



**CALENDAR**

**Monday, December 6**

**Tuesday, December 7**

**Wednesday, December 8**  
12:30 1st Grade Chanukah  
Play  
3:15 Band

**Thursday, December 9**

**Friday, December 10**  
4th Grade Oneg

**Candle Lighting times for December 2010**

Friday, Dec. 3rd - Light 4:04pm  
Friday, Dec. 10th - Light 4:03pm  
Friday, Dec. 17th - Light 4:05pm  
Friday, Dec. 24th - Light 4:08pm  
Friday, Dec. 31st - Light 4:14pm

Saturday, Dec. 4th - End 5:09pm  
Saturday, Dec. 11th - End 5:09pm  
Saturday, Dec. 16th - End 5:10pm  
Saturday, Dec. 25th - End 5:14pm  
Saturday, Jan. 1st - End 5:19pm

**DVAR TORAH BY RACHEL ANISFELD**

Do you believe in miracles?

Chanuka begs the question. *Al Hanisim ve'al hapurkan*, we say and sing. "For the miracles and for the salvation," we thank you, God.

What is the miracle of Chanuka? Usually we say there are two. The military miracle, that a small band of Maccabees was able to defeat the mighty Syrian-Greek army. And the miracle of lights, that a single jug of oil lasted for eight days instead of one. But maybe these two miracles are –like the two dreams of Pharaoh that Josephs says are really one in this week’s parsha – actually two manifestations of the same phenomenon. Both miracles express the strength of something small, a single can of oil and a tiny nation. Chanuka is about the triumph of the small, the survival of the nation of Israel, which, like a little flame set against the backdrop of a long winter night sky, should, by all rights, have flickered and died long ago.

Chanuka teaches us to believe in miracles, strengthens our faith in the indomitable divine spark in our midst. Chanuka is by necessity a winter solstice holiday; coming at our darkest time in the year, it reminds us to believe in light even in the midst of darkness. In Pharaoh’s dream from this week’s parsha, the skinny cows and skinny stalks of wheat swallow up the fat ones. That is the natural way of the world, the way of our worst fears, that trouble will outflank fortune, evil crumble good, darkness overwhelm light. But on Chanuka we are all -- like Yosef -- able to combat such nightmares. We stand, armed with our little lights, and push against the darkness, declaring our faith that light – no matter how faint -- will always triumph.

Is this realistic? Sometimes the evil side has the bigger army, the larger guns, the power of the state to torture and kill. On Chanuka we assert that miracles *are* realistic, that it is not numbers or power or might that prevail, but spirit, the spark of divine light, the flame inside us. The Maccabees and their little can of oil stand for all those who should have given up but didn’t, all those who fight might with courage and faith – the American revolutionaries, Gandhi and his followers, the Jews of the Warsaw ghetto uprising.

On Chanuka we remember their heroism and are strengthened by it. The word Chanuka has the same root as the word for education, *chinuch*. Chanuka is a kind of education, an education of the soul. We begin with one candle – small and flickering – but over time, our faith grows, and each night we find ourselves capable of pushing back against that darkness a little bit more, until, on the final night, our houses are sparkling with light, and we, with courage and faith.

Unlike the miracles of Passover – the 10 plagues and the splitting of the Red Sea – the miracles of Chanuka happened through human agency. On Chanuka, we learn that we, too, are responsible for playing our part in making miracles happen. We thank God daily for turning darkness into light each morning, but He has also implanted in us the divine spark, a spark which is also capable of turning darkness into light, of lighting a candle in the midst of the darkest of nights.



# Administrators Corner

## HACD Has Character!

Mrs. Patricia Balmer  
Lower School Principal

This year Hebrew Academy implemented a new character education program based on the book "How Full is Your Bucket?" The main idea of the book is to fill another person's imaginary bucket by doing simple acts of kindness. This is how the program works: First we read the story to each class. When a teacher observes a student performing an act of kindness, the teacher gives the student a ticket, with the kind act described on the back of the ticket. The child is then invited to deposit the ticket into an administrator's bucket. At the end of each month the tickets are collected from the administrator's buckets, read, and sorted by class. Next, a photo of the ticket holders is taken and the tickets are graphed by class. Finally, the photos and graph are displayed on the bulletin board by the office.

When the program began in September I noticed that the quality of the acts of kindness were pretty basic. Some examples included:

- Helped someone clean up
- Shared with a friend
- Talked quietly in the hall

While these are all very admirable acts of kindness they really didn't seem to reach the potential of selflessness that I knew that our students were capable of reaching. I decided to give our students a chance to grow and stretch a bit more in their character development.

