

# Heritage Academy TIMES

Jewish Community Day School



Fall 2007  
Kislev/Tevet 5768  
Volume 5, Issue 1

## EVENTS:

Thursday, August 30 – New Family BBQ  
Tuesday, September 4 – Middle School Scavenger Hunt in Forest Park  
Wednesday, September 5 – Grades 6-8 to Springfield College Ropes Course  
Sunday, September 9 – Heritage Academy runs a booth at *The Great Shofar Blast* at the JCC  
Monday, September 10 – Kindergarten Welcome Breakfast  
Tuesday, September 11 – 9/11 Commemoration  
Wednesday, September 12 – Rosh Hashanah Assembly  
Tuesday, September 18 – Grades 4 and 5 field trip to Forest Park for *Tashlich*; Back to School Night for Grades K-5  
Thursday, September 20 – Kindergarten *Mezuzah* Ceremony; Back to School Night for Grades 6-8  
Tuesday, September 25 – Middle School students to Ruth's House and the Jewish Nursing home to decorate their Sukkah  
Sunday, September 30 – Heritage Academy PTO sponsored "Spreadfest" of wood chips on the playground  
Monday, October 1 – Board of Directors' Meeting; Heritage PTO Meeting; First gathering of *Keshet L'Boget* (Connecting to our Graduates)  
Tuesday, October 2 – *Sukkah Fest*  
Wednesday, October 3 – *Simchat Torah* Assembly with Heritage graduates; Crisis Team Training at Longmeadow High School; Grades 4 & 5 visit JCC preschool for *Simchat Torah*  
Monday, October 8 – No School, Teacher in-service day (Safety & Security)  
Tuesday, October 9 – Ad Journal for Dummies Class  
Thursday, October 11 – Shlomo Kessel from Emuna Afula visits Heritage Academy; Specials Breakfast featuring Computer Technology Teachers: Rachel Wesley, Sally Z., and Jami Zmurko; Second Ad Journal for Dummies Class  
Friday, October 12 – Heritage PTO Playground Committee Meeting  
Monday, October 15 – Middle School Parent Breakfast  
Thursday, October 18 – Specials Breakfast featuring Art Teacher, Susan Shaker and Music Teacher, Cantor Elizabeth Berke; Grades K-2 Field Trip to Cold Spring Orchard  
Tuesday, October 24 – Community Rabbi's Breakfast at Heritage Academy  
Wednesday, October 25 – Specials Breakfast featuring Librarian, Geri Johnson

Monday, October 29 – Grade 3 field trip to Elm Knoll Farm  
Tuesday, October 30 – School Picture Day  
Thursday, November 1 – Kindergarten Field trip to Longmeadow Fire Department  
Friday, November 2 – Specials Breakfast featuring Physical Education Teacher, David Wells; Middle School assembly to commemorate death of Yitzchak Rabin  
Monday, November 5 – Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, November 7 – Heritage Academy PTO Meeting; Destination Imagination kickoff  
Thursday, November 8 – Grade 8 trip to Hebrew High School of New England; Session II Enrichment Classes in Art for Preschoolers begins  
Friday, November 9 – begin Friday 2:30 P.M. dismissals; Lt. Eric Rubenstein, parent, addresses Middle School Veterans' Day Assembly  
Sunday, November 11 – *Sulamot* program *A World of Shabbat – A Sunday Funday!*  
Monday, November 12 – Wendy Libowitz, parent, addresses Grades 4 & 5 about her recent mission to Honduras; Second meeting of gathering of *Keshet L'Boget* (Connecting to our Graduates)  
Friday, November 16 – Grades 6-8 Field Trip to Sinai Temple to view "A Festival of Israeli Art"  
Monday, November 19 – Grades 4&5 visit Ruth's House to present their Thanksgiving Songfest  
Tuesday, November 20 – Family Thanksgiving Luncheon Grades K-5  
November 26-29 – Grade 6 to Teva Learning Center – Jewish Environmental Camp  
Wednesday, December 5 – Chanukah Show  
Monday, December 10 – No School; Day School Conference  
Thursday, December 13 – Session III Enrichment Classes in Israeli Culture for Preschoolers begins  
Monday, December 17 – 1:00 P.M. dismissal for Parent/Teacher Conferences  
Tuesday, December 18 – 1:00 P.M. dismissal for Parent/Teacher Conferences  
Monday, December 24-Monday, December 31 – No school, winter break  
Tuesday, January 1, 2008 – No school; New Year's Day  
Wednesday, January 2, 2008 – School resumes

## MESSAGE FROM

### THE HEAD OF SCHOOL:

The Talmud says, "*It is not up to you to complete the work, yet you are not free to desist from it (Ethics of the Fathers 2:21)*. These are important words to guide the leadership of any school. That is why every year at Heritage Academy there are school-wide improvement goals set by the Head of School. We never become complacent here. In past years, some of these goals have included: differentiated instruction, teaching the writing process, and Type I, II, and III Enrichment. This year, one of our goals addresses our math instruction, both broadening and narrowing it. Paradoxical? Not at all.

First, why narrow it? Not every student needs to do everything as outlined in a broad, all-encompassing, grade-specific curriculum. Some students can demonstrate proficiency in many mathematical concepts and skills; therefore they should not have to sit through that instruction. The curriculum needs to be narrowed for those students. That is why our elementary teachers are learning how to pre-assess students to identify their mathematical proficiencies, and move them on to newer challenges. This is less necessary in the middle school, where math instruction is already leveled.

Second, why broaden it? No single math program is sufficient to address all that we want to accomplish in our math instruction. Although there is a body of empirical research documenting the effectiveness of the math program of choice at Heritage Academy, we are

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broadening our mathematical offerings to include things beyond that program. This includes a one-day-a-week *Math Lab*. The math lab consists of wider use of manipulatives, extensive focus on *word problems*, logic and probability puzzles and more. Third through fifth grades are also participating in *The Math Forum@Drexel University*, an on-line community of math learners engaged in activities such as the *Problem of the Week*, *Virtual Math Teams*, and *Math Journals*. Middle school math teachers are broadening their students' curriculum with the addition of the *MathCounts* program. This program consists of 300 creative math problems meeting National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards. During the winter, our grade eight students will participate in the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual *American Mathematics Competitions 8 (AMC 8)* contest. Last year, the AMC 8 contest involved over 160,000 students worldwide.

Thank you to Donna Lorenzo, our new *Math Coordinator*, for spearheading many of these initiatives. These initiatives will help our students develop as mathematics problem solvers and learners. The goal is to strengthen their comprehension, and also for them to be able to apply and demonstrate what they know. Mathematics is increasingly important in our technological and scientific age. Taking enough mathematics in school is the gateway to jobs and careers of all kinds, even those that are not explicitly mathematical, scientific, or technological. Our hope is to challenge our students, by both narrowing and broadening our math offerings, because Heritage Academy needs to always stay on the cutting edge. *"Institutions that are not continuously improving are in a state of decline."* (Senge, P.M. *The Fifth Discipline*)

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## FROM MR. SHIMON SHUSHAN JEWISH LIFE DIRECTOR:

Shalom everyone,

It is exciting that we have so many Judaic events and programs running at school. Among them: the Havdalah service that we have every Monday morning; the monthly Rosh Chodesh Assembly (led by the student council) with its unique monthly theme (e.g. The Power of Speech, Appreciation & Friendship); Tezdakah Projects; Chesed Starts at Home; Classroom Rabbi Program; Connecting to our Graduates; ... and more.

