

Hillel Highlights



From the Principal's desk...

Dear Parents,

As we begin the month of May, there is a flurry of activity at the administrative level as planning for the new school year – which began months ago – becomes more intense. This planning extends to all areas of school operations, but most importantly to personnel, class configurations, new hires and scheduling. As our plans take shape, we intend to keep you informed in a timely manner of all pertinent information.

As I tour our classrooms, I see that our students are fully engaged in the learning process and building on the skills and knowledge that they acquired throughout the year. I also see examples of collaboration between grade levels. For instance, the 2nd Grade class and 6th Grade boys are teaming up for this year's edition of the Invention Convention. Mrs. Reuler's 6th Grade girls have recently met up with Mrs. Anderson's 3rd Grade girls to share with them the books they have authored. These collaborations enable students to play the roles of mentors or mentees, and are a great lesson in leadership for the older students, while giving younger students role models to look up to.

As principal, I sit in on many "Staffing Meetings," in which all the adults and professionals who work with a given student meet with our DPS liaison to discuss the student's performance. At these meetings, parent, teachers, resource teachers, etc... all share their observations with one another. I am always impressed by the level of caring and concern our teachers have for every single student. Often, based on these meetings and preliminary paperwork, parents are asked to sign off for additional DPS educational testing. Once the testing is completed, another meeting is held. Test data is analyzed and, if warranted, recommendations are made and support services are offered. These services are usually provided by Results Learning, a DPS recognized third party provider.

Results Learning also specializes in addressing Executive Function issues. As their website explains: *"Executive functioning is like the CEO of the brain. It's in charge of making sure things*

get done—from the planning stages of the job to the final deadline. When kids have issues with executive functioning, any task that requires planning, organization, memory, time management, and flexible thinking becomes a challenge.” This week, a staffing meeting was held for a student who has been identified with such tendencies. Having contracted with Results Learning to address this child’s deficit, the parents and Results Learning were eager to collaborate with Hillel Academy and its teachers. At the meeting, ideas were exchanged and a plan of action was developed in which all this child’s teachers and tutors will work together with Results Learning professionals to provide strategies to enhance the entire range of this child’s school (and life) experiences.

While this meeting was very important for helping this particular child, as the meeting progressed it became more apparent that the ideas and approaches being discussed were not merely good ideas for students with executive functioning issues. Indeed, they were best practices that can enhance learning for every child in every classroom. Thus, the time spent focusing on this specific student’s needs will improve instruction for all students.

Schools are (surprise, surprise) not perfect organizations and we sometimes struggle with finding the correct balance between the needs of the individual and those of the group. However the above illustrates that there is often a symbiotic relationship in which focusing on an individual child’s needs and having inclusionary classrooms comes back to benefit all our students in many wonderful ways. This is one of the special things about a school such as Hillel Academy. Our goal is to continue to focus on the needs of each individual child in a manner that will improve the school experience for all our other students as well.

Have a wonderful Shabbos,

Rabbi Yisroel Goldbaum

D'var Torah - Acharei/Kedoshim

Down on his luck with nowhere to turn, a poor fellow decided that he had no choice but to beg for alms. With no training in this line of “work”, he sought out an experienced “schnorrer”. “How does one go about collecting?” he inquired of the veteran. “It’s really quite simple,” was the reply. “You travel to a city and find a ritzy neighborhood with swanky houses. Knock at the doors and state your case. That’s all there is to it!” Bolstered by these words of wisdom, the amateur panhandler was set to go.

Arriving in a big city, he investigated until he found what appeared to be an affluent, gated community. Going from one fancy residence to another, the novice beggar banged loudly on the doors and eventually cried out in frustration, but to no avail – not one door opened. Finally, having had enough, he traveled back to his village and poured out his tale of woe to his practiced counterpart. “Sounds impossible,” mused his friend. “Show me where you went.” With that, the two of them tramped back to the city and the poor fellow took his friend directly to the neighborhood he had visited earlier in the day. Taking one look at the “gated community”, the master schnorrer was unable to stifle his laugh. “That’s not a fancy neighborhood,” he chortled! “It’s the rich folks’ cemetery where they bury their dead in gaudy mausoleums!”

