

Issue #2  
December 2012  
Kislev 5773

# THE CHAI CENTER HEBREW SCHOOL NEWSLETTER **Chanuka Edition**



**The Chai Center**

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B"H

## From the Director's desk...

Dear Parents,

The holiday of Chanukah was enjoyed and felt throughout Hebrew School. Our halls were decorated with Chanukah decorations thanks to Jon & Stephanie Zweibel. Our classrooms depicted Chanukah scenes, holidays, and customs of Chanukah. The feeling of the holiday was in the air and permeated our students with a great joy and sense of Jewish pride and identity.

I would like to thank our wonderful PTA presidents who work tirelessly for our school. They helped create a beautiful Chanukah atmosphere with their Chanukah gift and book sale. Their latke competition was a lot of fun to watch and the chocolate chanukah gelt a nice treat.

I would like to thank the parents who participated in our Curriculum Day, showing your children what they learn in Hebrew School is important and matters. Those who attend the Rabbi's select Sunday morning Torah classes show your kids that learning torah and discussing its valuable lessons are vital for our time. **Actions speak louder than words and as the new year approaches we ask that you take advantage of The Chai Center programs that are made for you and your children to increase their Jewish awareness in a fun filled manner. A list of programs will be listed in the upcoming events.**

Wishing you a happy, healthy sweet new year.

Looking forward to seeing you Wednesday, January 2,

All the best,

Deena Lehr

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### A MESSAGE FROM THE RABBI

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Dear Parents,

Our prayers go out to the victims of the terrible tragedy in Connecticut. In light of this recent tragedy, we would like to share with you the existing and new security measures that are enforced here at The Chai Center to ensure the safety and security of the children that are entrusted to our care on a daily basis. We have recently installed 16 video cameras in total which are monitoring all entrances and exits to The Chai Center on a 24 hour basis. In addition, the new preschool hallways have monitors as well.

These security measures are in place as a necessary precaution. May Hashem guard us and protect us.

Rabbi Saacks

**PTA UPDATE**

By Sheela and Allan Richter  
Parent-Teacher Association Presidents

Because the Jewish way is to move forward and upward, in the months ahead the Parent-Teachers Association of the Chai Center's Hebrew School aims to surpass what has already been a very successful school year.

A highlight was our well-attended trip to the Jewish Children's Museum in Brooklyn, where our students walked in the footsteps of the Patriarchs and took an interactive journey through the Jewish holidays and the beauty of mitzvot in the innovative environs of this extraordinary facility.

Student reporters of The Chai Times, the student newspaper, have been busy interviewing and preparing articles for our premier issue. We're delighted to see that each meeting of the newspaper draws a bigger crowd.

Our holiday gift and book sale has been a big success, as was our "latkefest" and latke contest. Speaking of food, we started the school year with a BBQ breakfast and demo by our resident BBQ king, Craig Winawer. Thank you, Craig.

Indeed, we have many treasures among our students, parents and teachers right here at the Chai Center. Many have fascinating stories, and you will have the opportunity to hear them at some upcoming P.T.A. breakfasts. Look for parenting workshops at some of these breakfasts (complete with an omelet station), too.

As the student newspaper takes shape, we'll begin to develop one of our other major initiatives—Captain Yackov's Happy Mitzvah Band. Student and parent musicians are invited to join.

The success of our exciting events and programs is measured by the impact they have on the students. Thankfully, we've seen the students animated, enthusiastic and eager to participate, and that is the Jewish way. We hope that you share in that enthusiasm and we look forward to seeing you. To reach us, contact [pta@thechaicenter.com](mailto:pta@thechaicenter.com).



## **Morah Beverly—special needs class**

### **News from Morah Beverley's Class ...**

We have had a fun-filled and busy semester in our class this year. We have enjoyed learning about the high holidays such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah. Multisensory lessons including crafts, games, activities, songs and dittos have made the material interesting for the students.

We keep to our routine for the first half of the class where we start off our day davening, discussing mitzvot and touching on important values. Please keep sending in those Mitzvah notes and Tzedakah each week. We love celebrating the good your children do, and they are already excited about which organization we are going to vote to donate our tzedakah to this year.

This year we have spent much time learning our aleph bet and it is wonderful to see the progress the students are making and how good they are all getting at reading their Hebrew letters.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who come each week and help make our class such a wonderful experience for everyone. It is good to see the relationships developing between them and the students. Have an enjoyable, safe break and we look forward to seeing everyone on January 6th.



Morah Devorah ~ Judaic - K-1st grade

In 1st grade we are spending a lot of time learning about different mitzvot with the curriculum Torahpedia. each week we discuss a different mitzva i.e. not wasting, honoring parents, loving a fellow Jew, we learn each one in a way that the kids can apply it to their own lives. through fun activities and many discussions they really come to love learning and have a feeling for the Torah and Mitzvot.

In our Aleph Bet section, the kids are well on their way learning the Hebrew letters. each week we add a new letter and review the previous ones. Thanks to all the parents that do the weekly homework with their child. The practice and review is what allows your child to be fluent in the Alef bet. we've seen such progress, and are ready to continue learning more!