In the middle school, we have Sheat Chesed; Alternative Tefillah; Judaic Elective Courses; Building Jewish World (Bar/Bat Mitzvah program); and the active participation of our Student Council in Judaic projects.

All of the above is in addition to the other wonderful Judaic activities and assemblies that our dedicated teachers are managing throughout the year.

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During the past three months, I have been keeping you up to date on these exciting events and activities. Bringing more Judaic Spirit to our school is one of my primary goals as Jewish Life Director. Through these programs we bring into our classes and into our homes the wonderful face that Judaism has to offer to each one of us. The impact on our students is outstanding.

Let me share with you one story that took place in our school, just a few weeks ago, during the visit of Mr. Shlomo Kessel, the head of Emunah Afulah in Israel:

Mr. Kessel shared with our students a few touching stories about children at his center. One of these was about Danielle Mualem (the child we are currently sponsoring). I noticed many students wiping their tears as they listened. In addition, a number of students shared personal stories about children they personally knew who came from dysfunctional families.

Heritage Academy provides a compassionate learning environment where every student feels welcome regardless of the way he/she practices Judaism. Through our pluralistic approach (i.e. the Swing Period, Alternative Tefillah, the Judaic Elective classes) children are provided a fine education, both spirituality and academically. I admire the way that our students at Heritage accept the differences and learn how to live in friendship with one another; even those who are not exactly like themselves.

Cooperating parents, stimulating faculty, excellent rabbis and other leaders in the community, and of course our wonderful children, are all significant pieces in this outstanding puzzle that we call Heritage Academy.

With best wishes for a Happy Chanukah!



Students from Grades 4 and 5 present *Tzedakah* to Shlomo Kessel from Emuna Afula.



## ENRICHMENT PROGRAM 2007-2008

### MRS. SHOLES

Another great year is shaping up at Heritage Academy! We have built on our previous enrichment programs and begun some new ones to meet the needs of our students this year. We are kicking off another year of *Destination Imagination* with four teams from Heritage Academy: a Rising Stars team (gr. K-2) managed by Mrs. Pisani and Mr. Schneider, two intermediate elementary teams (gr. 3-4) managed by Ms. Zmurko and co-managers Ms. Stokes and Mrs. Yashgur, and a middle school team (gr. 5 and 6) managed by Mr. Prewandowski. There are still a few spaces on the elementary teams, but the roster will be closed by mid-December. Meetings are being held on Wednesdays after school (except for the Rising Stars team, which meets on Thursdays). The regional competition we will be attending will be on Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School on the Cape. We hope to have a dress rehearsal for an audience during the last week before the competition. DI is a wonderful program, and I am thrilled that so many students, parents and teachers have stepped up to expand it this year! If anyone is interested in becoming an assessor (judge), we still need 3 volunteers to be trained in Grafton on Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> and to work at the competition on March 30<sup>th</sup>. College students, older high school students, neighbors, friends, colleagues: any reliable volunteer is welcome, and there are various tasks to suit different talents and interests. Send me their names and contact information and I'll get in touch.

In Grades 1 through 5 we are again compacting curriculum and providing small group enrichment, as needed. Group instruction in various subjects (reading, writing, math, etc.) will be provided whenever students have mastered substantial portions of the standard curriculum in that unit or subject. Some groups have begun to meet once or twice weekly, but others will be formed when necessary. We have recently enrolled in *The Math Forum*, a problem solving program available online through Drexel University in Philadelphia. Students in Grades 3, 4 and 5 will have the opportunity to try these resources during their "math lab" period on Fridays. This is a new program for Heritage, and we hope it will provide some extra challenge to our students. I am also piloting a math enrichment unit with my small groups in grades 3 & 4 from the *Mentoring Mathematical Minds* program. So far, both the students and I are enjoying it and finding it stimulating.

Last year, a few students pursued independent projects, toward the end of the year, with minimal oversight from me. This year, that opportunity is again being offered to a few students in grades 4, 5 and in the middle school. These projects will be in areas of interest to the individual students, and I will serve as facilitator and resource. The projects that students are tackling are exciting, and I look forward to seeing their products later in the year and sharing them with appropriate audiences.

Throughout the year, in collaboration with the classroom teachers, there will be some whole class enrichment experiences. Recently, the Third Grade was able to examine some Native American artifacts and crafts, in conjunction with their unit on Native Americans. I look forward to arranging other special activities to coordinate with our curriculum. We've had a great start to this school year, and I look forward to working with students, teachers and parents to continue to meet the enrichment needs of our students.

### SHALOM FROM GAN YELADIM - KINDERGARTEN

Our days begin with the little ones sharing tidbits of information and hugs, followed by free play. It is the 1<sup>st</sup> year Kindergarten is participating in the Saxon Math program. Geometric shapes such as rhombus, trapezoid, and parallelogram are part of the vocabulary. Copying designs using pattern blocks is a favorite thing to do. Cute teddy bear counters help teach 1-1 counting, sorting, graphing, and the concept: fewest/most. During small group instruction in reading, a large grid drawn on the magnetic white board acts as a Dart Game where the boys and girls use magnetic darts and aim at a box. One group identifies a specific CAPITAL letter, another identifies the lowercase letter/sound and a word beginning with it, while the last reads a specific word that is in a book they are reading. Fire, school, home, playground, and street crossing safety were topics we concentrated on in October. In school we took a walk and pointed out EXIT signs, alarms, and fire extinguishers. Drew Guertin, our school custodian and crossing guard visited wearing a reflective vest and carrying a STOP sign. After speaking to us we followed him outside and he helped us cross Converse Street, safely. Making a yummy fire truck cookie and a field trip to the Longmeadow Fire Dept. brought this unit to a close.

Kindergarten joined 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade on a visit to Cold Orchard Springs in Belchertown. We saw how an apple is tested for ripeness and then picked our own bag of apples in the orchard. They were free of chemicals, crunchy, and sweet. Finally, we started *Open Circle*, a comprehensive, grade-differentiated social and emotional learning program taught in grades K-5. Non-negotiable Rules, School Listening Look, and Double-D Behavior (dangerous and destructive) are various terms familiar to children in these grades. Other components include: a letter to families, extended activities, and literature reinforcement. (See the *Open Circle* collection of books in our school library.)

We are into our Thanksgiving unit and look forward to learning about Mexico. Ole!

The beginning of the year was packed with Jewish holidays and the *ruach* (spirit) in the classroom was palpable. The *banim* and *banot* (boys and girls) were, and continue to be, excited to learn about the holidays, sing songs, and dance to the



Israeli beat. *Tefillah* (prayer) is recited daily. Words and phrases *b'ivrit* (in Hebrew) are spoken throughout the day. A sticker chart encourages each child to practice and use this new language.