The next day, having pity on his bumbling friend, the maven took him directly to one of the

best parts of town and supplied him with a list of addresses to visit and the donation amounts he could expect. Sadly, this, too, did not work out. Going door to door and demanding the amounts specified on the list, the luckless beggar was either turned away or given a token donation. Utterly dejected, he trudged back to his mentor. Upon learning of his mentee's "sales pitch" or lack thereof, the guru explained to him that his technique was all wrong. "To obtain the largest contributions one has to pander to the sensitivities of the donor," he expounded. "Share with them your tale of woe, arouse their compassionate tendencies, find favor in their eyes, and they will open their hearts and wallets to you." Following this sage advice, our poor friend eventually honed his skills and became an adept schnorrer.

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchok Shain, in his work, *Birkas Ish*, uses the above parable to explain the seemingly haphazard sequence of two pesukim in this week's Parsha: *"You shall not turn to the idols, and you shall not make molten gods for yourselves. I am HaShem, your HaShem. And when you slaughter a peace offering to HaShem, you shall slaughter it to be acceptable for you. (Vayikra; 19:4-5)*

Turning to other deities is the same as knocking on the doors of a mausoleum – no one is home to take the call. The only address to turn to – the rich neighborhood in our tale – is HaShem; *"I am HaShem, your HaShem."* However, we must not turn to HaShem with demands, but rather beseech Him in a manner that He will find pleasing; with humility, contriteness and the realization that we will always be indebted to Him for all His kindness. This is implied in the conjunctive nature of the second verse: *"And when you slaughter a peace offering ... slaughter it to be acceptable for you."* It is not enough to go through the motions of bringing a peace offering; it must be done in a manner that is pleasing for HaShem, the prospective "donor".

We, too, must always keep in mind that HaShem is our sole address for all of our needs. The boss, our investments and the current healthcare system are but tools in His hands. The way to find favor in HaShem's eyes is through heartfelt dedication to Torah and mitzvos, and bland, uninspired performance is not enough. HaShem wants our hearts and emotions to be directed towards Him as well. When we do that, He will respond with the good we so deeply desire!

Rabbi Yisroel Goldbaum

Pesach Hasmoda Raffle Winners

The final Hasmoda raffle of the year took place last Friday. The kids had a great time looking over all the wonderful prizes and deciding where they would enter their raffle tickets. Pictured below are the winners in the Boys Division: Mendy Sher, Chaim Tzvi Seligman, Moshe Yosef Berkowitz, Gavriel Kravitz, Yehuda Schnall, Aryeh Chernitzky, and (not shown) Benny Treister, Yehuda Kagan and Chaim Kaplan.

In the Girls Division the winners were Tamar Zussman, Devorah Schweitzer, Chaya Borenstein, Leah Zeiger, Kayla Zuckerman, Rena Muller, Shevy Milobsky, Atara Lustig and Chava Leah Fleischer.

The Grand Finale Trip will be to the new and exciting pool at Ridge Recreation Center in Littleton. Over 60 boys and 80 girls are eligible to go on the pool trip! A fantastic job was done by all this year!

Schedule of Grand Finale Hasmoda Trips

Girls on Sunday, June 4th from 6-7 pm

Boys on Sunday, June 11th from 6-7 pm



Data Wonking in 1st Grade!

Over the past 2 weeks, our 1st graders have been learning how to be “data geeks!” They collected data from their classmates, thought about how they wanted to use the data and then created different types of graphs that made their data usable – picture graphs, bar graphs and tally mark graphs. The class was divided into groups of 2 or 3 students to collect data and create the 3 types of graphs. It was a wonderful exercise in team work, compromise, data collection, and more. They probably all have jobs waiting for them in the Tech Center!

1st Graders working on their graphs



If you missed the performance of *A Twist of Fate* (or want to see it again and again and again!), don't worry! You still have the opportunity to see it! DVDs of the show are available from the Hillel Office. Cost is \$5. Stop by and pick up your copy!

6th-7th Grade Siyumin

The 6th and 7th grade boys had a fantastic time at Monaco Lanes as part of the siyumin they made this week. The 6th-7th grade mishnayos class completed masechta Bava Kama, mastering all 10 perakim, and the 7th grade finished the 2nd perek of gemara Makkos.