Morah Batsheva~ Judaic/Hebrew 2nd/3rd grade  
Aleph Champ– White Level

In 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade we have done so many fun things! We learnt the first 6 Hebrew letters and little stories about each one of them and their friends in school. We also know all the different things around our room that start with those Hebrew letters.

In Judaic class we learned about all the High Holidays and some boys even brought in their shofar and blew it for us to see! The past few weeks we learnt about how G-d created the world in 6 days and then finally on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the world was complete and that is the day that we spend time with our family and think about G-d. We also all sat around a real Shabbat table with candles, challah and wine.

Everyone asked so many interesting questions about creation and I'm so excited to learn all about what came next in the story of the world.

### **Morah Estee~ Judaic– 4th grade**

In the past month the fourth grade class has boomed from topic to topic. First the children were taught how the Jewish calendar works and how according to Judaism the days starts at night and follow the moon. They girls and boys learned how they also have Hebrew birthdays and how it's not just a day to get presents! Their Hebrew birthday are a day to make resolutions and goals for themselves in order to be a better Jew.

They understood the special responsibility they were given to spread torah and do mitzvoth and how every year they should reflect and aim to continue to bring joy to Hashem and everyone around them. With the excitement of Chanukah approaching we switched to gears and prepared for the occasion covering all our bases. The children learned everything from the miraculous story to how to light the menorah. Everyone practiced the blessings the say while lighting the menorah and learned the meaning behind the driedel. Hopefully the lessons we learned in class were able to enhance your holiday!



### **Morah Nati~ Judaic– 4th grade**

Chanukah has been on our minds! To refresh the history of the story of Chanukah, we were each given a event and had to arrange ourselves in the correct order. Discussing the customs and nuances of the holiday, we made skits, drew pictures and even managed to fill out a booklet to take home. We loved the abundance of chocolate coins during our class dreidel game and know what all four sides of the dreidel represent. As a grand review, we played Steal the Salami and cemented our points with answering questions. Have a great vacation; come back ready for even more fun!

## MEET THE TEACHERS

### Rabbi Avraham—Judaic— 5th grade

Our goal is to understand that our purpose in this world is to make the world a better place and that the Torah is the guide (our Divine instruction manual) that helps us fulfill our purpose as meaningfully and productively as possible.

In our class, we are exploring the Aseret Hadibrot, usually translated as The ‘Ten Commandments’, which represent a framework for all the mitzvot. These are not just 10 isolated mitzvot, but rather categories for all 613 mitzvot from the Torah. These mitzvot should be the guiding force in our lives.

We have explored how all the mitzvot (613 of them) are split up into 2 categories: between fellow to fellow and between human to Creator.

We studied the concept of Emunah, faith and trust in Hashem. Our goal is to understand that having Emunah is believing that Hashem guides the world. Since He loves us, everything that He does for us is for the best. Having Emunah, faith, takes training. Our class is working on strengthening our foundation of faith and character.

We learned about the concept of idol worship, how it applies to us today and why it causes such a serious breach in our relationship with Hashem. We can relate to the concept of anger being the equivalent of idol worship, and we learned healthy ways to deal with our anger. Recognizing individual Divine Providence in our lives is an antidote to anger.

We look forward to exploring and discovering the rest of the ten commandments and their application to our daily lives.



### Morah Mushka - Judaic - 6th grade

We are learning all about our heritage and Jewish history from the Torah. We are analyzing the stories and making the lessons practical to our daily life. We have enjoyed learning about Jewish leaders and judges who have taught us what it takes to be a real leader. We enjoyed learning about Chanukah and how light and good deeds triumph over darkness our class discussion and Chanukah games were a great hit. Looking forward to a great continuation of the year.

## MEET THE TEACHERS

### **Morah Leah- Judaic-7th grade**

In the 7th grade we have been learning all about our Jewish History and the heroes therein. We learned about the land of Israel and those who were put in power to conquer, divide, and protect it. The first few months of Hebrew school we devoted to learning about various shoftim-judges of the Jews during the period following the passing of Yehoshua. Each shofet teaches incredible lessons in personal strength and dealing with adversity. We discussed the Jewish take on true bravery, peer pressure and personal strength. We also began studying the next era in Jewish History- the Jewish kings. We learned about the Torah perspective on leadership, individuality, democracy and authority. We have learned about the first Jewish king - Shaul and are continuing onto learning about David. Each lesson is packed with information, hands on activities illustrating the core value of each hero and discussions on how to make those values actual and personal. Most recently we learned about Chanukah. We explored the history, the customs and enjoyed a comparative lesson on the Greek culture vs the Judaism . The boys also enjoyed a dreidel game in which they bargained chocolate chips for mitzvot.



### **Morah Chavie ~ Hebrew**

#### **Aleph Champ – Orange Level**

We have come such a long way! We started off the year reviewing our Aleph-Bet and learning new letters. We read, played games, did work in our workbooks, and have now graduated from the Red Level! We started Orange, and learned the first vowel, Kamatz, and are really enjoying reading words!

