardent Zionist; his passionate love for the State of Israel was unbridled. Milton's greatest loves of his life were his eleven grandchildren, six of whom are present or former HDS students, and all of whom received a Jewish elementary school education. It is very befitting to grace our campus with his name. We thank Caroline and Daniel for their magnanimity and are grateful for their support and friendship.

Ivrit Creator Visits HDS

Dr. Shachar Yonai, creator of the Migdalor Ivrit Program, visited HDS with his SmartBoard presentation of the new curriculum that will be used to teach 1st graders. Teachers from the other local Jewish day schools also participated.



CHANCE ENCOUNTER...HDS teachers Jodi Deichman and Judy Weinstock literally run into each other in Israel. Now that's a small world!

HDS Happenings



At the end of the summer, Camp Gan Izzy of Parkland honored various campers who excelled in midot, davening and overall behavior at an awards ceremony. Mazal Tov to the many HDS students who received these awards. At the conclusion of the awards presentation one boy and one girl, who represent the best all around campers, are named Mr. and Ms. Gan Izzy, respectively. Congratulations to HDS' own **Yitzy Lanner** on this honor.



Thanks to our past 8th grade class, the children of Bet Elazraki (above), an orphanage in Netanya, were able to start school with brand new school supplies and backpacks.



Hillel Goes Green

By: Mrs. Deichman

Mazal Tov to a "greener" Hillel Day School! During the 2007-2008 school year, students and faculty, in conjunction with the Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County, initiated a long-term recycling program at HDS.



Each morning during the month of Elul, HDS students hear the sounding of the Shofar. Students on the second floor (2nd-5th grades), gather and first hear a message from Mrs. Smolarcik and then Rabbi Gabi Snir blows the Shofar. Students in ECE through the 1st grade listen to the Shofar blown by Mr. Chayim Dimont. What an inspirational way to begin the day of learning and to awaken ourselves with thoughts of *Teshuva*.

Led by the 5th graders, the HDS community is now proficient in their recycling do's and don'ts. Last year's 5th graders helped in educating the students and staff every Wednesday through "The Green Project." Students created committees such as the Multi-Media Committee, the Recycling Committee, and the Fundraising Committee, to share in *Tikkun Olam*.

One example of the magnificent outcomes of the project is that the Fundraising Committee raised over \$300 from the raffle of a solar-powered watch. The proceeds were donated to the Jewish National Fund. In addition to contributing to saving the earth, Hillel is compensated on all recycled paper collected.

In preparation for "The Green Project," last year's 5th graders traveled to the Solid Waste Authority's recycling center to learn about recycled materials and to brainstorm ideas to bring back to Hillel. This year's 5th grade class has been passed the torch and will continue the new tradition.



Dear Parents,

Each year I marvel at how much the children have grown over the summer break. It is a pleasure to see them returning to school with smiles on their faces after enjoying a fun and restful summer. Now that the school doors are open again, it's nice to see the children getting back into the rhythm of the school day. Of course this transition often has an adjustment period not only for the students, but also for the parents.

Although I have written about this before, I think that the message can be a welcome reminder to those who have read it before and helpful to those who have not. It is especially difficult for many families to adjust back into the homework routine. As a result, homework can become a tiresome task, with its completion as its only focus. In truth, however, homework serves two purposes: firstly, it is a manner in which teachers evaluate the students' understanding of the material, and secondly, it is a tool to bridge the gap between home and school. Spending time with your children on homework gives you the opportunity to get to know what your child is learning. When children see that you are interested in what they are learning, you send them a positive and valuable message.

For younger children in Kindergarten and 1st grade, homework should be a time spent bonding and helping your children learn the important skill of focusing. Making sure that your children are following directions, using appropriate pencil grip, forming letters correctly, and reading with age-appropriate fluency and comprehension, as well as evaluating their work, are all key components of successful completion of homework assignments. For older children (2nd-3rd grades), parents should make sure there is

an understanding of the expectations of the assignments and be readily available for support. A parent's role in homework should be one of facilitation. If a child makes careless error(s), ask him or her to review the problem. Help children understand the importance of reviewing their work and making corrections when appropriate.

Should your child have consistent problems with an assignment and not be able to complete it, move on and send a note to the teacher explaining specifically what your child was having difficulty with. It is imperative for teachers to get that feedback from parents. Homework is a critical evaluator of children's understanding of what has been taught in the classroom. Parents

should not feel that they are in the role of *teaching* the material.

Other factors that tend to be a problem are sibling interruptions. It is critical that everyone understand that this time is sacred and not negotiable. Planning ahead for younger siblings, whether it be through play dates or a focused activity that will occupy their full attention and won't warrant the need for assistance, is imperative.