We began the *aleph, bet* (Hebrew alphabet), and are currently on the 4<sup>th</sup> letter, *dalet*. *Gan yeladim* has fun hearing his/her name beginning with the new letter/sound and helping generate a list of vocabulary words that start with it. Using “magic noodles” to create a *keshet* (rainbow), is how we learned our colors. Since *Simchat Torah*, listening to the *parsha* (weekly *torah* portion) has been included in the curriculum. We culminate the week by welcoming *Shabbat*. Celebrating a student’s birthday along with his/her family enhances the festivities. Commemorating *Chanukah*, a favorite holiday, continuing the *aleph, bet*, working on art projects, and more dancing are some of the activities we look forward to in the next term.

## FIRST GRADE NEWS – MRS. Z.

The first grade class has been full of hustle and bustle this year. We have now learned all the new rules and we have been busy putting all of them into practice. We have learned most of our letters in writing and now we are practicing. We learned the name of the lines and where to put our letters. We have been writing sentences in our journal. We hope you enjoy reading our sentences as they come home.

We also went to Cold Springs Orchard in Belchertown. We really enjoyed learning all about how apples are grown. It was very interesting. The best part was picking the apples and getting to eat one right off the tree.

In Math we have learned about odd and even numbers and have started to learn our addition facts to 6. We are getting pretty good at memorizing them so we can say the answers quickly. We like to play addition bingo. Remember to practice the facts often.

Thanksgiving is right around the corner and we have been learning many things in Social Studies. We read a book about Squanto and learned how hard the Pilgrims had to work when they got here. We hope you like all of our projects and enjoy using them to decorate for the holiday.

Coming events: getting ready for Chanukah; and starting our timed-tests in Math, to see how well we know our math facts.

Have a very Happy Thanksgiving and Chanukah. We look forward to sharing our Thanksgiving Day luncheon and the Chanukah play with you

## KITAH ALEPH – MORAH IDIT & MORAH INBAL

It’s fun - *kan* , it’s fun - here.....

*Shalom, shalom* from *Kitah Alef*. We started the year with a very sweet group of children in *Kitah Alef*. A group of boys and girls, all eager to learn and to start their journey of knowledge.

After making the transition from Kindergarten to *Kitah Alef*, learning the rules of behavior and getting used to the new learning environment, we quickly got to know our new friends. We are enjoying our studies and the children are happy to be with their friends in class.

In Hebrew we already learned ten letters! We sing and learn new words in Hebrew, which reinforces our vocabulary. We listen to stories and have lots of fun. When we got to the letter Vav we heard a story about a balloon man. Every child got his own balloon with the letter and the class was filled with happy students and colorful balloons. One morning, Morah Idit decided to do a puppet show about a story we learned in class. The story was about *Hav-Hav* a dog, who is a character in our Hebrew book, and the students loved it!

September and October were mainly about the High Holidays in *tishri*. We welcomed the Jewish New Year, wrote *Rosh Hashanah* cards and learned about *Succoth* and the customs of *Yom Kippur*. This year we have something new, a daily “swing period.” During the swing period, we learned about daily life in school and at home. We read lots of books and the students made their own books in Hebrew.

Every Friday morning we learn about the *Parshat Hashvua* – the story and *torah* portion of the week. In the afternoon, we end the week with *Kabbalat Shabbat*: Welcoming the *Shabbat*.

It is a special time of the week. We celebrate the *Shabbat* by singing *Shabbat* songs, lighting the candles and say the blessings over the wine and *challah*. Every week we have a *Shabbat ema* and *abba* who bring a snack for the whole class and we all enjoy the celebration.

When we learned about the Autumn season (*Stav*), we took our books and went outside. Our assignment was to collect four different kinds of colorful leaves. The children enjoyed the activity and came back to class to decorate their pages.

We are using a temporary *Siddur* in class. It’s lovely and every child has his own, with pictures of him/her praying and saying the blessings within the book.

The atmosphere in class is great and we hope to continue this wonderful year of learning and having fun in *Kitah Aleph*!



## SECOND GRADE – MRS. KRAMER

The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom is a busy place to be this year. Each morning we begin the day with a math meeting where my Star Student of the week leads the class in a discussion about the weather and the calendar. Each child contributes to the meeting by thinking of a number sentence for the number of the day in the month. Everyone gets very excited and the children learn from one another. Almost every day each child takes a 2-minute fact test to keep his/her math skills sharp.

We have completed a science unit on the seasons and weather. For a culminating activity, Brandon Butcher, chief meteorologist from Channel 3, came into our room to teach the children about the different weather conditions. He presented a very vivid and colorful slide show. The children have been writing many stories about the seasons and the weather. They all have wonderful imaginations. After each story is edited for proper capitalization and punctuation the pieces are ready to be published and displayed for all to enjoy.

As we approach the Thanksgiving holidays, the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are busy learning about the Pilgrims' voyage to the new world and the first Thanksgiving. We have completed a book called, The First Thanksgiving. We are in the process of practicing for our Thanksgiving performance at the Thanksgiving luncheon. All the children are working very hard to put on a great play.

After the Thanksgiving holiday break, we will begin learning about the continent of Africa. The children will learn about the different countries and cultures through books, pictures, stories, and music.

A great part of the day is spent on learning to follow directions and doing *mitzvot* for their classmates. Every Thursday we continue to have an "Open Circle" meeting which helps instill better social skills and proper behavior. The children are all active participants in this activity. It is a great year!



First grader Stephan Pinco on the first day of school.



Shimon Shushan leads the Kindergarten Mezuzah Ceremony at the front door of our school.

## KITAH BET – MORAH IDIT & MRS. EFRON-NISSIM

We started the year with enthusiasm and joy. *Kitah Bet* students were glad to come back to school. They love Hebrew and they are good, achieving students. The holiday period went well, welcoming the Jewish New Year, writing *Rosh Hashanah* greeting cards, learning about *Succoth* and the customs of *Yom Kippur*. *Kitah Bet* was very involved with our *Simchat Torah* celebration. We learned a few songs and sang and danced happily around the torah scrolls.

In class, we learn about our friends, new friends and how to welcome them.

In Hebrew, we learn about the things that we do in class such as: study, play and listen. We write short stories in Hebrew, and then make *brochim habaim* - small books. We learn how to ask questions in Hebrew. We have a *machberet lemazkert* - a notebook - to remember things we did last year and add new things we learn this year. We learned about the book of Genesis and enjoyed the stories of *Parashat Hashavua* every week.

This year we have a special "swing period" in the afternoon when the students of *Kitah Bet* study about the *Shabbat* and its customs. We say the blessings and learn about them. Every Friday, it's the special time in the week that we have *Kabbalat Shabbat*.

Every *ema* and *abba shel Shabbat* bring a snack for the whole class. We sing songs of *Shabbat*, say the blessings over the wine (juice) and *challah* (bread) and sometimes have a special guest, our classroom rabbi: Rabbi Schwartz, who makes the children laugh and keeps them very interested. One Friday, Rabbi Schwartz came and did an optical illusion activity with the children and they were very excited!

We are now in the middle of practicing for our exciting, winter, Hanukah show. The atmosphere in the class is great! We hope to continue this year with the same enthusiasm of learning and having fun!