Yisroel Potestio's score of 191 topped the bowling charts, with Michael Jacobs a close runner up. All the boys had a blast, especially as they completed their celebration with pizza from Brooklyn Pizza. A special thanks to Rabbi & Mrs Mintz for sponsoring the pizza for the entire group in honor of the siyum.



Spotlight on our Teachers

Mrs. Quinn Berling

3rd Grade Boys General Studies

Mrs. Berling's Bunch of Boys

Welcome to our boisterous, bouncy, blooming class of 25 boys! We have accomplished so much this year and I am so proud of the learning that has gone on within these walls.

We are currently working on properties of shapes, lines and angles in Math. The boys enjoy using rulers and protractors to measure lines and angles. We are learning about polygons, which means "many sides." It's fun to find polygons around our environment!

In Science we have been concentrating on the earth's different biomes. We have investigated rainforests, deserts, oceans and are now discovering grasslands. The boys will get to choose an animal from their favorite biome and do some in-depth research using Chromebooks and the library. They will also have the opportunity to make a diorama at home showing their animal and the environment in which they can be found.

In Language Arts, we are discussing figurative language. The boys made pictures of some common idioms, ("It's a piece of cake," "Caught between a rock and a hard place," etc.). We've also learned about similes, metaphors, onomatopoeias, etc.

Reading continues to be individual novel studies and Social Studies includes map reading and Colorado History.



Hillel Updates and Schedule Reminders
Friday dismissal times from March - June
Preschool dismissed at 12 noon
K-8th grade dismissed at 2:30 pm

Monday, May 8-May 26th - MAP testing - during the testing period please make sure your children get adequate sleep and come to school with lunch and snacks. Testing takes place during the afternoon so snacks are important. Also please try to avoid scheduling any out-of-school appointments during this time.

Friday, May 12 - Dismissal Notice - All students will be dismissed at 12 noon due to a Faculty In-Service.

Monday, May 29th- Memorial Day - Noon dismissal for all students

Tuesday, May 30th - Erev Shavuous - school only for boys in grades 3-8th from 8:30 to 12 noon.

Wednesday, May 31-Thursday, June 1 - Shavuous - no school

Friday, June 2 - Delayed start - classes begin at 9:15 am. Middle School boys' Sshacharis at 8:30

Mazel tov to Rabbi Binyamin and Tova Seligman on the bar mitzvah of their son, Chaim Tzvi.

Mazel tov to Rabbi Yaakov and Chaya Meyer on the engagement of their daughter, Esti, to Chaim Gross of Chicago.

Mazel tov to Eitan and Gitty Crystal on the birth of a daughter, and to grandparents, Jonathan and Gloria Crystal.

Thank you to Rabbi Yisroel and Sari Field for sponsoring the Boys' Breakfast for the week before and after Pesach Vacation.

Thank you to Isaac and Tamar Kravitz for sponsoring the Boys' Breakfast for the week of April 30-May 5th in honor of their son, Gavriel.

Remember the school calendar can be found on our website at www.haod.org or on the back of the Parent Directory.

Community Events

Tuesday, May 16th - The Women's Division of the Denver Community Kollel presents *Cooking for the King – A Pre-Shavuos Cooking Demonstration with Chef Renee Chernin*. The demo will be at 7:30 pm in the home of Agi Fried, 220 S. Forest, Denver. The cost is \$18, Sponsorships of \$54 are available, which includes a signed cookbook. **Space is limited to 30 people.** RSVP email the Kollel at info@denverkollel.org or call the Kollel at [303-820-2855](tel:303-820-2855)

Sunday, June 4 - JewPro at The Jewish Experience invites men ages 18+ to participate in the 2nd Annual Charity Basketball Tournament from 2:00-5:00 PM at DJDS. All proceeds to benefit Just Kitchen, a new chesed initiative providing nutritious, kosher, home-cooked meals to community members in need. For more information, please contact Rabbi Danny Wolfe at [720-319-0402](tel:720-319-0402) or register at TheJE.com/BBall.