It is now December and I have collected tickets for three months. As time marched on the HACD students began to take their acts of kindness to the next level. Here are some examples from October and November:

- Sat next to a lonely kindergartner at lunch instead of sitting with his friends
- Went against the crowd and stood up for someone
- Cheered up classmate who was sick
- Gave up his chair for a visiting adult
- Supported a classmate who was having difficulty learning something
- Made sure to include everyone in a game
- Went out on a limb and declared that all his classmate's drawings were pretty
- Went out her way to help someone who was feeling left out

Now that was more of what I had in mind! These acts required empathy, compassion and selflessness. These traits are the building blocks for good character. I am noticing that the acts of kindness are making a difference in the culture of our school too. It seems like the children look for opportunities to help others. Sure, at first, they were motivated by the tickets, the pictures and the graph, but now I feel like the children are developing into awesome characters because it is the right thing to do! We are very proud to say that HACD has Character!

# COACHES CORNER



Come and support the HACD Lions basketball teams this Sunday 12/5 at home.

5/6 boys play Holy Spirit at 10:15

7/8 girls play Guilderland at 11:30

7/8 boys play St. Lucy's - 12:45.



# Alumni Corner



## **A Gift That Will Last A Lifetime**

by [njkriegel](#) / December 01, 2010

*Nancy J. Kriegel is Assistant Director of CJP's Initiative for Day School Excellence. She lives in Sharon and has three kids attending day school in Greater Boston. She is a graduate of Bet Shraga '81. Nancy and her 4 siblings attended Bet Shraga. She and 3 of her siblings (in addition to members of the Kieval family from Albany) were instrumental in the establishment of the South*

*Area Solomon Schechter in Sharon, MA. .*

The latest toy or technological gizmo is often what kids covet this time of year. Yes – such gifts are exciting for our children – but how long do they last? And what benefits do our children actually get from them?

Jewish day school education is a gift that many in our community have chosen to give their children. Our community's 13 schools provide over 2,700 of the Greater Boston area's children the foundation for solid Jewish identity, lifelong friendships, and innovative learning opportunities that shape who they are and how they function in society for the rest of their lives ... now that's a gift that keeps on giving!

I view my own Solomon Schechter day school education (received in another state) as one of the best gifts that my parents ever gave me. At a young age I was given many tools whose importance I did not fully appreciate until adulthood. I was given the tools of Hebrew language, critical thinking, pride in my heritage, joy of learning, and connection to a community bigger than myself. I was given the gift of teachers who were extended family – sharing in joys, triumphs and challenges. These tools and connections centered me in the broader world when I attended public high school and the University of Pennsylvania, and later while obtaining my law degree at Boston College Law School.

As I have transitioned from student to professional to parent and community member, I recognize my day school education also gave me a common language to connect with so many other day school grads from across our country. These shared “parallel” experiences of the joyful childhood memories of day school -- as well as shared values and ethical sensibilities -- have led to some of the most meaningful friendships and connections in my adult life.

The many tangible and intangible impacts of my parents' gift to me have continued until today. My wonderful husband who did not have the benefit of a day school education often marvels at my second nature-knowledge about Jewish history and tradition. He feels that he has benefited from the gift my parents gave me and my siblings way back in the seventies, because as a result we have chosen to give our three children the same gift. He is enjoying learning with them, and joining other day school parents in a community who share in life's challenges and joys and who together are raising Jewishly connected, knowledgeable and ethical human beings. My husband has often said that when Hillary Clinton, years ago, coined the phrase “it takes a village” – she must have been talking about the wonders of a Jewish day school community!

**Dear Friends,**

**It is hard to believe that Turkey Day is almost upon us and the start of the Shomray Torah Annual Fund Fall Campaign is just around the corner. Please grab a few minutes over the holiday weekend to look through our Fall Campaign mailing. Big picture (for those who like the short version) the Fall Campaign is about all of us and for all of us. Every one of our children benefits from funds raised.**

**We all depend on the Shomray Torah Annual Fund to pay for the difference between tuition charged and the actual cost of educating each of our children. The fund supports new educational programs, teacher development and technology advancement. It ensures that tuition is accessible to all who desire a Jewish education. Whether it is \$5, \$500, \$5000 or an extra ad solicited, we need your support and the message it sends. It tells the rest of our extended family (alumni, parents of alumni, grandparents and community members) that our school is a winning investment, which is not so easy to find these days.**

**As the children are learning this year, we are all one team. And as any coach will tell you, in order to win you need 100% participation.**

**Thank you in advance and have a wonderful Thanksgiving.**

**Please feel free to contact us at [shomraytorah@hacdalbany.org](mailto:shomraytorah@hacdalbany.org) with any questions. Volunteers and ideas welcomed!**