Embrace homework as an opportunity to bond with your child. This is a wonderful chance to show that you value education and value their work. Time with our children is not measured by how fun children may see it, but rather about the care and quality of the time spent.

From the Jewish Journal - L'Chaim - September 9, 2008

Hillel campus makeover to begin with new gym

By IAN SQUIRES
STAFF WRITER

Hillel Day School of Boca Raton has a plan — three-phase construction plan that starts with a gymnasium, the school's first. With its enrollment having risen by 150 in the past five years, the school, which has pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade classes, is nearing 500 students this academic year.

Construction is already under way on the gymnasium with completion expected in fewer than six months. Without a gym, no Hillel Day School basketball team has ever played a true home game.

"What school doesn't have a gymnasium?" school president Dan Katz asked. "Now we'll be able to compete in basketball and volleyball, where we had to rent a gym before. We had gym classes outside."

Athletic director Maia Shaffer said she's eager for Hillel Day School to have the ability to field a complete athletic program.

"It's going to improve the quality of physical education tremendously. And we can add so many sports," Shaffer said.

Girls' softball coach Rick Adelman said he can't wait to see the finished gym.

"It's going to be a beautiful



Christian Romero, left, and Jesus Medrano, both of West Palm Beach, use wire ties to reinforce the rebar for the exterior wall of the gymnasium under construction at Hillel Day School of Boca Raton. Staff photo/Kimberli DiMare

facility, equal to any middle school in the county. Public, private, any of them," Adelman said. "I think it's going to be a really, really amazing facility."

And no longer will the South Florida skies be of concern for their teams.

"Bad weather should never be a reason for us to not have practice," he said. "When it's raining or when it's real hot, you can go inside

and drill. You can't have batting practice, but you can do everything else."

After the gym is finished, complete with wooden floors, showers, offices, lockers, bleachers and more, HDS will shift the construction focus.

"The next phase is to build a middle school. At present, the middle school is housed in a trailer," Katz said. "We hope to tear that down and

replace it with a beautiful building. It will cost \$3 million, and we've already raised half of it. So we've got to raise the other half and build it."

School officials aim to have the school built by 2010 or 2011, at which point they can start planning the final stage of construction — a synagogue on the school's campus.

To learn more, call Hillel Day School at 561-470-5000.

Every Parent Counts in the Every Parent Campaign (EPC) *By: Libby Rombro, ECP Chair*

Every year, Hillel Day School holds an Every Parent Campaign (EPC) as part of our Annual Fund. We do this so that each parent of every Hillel child can participate in the school's mission, and share as an invested partner in our success and accomplishments.

The Annual Fund is essential to maintain the superior level of Jewish and secular studies that Hillel offers and which we all require for our children. This fund also makes possible many of the things that make Hillel better every year: the expanded physical education facilities, the after school programs, the technological advances, the new music program, etc.

These wonderful benefits come, first and foremost, from the broad base of support from our own Hillel families. The sincerity and conviction of *Tzedakah* from the Hillel family allows us to confidently seek additional donations from other people and businesses, expanding the Hillel family in a way that is essential to our continuity and to our growth.

The Every Parent Campaign looks for 100% participation. The size of the gift is not what matters. The quality of the gift is measured by the family's ability to give. You can participate in the Every Parent Campaign with a contribution to the Hillel Annual Fund Campaign any time during the year. Placing an ad in the Ad Journal, joining the Tribute Committee, or attending the Annual Dinner all qualify. So does taking part in the golf tournament or a donation to the Scholarship Assistance Fund. If you contribute to the Annual Fund in any of these many ways, then you are already a part of the Every Parent Campaign. For more information or to make a donation, contact Suzanne Rice, Director of Development, at 561-470-5000 or e-mail suzanner@hilleldayschool.org.

Honorees Announced for Annual Journal Event

HDS is proud to announce that this year, **Drs. Stuart and Hindy Rubin and Rabbi Mordechai and Hadassah Smolarcik** will be honored at the school's **Annual Journal Event on Thursday evening, January 8, 2009.**

This event is our school's major fundraiser of the year and the dollars raised allow us to continue to provide the finest Jewish and secular studies education to all our students, regardless of their family's ability to pay. Last year \$454,000 was raised and this year's event co-chairs, Daniel and Caroline Katz and Teddy and Linda Struhl, are hoping to exceed that.

Hindy and Stuart have had leadership roles at Hillel for many years. Hindy's background as a psychologist and her multifaceted organizational involvement prior to moving to Florida and here in Boca Raton enabled her to become involved in many aspects of Hillel. As president of the Board for three years, chairperson of the *Vaad HaChinuch* for multiple years and mother of four

past and present Hillel students, Hindy has supported critical initiatives that significantly and positively impacted the quality of the education provided by Hillel Day School. She has also contributed to organizational and financial development of the school. Stuart, too, supports all efforts of school improvement. He also served on the school's Board in previous years. Stuart and Hindy, together, have made Hillel Day School an important part of their daily lives.