## DON'T TALK SO LOUD, I'M STANDING RIGHT NEXT TO YOU- GRADE 3 WITH MR. PREWANDOWSKI

**The sun and the moon and the earth...** this was the first science topic covered by Grade 3 this year. Besides looking at some great pictures... and drawing some even greater ones... we also began to learn a new skill. We began keeping a notebook, and learning to copy notes from the board. These notes also included pictures, and even a few quotes from people like Sir Isaac Newton... remember him? He is the one who invented gravity. In any case, the notebooks seemed to work well as the students had only their notebooks to study from for the "big test". They all did quite well on the test too.

**Out standing in their field...** At the end of October we took a field trip to Elm Knoll, a nearby pumpkin farm. We went on a hay ride, saw some enormous bulls and got to feed them... yikes, their tongues are huge. We also saw an emu, several 600 pound pigs, two dozen puppies, and a wallaroo (a what?). Besides all the animals, there was a big place to run and play, and a lot of great things made out of hay that we could climb on. We even got to go out into the pumpkin patch and choose a pumpkin to take home. There are loads of pictures so if you are ever in the hallway outside our classroom please check out the bulletin board.

**More school please...** Two weeks ago, in *Time for Kids*, there was an article about how some schools across the United States have decided to hold classes for eight hours a day, instead of the traditional six or seven. Needless to say, everyone in the class had an opinion on that subject. We used this as an opportunity to start learning how to write opinion papers. To my surprise, not everyone was against the idea of a longer day. Again, if you are outside the classroom in the next several weeks, you can read the opinions... and decide for yourself.

**Sioux, Sioux who?...** Now we are studying Native Americans... or American Indians... or Indians... or First Nation Peoples. Besides all the things we are learning about the way these people used to live, we have also learned that any of the above mentioned terms is just fine with the people themselves, as long as it is used with respect. But there's more. What would show even more respect is if we found out what tribe we are referring to and use that name instead. If they are Sioux, then that is what we should call them. Wouldn't you rather be referred to as an Israeli instead of a Middle Easterner? Ahhh... we never do stop learning.

**It was a dark and stormy book report...** Finally, it is now book report season. Each child will be responsible for a book report each month. I am sure you have already read the form that was sent home on Monday, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>. These will necessitate a good deal of work on the part of the children, and they are excited and want to do a good job. For about a week each month,

please allow some extra homework time to accommodate their book report assignment. Thanks.

**In conclusion...** In my opinion the year has been going great so far. Every day has held something memorable and fun. So... thanks for providing me with such a super group of kids. I'm looking forward to a terrific rest of the year.

## THIRD GRADE (KITA GIMEL) – MORAH HOFIT

People say that all beginnings are difficult. I guess not all of them. Sometimes the rules change. Someone upstairs decided to surprise me. I arrived at Heritage Academy this year and realized immediately what I had won: eleven, sweet, clever students.

We opened the year with personally getting to know each other, and learning about *Tishri's* holidays through songs, pictures, and stories. The students are continuously enriching their knowledge in Judaic studies: Jewish holidays, *Tefillah*, *Shabbat*, *Parashat Hashavuah* and *Chumash*. In Hebrew, we are working on various skills in reading and writing, and on constantly building our vocabulary. Every student wrote a personal project about him/herself. This included what he/she looks like, hobbies, why he/she received the name he/she did, Hebrew birth date, and favorite things. Every week, the students take a Hebrew book from the class library, and receive a *Parashat Hashavuah* paper on *Erev Shabbat*.

I am glad to see the motivation in my students, and I hope for a good and successful year.



Fourth grade performs for the residents at Ruth's House.

## FOURTH GRADE MRS. ZMURKO-

In fourth grade general studies, the students are taught how to approach learning to better their understanding of subject area material. They are taught to analyze tasks through self-questioning. *What do I need to do? How will I do this task? What could help me succeed? What could get in my way? What can I do about those things that could get in my way? How am I*



doing? Thinking about the academic tasks before, during, and after completion helps students better manage the tasks and improve their learning in order to meet school with success. Behind each subject taught in fourth grade is the instruction of how to approach learning.

In reading, we have learned the Read and Reflect strategy. This strategy is a series of five questions, which promotes comprehension and inferential thinking. The questions used in the Read and Reflect strategy include:

*What is the section mainly about?*

*What confuses me?*

*What is important?*

*What connections can I make?*

*What am I thinking?*

The middle question, “What is important?” keeps students focused on the purpose for reading, whether it is looking for story elements in a fictional story or looking for a key definition in a science text. The Read and Reflect strategy is applied to various texts each day, and therefore, the students take ownership of these five questions.

In fourth grade, we continue to learn about the English language. The students are taught to study the language, and to become more familiar with its spelling patterns. We are learning that difficult words are made up of smaller words and we should use our understanding of the smaller words to decode, encode, and define larger, more difficult words. We need to use what we know to get what we do not know. We are also working to understand why the English language is difficult. We are reading about the history of the English language, and how, over time, different groups of people contributed to this language. Reading the history helps us to understand that each word in the English language has its own story.

In Social Studies, we started the year reviewing the seven continents and four oceans. We are currently in an explorers unit with a specific focus on the Spanish explorers that came to the new world after Columbus. The goal is that students build upon their knowledge of who influenced the land we now call the United States of America. After the explorers unit, we will move to the study of the thirteen original colonies. During social studies lessons, we read historical texts using Read and Reflect with a specific focus on the social lens. The social lens keeps us focused on the people of history. We use key words (groups, goals, obstacles, action, change, result) to pull important information from texts and to build a good understanding of history through the perspective of the people involved. Using these key words help the students keep their notes focused on the purpose for reading. The students use graphic organizers to keep their note-taking organized and easy to study. It’s more fun reading about history when you connect with the idea that you are reading about people and their stories.

In science, we have been exploring in a few areas. From the start of the year, the fourth grade class has maintained our *Classroom Feeder Watch*. This is an observational program where students practice identifying birds based on field marks.

The students use field guides to help them identify. We observe and record the birds that arrive at our window feeders each day. Frequent visitors to the feeders include the house sparrow, the tufted titmouse, and the chickadee. Through daily observation and recording, the students are naturally learning about bird identification and bird behaviors. Alongside *Classroom Feeder Watch*, we have been immersed in the study of the musculoskeletal system. We have specifically focused on how the muscular and skeletal systems work together to cause movement. Pulling out the important information in a science text is difficult, and therefore, we continue to practice Read and Reflect. Before reading, we always clarify our purpose for reading, which helps us identify the information needed for note taking. The students mapped out important information about movement on concept maps, which were constantly used to rehearse the information learned. We ended the musculoskeletal system unit with a special visit from Dr. Michael Zmurko who taught us about injuries to these systems.

In math, we have the privilege of breaking into small groups, as well as providing individual math instruction. This keeps the math instruction focused on student needs. We also have started Math Lab on Fridays, which engages the students in constructions and problem solving. This year, the students are doing a lot of writing about math. They are coached to explain (in writing) the mathematical concepts being taught. Using the proper vocabulary in these explanations is essential. Developing strong mathematical vocabulary only proves itself advantageous, and writing about math helps the students practice the vocabulary being taught each day.

The fourth graders will continue to develop in their approach to learning as we continue to work in all of our subject areas through the end of the school year. This class shares a love for learning and it is a pleasure working with all of them.



Fourth Grader Sarah Goldstein with residents of Ruth’s House.