## **"2nd Annual Shomray Torah Fall Campaign Phone-a-thon"**



**Kickoff : Sunday December 5th @ 9:30am  
at the Hebrew Academy**

**We are calling for your support to help us reach our  
Fall Campaign Goal of \$200,000!**

**Volunteers, Parents and Kids,  
Bring your appetite, enthusiasm and phone.**

## PARENT ORG NEWS

### *KIDZ* BOUTIQUE

What a tremendous job our parent volunteers did in running our Chamukah Boutique. Their hard work made it a huge success! There has not been a Chamukah Boutique in recent memory of it's kind at Bet Shraga, and the kids loved it. The looks on their faces as they shopped showed such happiness and content. They truly enjoyed shopping on their own for loved ones. Kudos to our volunteers Nathan Horwitz, Paula Binyamin and Goldie Lapiner. Special thanks to Sheila Koppel for volunteering both days. We also recognize Teaching Assistant, Ms. Rachael Woren. Rachael was such a big help not only to us in the Boutique, but with the younger children as they shopped. Rachael went out of her way to make sure that all the younger children shopped successfully. She is wonderful! Amazing things can happen when you have amazing people as part of the volunteer team. Thanks to all.



## CHANUKAH PROGRAM

On Wednesday afternoon, the school celebrated the coming of Chamukah. Parent Org. provided fresh and tasty Hot Latkes with applesauce. Many thanks to Teacher Assistant Rachael Woren and Parents Tanya Schwartz and Nathan Horwitz for distributing the Latkes and applesauce. Parent Org. wishes all a Chag Chamukah Sameach!



## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION** **REGARDING SCHOOL PICTURES AND RETAKES**

Picture Retake Day will be on Thursday, December 09, 2010, between 8:00 and 9:30. Please review the picture packets that came home today. If you want a retake, you must return the original pictures by Monday, December 06, 2010. If you wish to purchase new pictures (in addition to those already taken) please pick up a flyer in advance from the school office.

**CLASS PICTURES:** Class Pictures have not been sent home. Life Touch had problems with processing the pictures and they have to be re-printed.

**Attn 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Parents:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Class pictures have to be retaken on Picture Day because the teachers were not in the pictures.

As a friendly reminder, below is a copy of the school dress code from the Parent Handbook.

“No inappropriate exposure. No bare midriffs. No skin may be visible between the shirt and pants/skirt. No low cut tops. Tank tops and spaghetti straps are not acceptable. No very short shorts or skirts/dresses. Since “an arm’s length” varies, we ask that shorts, skirts and dresses are an appropriate length for school.”

If you have any questions please contact Parent Org at [HACDPARENTORG@nycap.rr.com](mailto:HACDPARENTORG@nycap.rr.com).

Thank you in advance,

Parent Org.

## Be a Part of the Art

### *Our Children – Our Hope – Our Future*



The children of Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy are creating a tapestry – a lasting handcrafted work of art – that will travel to various community venues over the next year, providing outreach to the community and highlighting the students' love of their school. After the exhibit has traveled, it will be on permanent display at Bet Shraga Hebrew Academy. This beautiful tapestry is being created in honor of art teacher Amy Rosenstrauch, whose dedication and creativity has helped foster a love of the Arts in Bet Shraga students.

#### *How is this tributary work of art being created?*

Each student will draw a picture with the sentiment: "To me, Hebrew Academy is..." that will be converted into a "Tapestry Square." The tapestry will be completed under the supervision of a textiles artist and will incorporate felting projects Mrs. R has done with Bet Shraga students.

#### *What can I do?*

For just \$25 per square, YOU CAN SPONSOR A BET SHRAGA STUDENT to help create this tapestry. All contributions will be noted on a dedication panel. Please complete the form below and return it to the office, attention "Tapestry."

Thank you for your support!

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***Yes! I want to Be a Part of the Art with a square on the Bet Shraga Tapestry!***

Number of students to sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

Name of sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

Here is my check for \$\_\_\_\_ (\$25 per square) payable to HACD, Total # of Squares \_\_\_\_\_

Charge my  VISA  MasterCard  Discover  American Express

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **Community Event Calendar**

### **December 5, 2010**

The Coalition for Tomorrow presents, JFed Mitzvah Day Connecting Through Social Action, 1:00pm—5:00pm. at the Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York 184 Washington Ave. Ext. Albany. Projects will include assisting at Daughters of Sarah Nursing Center, an opportunity to help out in the secular community, an interactive project for young families with seniors at the Massry Residence. Questions please call Leah at Federation, 518-783-7800 ext.222 or [lgolby@jewishfedny.org](mailto:lgolby@jewishfedny.org). Make your reservation now register online at [www.jewishfedny.org](http://www.jewishfedny.org) or call 783-7800.

### **December 12, 2010**

The Community Coalition for Jewish Education invites all 6th graders to “Gather Us Together: The Ethiopian Jews Come Home” at The Golub Center 184 Washington Ave Ext. Albany, NY from 10:00am-11:30am. Please RSVP to your education director, Questions? Call Marci Gainkin, 783-7800 or email [mgalinkin@jewishfedny.org](mailto:mgalinkin@jewishfedny.org).

**To put a community wide event in our e-shabbaton, please email a text only version to [klinehan@hacdalbany.com](mailto:klinehan@hacdalbany.com) by Wednesday.**