Hadassah and Rabbi Mordechai Smolarcik, on a daily basis, teach our children Torah and provide all of us with Torah role models. For over a decade, Hadassah has been a vital part of the school's Judaic Studies department and currently serves as the school's Judaic Studies Coordinator. Her talented imprint can be readily discerned in the school's highly detailed curriculum as well as in the many instructional innovations evident in our Torah classes. Rabbi Smolarcik is a creative force on our middle school faculty. His high standards and integrity challenge all students to be their best, spiritually and academically. Rabbi Mordechai Smolarcik currently serves as the rabbi of the Boca Raton Synagogue West, which is housed on

Hillel's Milton B. Katz Campus. Rabbi Smolarcik is presently working towards his doctorate in clinical psychology.

Please honor these well-deserving community members by supporting the Journal Event. Join the Tribute Committee, congratulate them in the ad journal and join us on January 8th. For more information contact Suzanne Rice, Director of Development, at 561-470-5000 or e-mail suzanner@hilleldayschool.org.

Bench Naming Opportunity



Please consider sponsoring a beautiful bench in honor or in memory of those you love. Each bench will be personalized with a bronze-engraved plaque. Please contact Suzanne Rice, Director of Development, at 561-470-5000 or e-mail suzanner@hilleldayschool.org.

Save the Date

Thursday Evening, January 8, 2009 ~ 12 Tevet 5769

Hillel Day School of Boca Raton

Annual Journal Event

Honoring
Drs. Stuart & Hindy Rubin ~ Rabbi Mordechai & Hadassah Smolarcik

Journal Event Co-Chairs
Daniel & Caroline Katz ~ Teddy & Linda Struhl

From page 5 (Rosenstein)

especially that which relates to Israel. Though bonds of solidarity and friendship among the P2K participants burgeoned in Washington D.C., I strongly believe that sharing a week together in Israel proved the most critical component of this exchange. We traveled. We learned about ourselves, about our schools, and about our people. We ate too much. We laughed a lot. We danced. We sang. We prayed. We cried. Most of all, we uncovered our "peoplehood," our Jewish peoplehood. We discovered, through our travel, our learning, our laughter, and our tears, that we are part of the same evolving memory, and we partake in the same hope for our people. Just as the Israelis from Kiryat Bialik reveled in the profusion of Zionism among our group and our students as they visited the Diaspora community of Boca Raton last December, I relished the feeling

of a shared Jewish identity as I joined in explorations and celebrations of our shared heritage in Eretz Israel. While I concede recognition that our group of educators was charged with a primary mission of developing and then implementing parallel curricula in American and Israeli 7th, 8th, and 9th grade classrooms, I suggest that the bridge forged between our two communities is evermore eminent in its capacity to connect people and to create pathways of appreciation for our Jewish destiny.

Finally, with incomparable gratitude, I give tribute to the Boca-Bialik Bridge, for I have never felt a more authentic connection to my own Zionism, my students, and my already vibrant Jewish identity.

If you have information to include in a future *Hillel Herald*, please e-mail suzanner@hilleldayschool.org.

If you are not receiving this newsletter via e-mail please let us know.

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Calendar At A Glance

October 2008

- 8 ▫ Erev Yom Kippur - school closed
- 9 ▫ Yom Kippur - school closed
- 13 ▫ Sukkot Break Begins - school closed through Oct. 24
- 27 ▫ Classes Resume



November 2008

- 10 ▫ Parent/Teacher Conferences, All Grades (Evening)
- 11 ▫ Parent/Teacher Conferences, All Grades - school closed
- 14-15 ▫ 7th & 8th Grade Shabbaton
- 21 ▫ End of First Trimester
- 26 ▫ Noon Dismissal
- 27 ▫ Thanksgiving Break - school closed
- 28 ▫ Thanksgiving Break - school closed



December 2008

- 14 ▫ Chanukah Fair/Open House
- 26 ▫ Winter Break Begins - school closed through Jan. 2



January 2009

- 5 ▫ Classes Resume
- 8 ▫ Annual Journal Event
- 19 ▫ Mid-Year Break Begins - school closed through Jan. 23
- 26 ▫ Classes Resume

February 2009

- 9 ▫ Parent/Teacher Conferences, Grades 1-8, Evening - regular school day
- 10 ▫ Parent/Teacher Conferences, Grades 1-8 only no school, but ECE will have a regular school day
- 16 ▫ President's Day - school closed
- 20 ▫ End of Second Trimester

Hillel Day School is a "Makom Torah," a place where Torah is studied. As such, dress should conform to what would be appropriate when visiting a synagogue.