## NEWS FROM THE ART ROOM — MRS. SHAKER

We got off to a slow start in Art this year with the Jewish Holidays falling on Thursdays and Fridays...our Art days here at Heritage Academy. Now we are in full swing



and have been creating many works of art that are on display throughout the building. (Come and stroll!) Don't worry, eventually all artwork will make its way home to you by the end of the year.

All grades have been working on projects for our upcoming Geography Bee and Fair to be held in January. We have also been busy with Thanksgiving projects, the Hanukkah show, and the Artist-of-the-Month program.

As I begin my eighth year here at Heritage Academy, I continue to be amazed by the artistic talent of the students here. I enjoy working with your children and helping them to express their creative selves.

## MUSIC NEWS — CANTOR ELIZABETH BERKE

The beginning of the school year has been busy in the music classroom. In the early grades we are working on identifying the beat, and we are learning how to keep a steady beat to music through movement. The students enjoy the new metronome (generously donated by Mrs. Shaker), which helps musicians keep a steady tempo. Third grade is excitedly learning the recorder. They already know the notes B, A, and G. Fourth and fifth grades are being exposed to a number of standard Jewish songs and musical concepts, as well as instrument families and the sounds of each instrument. Sixth grade has been learning about different musical styles, from Classical and Reggae to Zydeco and Jazz. We are starting a unit on musical terminology, and will soon be starting Music History. Eighth grade is heavily involved in the Hanukkah Show, which promises to be entertaining and illuminating.

## THE LIBRARY CORNER - GERI JOHNSON

Our library collection has grown so big, that we are in the process of upgrading the computer catalog capacity to *unlimited* from a previous limit of 5000 books. This is exciting news as we will be able to provide access to a classic, a modern, and a Judaic collection.

With the teacher's lunch area and workroom moved, the Library has never looked better. We welcome back Lara Tempkin-Pisani, our always ready with a camera, Admissions Director, and Marilyn Smith, our Reading Specialist, as our newest neighbor, who share the library area. We continue to encourage sharing library space with other small groups during Library Time, as it is the best way to learn why one speaks in a low voice in the library.

HEY! Ask your child about *The Library Cheer*, and ask for the Hip-Hop version. *Last Name First* is a concept that spills into the basics of the real world, (think telephone directories, indexes and to forth) and our choreographed cheer is just plain fun to do! Another reason how Library is really a fun place as students learn library decorum, enjoy the computer catalog, participate in the ever popular Story Time, and push the "Easy Button" while learning how the library works and how to find library materials. Please try to save some time in April to help out at the popular Scholastic Book Fair during Parent/Teacher Conferences. We are actively seeking volunteers to (wo)man the Fair for the evening conferences.

I want to thank you for all your support for our Library!

## FOURTH GRADE- MR. EDRY

In fourth grade Hebrew, we are about to finish the first book of the *Chaverim B'ivrit* program. This unit was all about the extra curricula activities that students partake in such as: swimming, basketball, art, cooking, photography, etc. The students developed Hebrew vocabulary that related to these endeavors. They learned how to play chess, and had a cooking class **all in Hebrew**. The students took turns making fruit salad, while being videotaped as if chefs on T.V. Students completed Hebrew book reports on books they read in class. We continually practice our Hebrew conversational skills. Our goal is have the students comfortable with the Hebrew language; in writing, speaking, and reading.

In our *Chumash* study, we have been working on a project about *The Cave of the Patriarchs/Machpelah*. The



Mrs. Zmurko working with Talya Hyman in class.



students worked with partners and researched on the Internet the importance of this place to the Jewish people. In our *Navi/ Prophets* class, we studied the *Book of Joshua*. We completed the Story of Jericho and the Crossing of the Jordan River. The students wrote creatively about these topics in both Hebrew and English.

Up until Thanksgiving and *Chanukah*, the students worked on our community *Chesed* project. Together with the fifth graders, we prepared a show and presented it to the residents of the Jewish Nursing Home. We prepared patriotic songs in English, and a Hebrew dance. Some students played their musical instruments for the residents. Everyone enjoyed this time and we hope to continue working with the Jewish Nursing Home.

We are continuing to integrate the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> grades whenever possible in order to expand their social circle. We are understand the importance of this social aspect for our students. Therefore, we have *Tefillah* every morning, field trips, lunch, recess and *Kabbalat Shabbat* together.

## FIFTH GRADE- MR. EDRY

We are progressing according to our planned curriculum. In Hebrew, we have been studying from the new program: *Tal-Sela*. In the unit *Ze Lo Ani* (It's not me), we learned a song by Leah Goldberg about a child who sometimes misbehaves and then regrets his behavior afterwards.

In *Chumash*, we have studied the book of *Shmot/ Exodus* and learned the reason why the Jewish people went to Egypt and how they became oppressed for 400 years. Since the word *Shmot* means "names," the students researched the origin of their Hebrew names. They also made beautiful posters with all the meanings of their names.

During the "swing" period, we studied the book of *Shoftim/Judges* and the story of Devorah, the only female judge, and how she led the people through war against the Canaanites. The students learned two *pesukim/verses* by heart, and recited Devorah's song in front of the class.

We had many visitors in our class such as Mr. Shlomo Kessel, the head of the *Afula Emuna Center* in Israel. He shared information about the children at the center and the great work they are doing there. We also had Liela Deshevsky, who is an alumni of Heritage Academy, and made *Aliyah* to Israel four years ago. She works as a counselor for Ethiopian Jews who immigrated to Israel. We also had Mrs. Libowitz speak about her mission to Honduras to help the people there medically. We are looking forward to having more parents visit and share their stories, interests, and passions with us.

## FIFTH GRADE - MS. STOKES

The Fifth Grade has had a busy beginning to the school year. We have completed our interview writing pieces, as well as our group community projects. The community writing projects involved using their creativity to construct their own community brochure. The students worked together in groups of three to create a persuasive brochure of their imaginary community. Their brochures were a success. Their persuasive language had me wanting to visit their created communities!

We have also been working on a weather unit in Science. The class had the wonderful opportunity of having Brandon Butcher (a meteorologist with Channel 3 in Springfield) visit our classroom. His visit was a wonderful learning experience and has provided enrichment on the weather around us.

In Social Studies we are coming to the end of our first unit on Federalism. We have already explored the journey of a few of our founding fathers: George Washington, James Adams, and Thomas Jefferson. We will complete the unit after learning about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, The Role of Sacajawea and the War of 1812. The class will participate in a project re-enacting key events that they learned throughout the unit.

I am truly proud of how hard the Fifth Graders have worked on reading *The Incredible Journey* by Shelia Burnford. The novel had many challenging words, which has enhanced their vocabulary. During our "swing" period, the students expanded their learning by completing a project by researching the animals in the novel.

The Fifth Grade class has been working diligently on their academics, as well as having successful rehearsals with the Fourth Grade. Together they will present a Thanksgiving program for Ruth's House. We are all excited to present the program that allows us all to reflect on the true meaning of Thanksgiving.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH – MRS. ROY

After a hike to Forest Park to search for objects of nature similar to those notes in students' summer journals, grades six, seven, and eight wrote and illustrated three haiku poems that they shared with the student body. This activity initiated the study of poetry through a consideration of figures of speech, musical devices, symbols, and theme. Students culminated their poetry unit by writing a poem of their choice.

Using the Bronze level of the *Prentice-Hall: Literature: Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes* series has enabled students to study literature while learning vocabulary, grammar, style, reading, writing, and test taking skills. Grade 6 is completing the poetry unit including the grammar and content vocabulary.



Students have written a Book Review on Treasure Island and Steinbeck's The Red Pony. Writing has focused on the process of prewriting and outlining form and content of the paragraph, starting with the basic paragraph. Writing workshops on Tuesday consist of two periods for instruction, modeling, outlining, and writing using the computers in the computer lab. Writing is evaluated using a rubric; rewriting suggestions are indicated on the rubric. Grammar work has included Daily Oral Language, common usage problems, editing symbols, parts of speech, usage, punctuation, and capitalization. Writing conferences have focused on individual weekly writing problems. Outside writing for November is a choice between Hitty: Her First Hundred Years and an age appropriate biography of Benjamin Franklin. The next literature unit will be the short story.

Using the Silver level of the *Prentice-Hall: Literature: Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes* series has enabled students to study literature while learning vocabulary, grammar, style, reading, writing, and test taking skills. Grade 7 is completing the poetry section including the literary terms requisite for analysis of poetry, grammar, and content vocabulary. Students have written a book review of Little Women or Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, comparison/contrast of two poems, a profile of a poet of their choice, and are culminating the unit with individual original poetry writing. Grammar work has included Daily Oral Language, comparisons of adjectives and adverbs, irregular comparisons of adjectives and adverbs, and the punctuation of coordinate adjectives. Literature has included the work of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Dickinson, Benêt, and Longfellow. Writing conferences have focused on the individual summer reading and weekly writing. The outside reading for November is The Prince and the Pauper. The next literature unit will be the short story.

Using the Platinum level of the *Prentice-Hall: literature: Timeless Themes series* has enabled students to study literature while learning vocabulary, grammar, style, reading, writing, and test taking skills. Grade 8 has completed the poetry unit including the grammar, content, and literary term vocabulary. Students have written a book review of the summer reading novels, a proposal for an anthology of poetry, a comparison/contrast of two poems, an analysis of a poem, and an original poem. Grammar work has included Daily Oral language, common usage problems, and elliptical clauses. Intensive review of nouns and pronouns has included case, number, gender, antecedents, and agreement. Literature has included Dickinson, Amichai, Browning, Tennyson, and Yeats. Writing conferences have focused on the individual summer reading and weekly writing. The outside reading is Our Town. The next literature unit will be the short story.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The Middle School offers an enrichment program. The program allows students to choose four different activities during the course of the year. The first session's choices were cooking, clubs, and chess. The sixth grade was required to take the Study Skills program for the first semester. Other additional choices for the next three sessions include drama, yearbook, and newspaper. The Enrichment Program provides students with the opportunity to share talents and expertise that the classroom would not ordinarily provide. In addition, the program builds community and structures socialization. The student body and the faculty are very excited about this innovation.



The Graduating Class of 2008 welcomes First Grade at the Opening Assembly.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH AND SOCIAL STUDIES- MRS. HEATH

As I begin my second year at Heritage Academy, I am looking forward to another interesting, fun-filled and exciting year. There are many activities planned for the Middle School that I'm sure will not only educate, but will also be enjoyable for all the students.

**In sixth grade math**, the students have been busy reviewing some basic skills, as well as working on improving their multiplication and division facts. This will enable them to enter the world of fractions and decimals much easier and so far so good. On Fridays we will be having a "Math Lab" where the children will be working on puzzles, word problems, and using a variety of manipulatives to discover that math can be both fun and challenging.

**In the sixth grade social studies program**, we have already learned about the foundations of geography, how geography and history are related and are now beginning to learn about some of



the many different cultures of the world. For the next few weeks, the students will be researching and working on individual projects concerning the many regions and the many different cultures that make up our world today. We will also begin preparing for the *National Geographic Geography Bee* to be held in January.

**The seventh grade social studies students** have entered the world of ancient civilizations. They have studied prehistoric times, the beginning of history and are now traveling through the Fertile Crescent. They became archaeologists of the year 4000, and as groups went on their own “dig” to discover artifacts from the year 2007, which they presented as PowerPoint presentations to their classmates. They also became “scribes” and created a manual for the farmers of Mesopotamia. As the year continues, we will be journeying through Egypt, Israel, Greece and Rome to discover how these civilizations developed and how they influenced many civilizations of the modern world. Their **art classes** are also being correlated with this area of social studies, and they will also be preparing for the *National Geographic Geography Bee*.

**The eighth grade social studies students** will also be preparing for the *National Geographic Geography Bee*, but at the moment they are busy studying the major religions of the world. They have asked many thought provoking questions and have been amazed by the many similarities between the religions. Soon, we will begin the study of Feudalism in England and Japan. Some of the eighth graders also chose as their elective, the course in Jewish History. This involved the study of the Jews who first came to America and the struggles they faced. They discovered quite happily how many of these immigrants were instrumental in establishing the foundations of our country. I am pleased to say that through this course they have taken even more pride in their heritage.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH - MRS. LORENZO

The **Geometry** class began the year with a look at geometric art, geometry in nature, and geometry in architecture. An introduction to all of the terminology that will be used throughout the year demonstrated to students that many commonly used terms have different meanings when taken in a mathematical context. The use of proper terminology is being stressed.

Inductive and deductive reasoning were explored through the use of patterns. Parallel line and angle relationships were discovered and involved the use of algebraic skills. The construction unit stressed that a compass and straightedge are the only allowable tools for copying segments and angles, bisecting, and finding perpendicular and parallel lines.

Slope was another concept which relied upon the use of algebraic skills. In addition to classwork, the students also researched and wrote reports on the famous mathematicians, Euclid and Pythagoras, who were important in the early development of Geometry.

The **Algebra** class began the year with a review of order of operations, integers, and solving one step equations. The properties of numbers were named and discussed. Equation solving expanded into multiple step equations, and equations with variables on both sides. Equations and charts were also used in solving word problems. The types of problems included consecutive integer problems, distance problems, coin problems, and value problems.

Polynomials were introduced along with the rules of exponents. Polynomials were added, subtracted, and multiplied as we prepared to move forward to the important concept of factoring.

Students used on-line resources and books to research and write about the early origins of Algebra in different cultures. The contributions of the Chinese, Greeks, and Egyptians to algebraic thought were shared in class..

## MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE AND MATH- MRS. CLARK

The middle school students have been working very hard in science. **The sixth grade** is exploring the universe. They are enjoying learning about the formation of the universe and our solar system. We will be studying the planets and learning about laboratories in space. From here we will move onto the Dynamic Earth and learn all about the surface of our planet, from rocks and minerals to volcanoes and earthquakes. **The seventh grade** began this year by studying cells. We have looked at them under a microscope and can tell the differences between plants and animal cells. Soon we will watch diffusion and osmosis across a membrane. We will continue on with mitosis and then move onto body systems. **The eighth grade** has learned about different types of matter. We have studied phases of matter and how things change from one phase to another. We are now looking at chemical and physical changes and how to balance an equation. This is in preparation for learning about atoms and molecules and how they combine. The year so far has been exciting and challenging. I continue as a Science Resource person for elementary teachers, and have aided and assisted them in their instruction. I look forward to the rest of the school year with all the students.

**The Algebra ½** class has been moving along quite nicely this year. We have been learning about exponents, areas, graphing and fractions. We will soon be covering volume, percent, mixed number problems, and ratios. It has been a challenging year so far but all the students have worked hard and are having a successful year.



Josh Kessler

Book Report

September 12, 2007

The Good Earth, a novel by Pearl S. Buck, accurately portrays the life of a farmer in early twentieth century China. The main character is faced with many different problems throughout the book and must work hard to overcome them. The title of the book also has meaning about the meaning of the book. The characters live off of the land and prosper from of it. They use what the earth gives them and are grateful, but when it gives them nothing, they must learn new ways to keep their family from dying. The Good Earth is a great piece of literature.

The Good Earth depicts the life of a simple farmer who lived in a small Chinese town in the early twentieth century. He is a man who lives off of the land, struggling to keep his family alive in horrible situations. In the beginning of the novel, Wang Lung marries O-Lan, a slave from the house of Hwang, the richest family in town (17-18). They both work very hard in the field, and save up enough money to buy more land. Wang Lung becomes increasingly rich until he faces his first major problem: a famine that breaks out because of serious lack of rain (58). Everyone ran out of food, and people had to steal what little food Wang Lung had (64). His newborn daughter died, "he saw upon the floor the child's body" (71), and they were forced to move to a large city in the south where they had to beg for money and food (80). Wang Lung was forced to steal when the Boxer Rebellion spread to his city, driven by anger towards the rich (119).

Wang Lung had stolen enough money to buy him and his family a ticket to go back up to his town, a new ox, new furniture, and even people to work in the fields for him. He bought all of the fertile land from the house of Hwang, which had been raided by bandits who killed and chased away most of the inhabitants during the famine. Wang Lung became increasingly rich, so he was able to afford everything he wanted, including an education for his children. Three of his children were married and two had jobs. After his first son was married, though, O-Lan died, and it was not until then that Wang Lung really appreciated her (228).

Wang Lung no longer had to work, and he did not need to worry about his children anymore, so most of the day he spent lazily at home. After some time he had saved enough money to buy the house of Hwang, which now became the house of Wang. He put everything in the hands of his son, and his son "called carpenters and clever masons and they repaired the rooms and the moon gates between the courts... and he built again the pools and he bought flecked and golden fish to put in them. And after it was all finished and made beautiful as far as he knew beauty, he planted lotus and lilies in the pools, and the scarlet-berried bamboo of India and everything he could remember he had seen in the southern parts" (265). Wang Lung grows old in this

house, and he watches his grandchildren become more numerous each year. Year after year was the same for him, until one year when soldiers forced themselves into his house and destroyed everything his son had so carefully made. A year later, after the soldiers had left, his son remade the house exactly as it was. Wang Lung's third son ran off and joined the army after his father forbade him to, because he talked to the soldiers and learned stories of war, compelling him to join. Wang Lung became more and more elderly, and his last days were peaceful for him, around family and servants. Before he died, he remembered that everything he owned the land had given him, and he warned his sons that "it is the end of a family-when they begin to sell the land" (307).

The theme of The Good Earth is change. Wang Lung and his family experience change many times in their life, from rich to poor, from farmer to beggar, and from his original house to his mat shack to his mansion. At the beginning of his life, he is of the lowest social class, and at the end he is one of the most important people in his town. Everyone in the world experiences change, just like Wang Lung did throughout the book. I'll experience a lot of change next year as I make the transition from middle school to high school. My brother experienced even more change when he was diagnosed with diabetes. Sometimes we do not like change, but it can not be avoided. The theme of The Good Earth shows that one person can undergo and survive beneficial and unfortunate change.

Wang Lung and his family experience change many times throughout the book. In the beginning of the book, he repeatedly says, "I am a poor man" (14). His father is afraid when he spends most of his money on his marriage, saying "There is no end to the money spent in this house!" (20). He is also ashamed of being poor, and does not want O-Lan to think he is as poor as he really is, so he says things like "tea? No-no-it makes his cough worse" and "certainly there must be tea leaves. Do you think we are beggars?" (24) even though he usually does not use them. Later on in the book, he is very rich and can afford everything he and his family desire (265). At one point in the book, the family also had to beg and later on had to steal (119). The universal theme of The Good Earth is change, and everyone must live through change some time in one's life, even if one does not want it.

The main character in The Good Earth is Wang Lung. His three main character traits are determination, perseverance, and stubbornness. Throughout the book he shows his determination, like the time when he was a beggar and told himself over and over that "we must get back to the land" (97). His determination leads to his perseverance working every day in the fields and pulling the cart in the city, leading to his wealth. "He put his hoe upon his shoulder and he walked to his plots of land and he cultivated the rows of grain, and he yoked the ox to the plow and he ploughed the western field for garlic and onions" (25). Wang Lung is also stubborn. For example, he attempts to make this third son become a farmer against his will.



Finally, after his sons convince him otherwise, he hires a scholar to teach him. The boy begins to learn of war, especially when the soldiers came. When he tells his father that he wants to go to war, Wang Lung forbids him, causing the boy to run away. The general impression of Wang Lung is a perseverant yet obstinate, self made man who works his way up from the lowest social class to the highest.

The Good Earth has many strengths and some weaknesses. The book is well written with good writers craft. For example it uses many writing tools, for example it uses figures of speech like metaphor many times. One metaphor is "...there was everything which the hand of man could coax from the soil..." (95). The Good Earth also has a universal theme, and accurately portrays many aspects of life in twentieth century China. One of the only weaknesses is that it is slow moving between its main plot points and in the last section of the book, but otherwise it is very intriguing. The Good Earth has many strengths and a few weakness, which is another reason that it is a great book.

The Good Earth is great novel because of its universal theme, and because it is very well written. The Good Earth is about a Chinese farmer named Wang Lung and how he deals with problems that he faces throughout the book. This book is an example about change and how every person in the world must experience it many times in their life. The Good Earth is a better written than many other books, and its theme is apparent all throughout the book whereas in other books the theme can only be seen in one or two places. Overall The Good Earth is an informational, intriguing book.

#### Work Cited

Pearl S. Buck. The Good Earth. New York: The John Day Company, 1965.

### The Head of School's Office Carmi Rothberg

I doubt that I will ever forget the interior of the Head of School's office. When I entered and saw the back wall, I sat down immediately on the wooden chair next to the left wall. As the chair groaned under my weight, I stared at the back wall. It was painted a dizzying green and orange that appeared to spin slowly, and the only parts of the wall that weren't whirling in slow circles had pictures of impossible shapes and circles with smaller circles inside them that seemed to never run out of smaller circles to fill in the empty ones. I shook my head to bring myself back to the office, and that's when I noticed the right wall, which made me feel even more like leaving. It was covered with bizarre maps: maps of the school, a map of an oven, a map of a glass, and even a map of the stomach! The only map that wasn't so peculiar was a map of Florida, but it had been hung upside down.

I needed to leave! When I turned to go into the hall, however, the left wall caught my eye. I sat down on the creaky chair again. The Head of School had obviously achieved many awards, for the left wall was hidden by important-looking awards and azure ribbons. I waded through the newspapers and pens that were strewn across the plum-colored floor. Since then, I have been afraid of that awful office that made me feel so small and insignificant.

*Note from Mrs. Roy: Carmi's piece was a descriptive paragraph that required spatial organization and specific sensory details. Students chose from a list of topic sentences that were provided for them.*

### Devorah Pava A Gloomy Day Without Rain

A good father was he  
A great grandfather he would be  
Now he is not here to see  
All his grandchildren including me  
He was only forty- three  
Too young for this to be

A gloomy day without any rain  
They thought they heard the rain hit the drains

Swish, splash, so sad.

His face was pale as snow  
Too tender for one to know  
I would have loved him so  
Like a daughter loves her father oh.

He looked lonely and lacking the strength to last  
That day passed very fast.  
It was so sad it was his very last

Swish, splash, so sad

It's so sad  
I never had  
My dear granddad



Matt Goldstein and Devorah Pava participate in a scavenger hunt at the Art Show at Sinai Temple.



Midnight Thunder  
Ariel Rothberg

The night was dark and the thunder's bark  
Sliced through the air like a knife.  
The heartless rain, indifferent to pain  
Like an angel dropped down to give life.

The night was black, the rain poured down  
The light of the world was instantly drowned.

The cold win howled, the thunderstorm growled  
The Earth gave a silent scream.  
As lightning rent the firmament  
In half from seam to seam.

The night was black, the rain poured down  
The light of the world was instantly drowned.

The wise willow trees swayed slowly in the breeze  
They had seen it all before.  
Like tired old soldiers getting older and older.  
'Twas a rainstorm, nothing more.

The night was black, the rain poured down  
The light of the world was instantly drowned.

A thousand hordes with a thousand swords  
Slinking away into the west.  
Defeated at last, the long night had passed  
And the unbreakable Earth was at rest



Kindergarteners Leah Gorfinkel and Michelle Baranovski prepare for the Chanukah Show.



Smiling faces of Raphaela and Rebecca Hyman with their dad, at the Family Thanksgiving Luncheon.



First Graders Avivit Armon and Kayla Weiss with the lulav and etrog during Sukkot.



## JUDAIC CLASSES IN MIDDLE SCHOOL — RACHEL WESLEY

Many different classes are offered to our middle school students. In Hebrew, we are currently learning the fable: “The Egg that Dressed Up”. It is the story of an egg that did not want to be who she was. The students identified a personal connection with the egg’s dilemma and explored means of learning and improving themselves and their social environment. Every Friday, we have Hebrew Writing Workshop in which the students follow the five steps of the Writing Process.

In Bible class, the students gained knowledge as they identified the characteristics of good leaders with strong leadership abilities. The students listed positive traits that a good leader needs. The assessment for this unit was to create a board game that included these various leadership traits with some examples cited from the Bible. Additionally, we continued to study Abraham, the first Jew. Each student researched one aspect of his life and created a PowerPoint presentation to the rest of the class.

In Israel studies, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade is learning about the contributions of the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine to the British during WWI. While 8<sup>th</sup> Grade diagnosed and analyzed the “Mandatory Cycle” which included the Arabs Riot and the British “White Books”.

During Alternative *Tefillah*, the students are working on the *Amidah* prayer. The goal is to add this important prayer to our project from last year – the Middle School *Siddur*.

## “WHAT’S UP” IN MR. SHUSHAN’S CLASS?

It is certainly true that this year started smoothly in the Middle school. In Judaic Studies classes, we learn and experience Judaism through Bible, Talmud, Hebrew and Israel. Here are some of the highlights of our studies:

In the sixth grade, the Judaic Studies class is exploring the history of Israel, from the awakening of Zionism through Moshe Montifiori, Herzl and the first Aliyah. As the year progresses, we will study the later stages of modern Zionism. Our students learned about the historical connection of the Jewish people to the Holy Land through our ancestors in the Bible. We rely on historical photographs and maps of early Israel to give us a better sense of what it was like during those groundbreaking years.

In Bible studies (sixth, seventh and eighth grades), we are analyzing the many ways that the Tanakh (the Bible) is relevant to our contemporary lives, and how the landscape of modern Israel makes Biblical history come alive. Most importantly, the students are developing the fundamental skills of Biblical exegesis, skills that they will carry with them as they grow Jewishly. They are

learning to look for key words that can help them understand deeper meanings concealed in Tanakh.

Students in my Hebrew class have been improving their vocabulary and grammar through interactive games. These are fun activities, and we learn a lot. We recently began a unit on music in which the students learn Israeli songs, melodies and tunes. During class, we speak primarily in Hebrew.

Talmud class for eighth graders is exciting. We explored the fact that the Oral Torah is made up of commentaries on the Written Torah. We are experiencing the relationship between the two, and its significance in a Jewish library. We learned how a page of Gemara is structured. With the use of diagrams, we are studying from Tractate Kiddushin, “Rights and Obligations: Parents and Children, Teachers and Students.” So far we are dealing with Mitzvot that parents are obligated to their children, and Mitzvot that children are obligated to their parents. In addition we learned the skills and the basic structure in each Sugiyah.

We continue to maintain a strong connection with our community Rabbis. Every several weeks we invite one of the local Rabbis to lead a discussion about the weekly Torah Portion.

Our Middle School students enjoy a variety of Judaic activities as part of our extra curriculum program. For Sukkoth holiday, eighth graders went to the Nursing Home and to Ruth’s House to decorate the Sukkah for the residents. For Simchat Torah, students led the Torah Services and the Simcha. A few weeks ago, our middle school students went to Sinai Temple to view an outstanding exhibit of Israeli Art and enjoyed a related Scavenger Hunt.

We are all looking forward to the start of our *Building a Jewish World* program, as well as our Sheat Chesed Program.



Jackie Chipkin  
Student  
Council  
President.



## COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY - RACHEL WESLEY

The Kindergarten class is amazing. They all love to come to the computer lab and with their curious eyes they cannot wait to do all the activities planned for them.

They learned about the computer components by playing games on the carpet, as well as the mouse game. Ask them about this game, they will be happy to “tell you.” We also visited the “lagoon” in Thinking Things 1, where we learned to go online and find educational websites such as:

[www.wacona.com](http://www.wacona.com)

[www.snopi.com](http://www.snopi.com)

The fifth and sixth grade students improved their PowerPoint skills by making better presentations and learning to do better research. The seventh grade worked on their class websites. The eighth grade worked on using the excel program. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me.

## COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY – MRS. Z.

The students have been busy in the computer lab learning all the important parts of the computer and their components names. The 1<sup>st</sup> graders have been practicing their typing skills using the TYPE TO LEARN program. While the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders have been practicing the skills they learned last year and adding new ones.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> graders have enjoyed using the program called KIDSWORKS. It is a student’s version of WORD and they have learned how to choose a picture, drag it and even color it. They have written short stories using the skills they have learned so far.

The 1<sup>st</sup> graders are learning how to insert a picture onto their page and write a sentence or two about the picture. They have started to use some skills found in PAINT to color their pictures. It has been exciting to see the things they can do using the computer.



Third Graders in Computer Lab.