We pray every day and are slowly adding new prayers to our routine- we added "Ain Kelokainu" and recently began the first few lines of "ashrei".

### Morah Estee~Hebrew Aleph Champ - Orange Level

Our fourth grade class is flying through the orange level of Aleph Champ! Their determination is evident as they go along in their reading exercises, are challenged in spelling bees and play fun matching games. They are on their way to mastering all the letters and new vowels like patach, kamatz and tzeirah. In addition the group shows tremendous kindness while helping fellow classmates reach their goals. The fourth grade class's passion will soon pay off when Rabbi Saacks comes and test their knowledge and we get to celebrate with an exciting orange party! That's not all that they are accomplishing though, before the work starts everyday the fourth grade has tefillah time. Through inspirational stories and

discussions the children are able to gage a deeper understanding of their prayers and what the siddur's words mean. The privilege of being able to speak to their G-d is something the children have recognizably learned to truly value.



### Morah Nati~ Aleph Champ - Yellow Level

In our Hebrew class, we have been busy practicing and reviewing as we prepare to graduate our yellow books. We know the majority of the vowels, along with all the letters, and are really working at speed and consistency. Playing games, especially timed races, is one of our favorite things to do! In addition to our reading, we have been focusing on the meanings of the prayers that we start each class off with. There are so many lessons and values to be absorbed into our lives and it's important for the students to view the Torah as practical and relevant. Here we come, green book!

## MEET THE TEACHERS

### **Morah Chava ~ Hebrew Aleph Champ - Yellow Level**

Our goal for this year is to know all the Aleph Bet letters fluently and all the vowels and exceptions. When this is accomplished, we will be able to read many words and be able to follow along comfortably with our prayers. We learning how to read more fluently by using flashcards, a hands-on workbook and a reading book.. Looking forward to a great rest of the year . I am very proud of the strides the students are making since the beginning of the year.

### **Morah Chavie~ Hebrew Aleph Champ - Orange Level**

**We are working our way through the Orange book, and are already fluent in 3 vowels-Kamatz, Patach and Tzeirei. We are looking forward to finishing shortly and starting Yellow! We practice reading for fluency and accuracy and reinforce what we learn with games and workbook work. Doing homework consistently helps us keep up with the class, and earns us 10 Torah Dollars!**

### **Morah Chava - Hebrew Aleph Champ - Yellow Level**

Our class is working on the yellow book with continued focus and effort we will master the vowels sh'va and cholam. We will then be able to read all letters and six vowels. In davening, we are learning more prayers and their meanings. We are working hard on our speed and accuracy so that we can pronounce words fluently and confidently.

### **Rabbi Avraham - Hebrew Aleph Champ - Blue Level**

We have accomplished a lot in the time we have been in Hebrew School. We have focused on reading profanely and accuracy as many of our students are gearing up for bar mitzvah. We are working hard on our prayers and learning the meaning behind the words to make our prayers more meaningful. We have learned all the Hebrew letters, vowels, and exceptions and are about to complete the blue book. We look forward to starting the purple book soon and having a great continuation of the year.



### **Morah Leah - Hebrew Aleph Champ - Brown Level**

we are working on both speed and accuracy in our reading and continuing to practice our writing skills. We enjoy playing hangman, using our skills of the vowels and the letter combinations to figure out what the word from davening is and we spend time reading and testing each other on our level. Each day we do a different activity to boost our skills and then spend time reading and writing in our books. We have been adding tefillot in davening as well. We are currently working on Ashrei and Aleinu and look forward to starting the Amida in the near future.

## MEET THE TEACHERS

### Morah Mushka ~ Hebrew Language/Speaking Division

In our advanced Hebrew class we are expanding our Hebrew vocabulary, progressing in our reading and comprehension and learning how to write Hebrew script.

Feel free to contact me if there is anything I can help to make your child's Hebrew experience better.

best wishes,

Mushka



### CHAI HIGH UPDATE

Dear Parents,

Chai High is a Hebrew High School where Jewish teens connect and keep the flame of Judaism alive. Students are post bar and bat mitzvah and continue on to twelfth grade. Chai High offers many social and community service opportunities. It keeps the teens Jewishly inspired and empowers them to remain connected to Judaism.

On Chanukah the teens went in a 18 passenger SUV limo and traveled to Midtown Manhattan. They played various Chanukah games and met 200 other Jewish teens from around the tri state area. They watched the biggest menorah in the world being lit and enjoyed pizza and doughnuts. It was a great event enjoyed by all.

Every Chai High starts off with an icebreaker to get the teens into it followed by a interactive discussions, power points, and videos where teens can gain fresh and new perspectives on subject material. Chai High ends with a prayer and exciting refreshments to end off the session including chocolate fondue, slurpies, or ice cream bars.

To find out more information or to refer a friend please email  
[RabbiAvraham@thechaicenter.com](mailto:RabbiAvraham@thechaicenter.com).

Best Wishes for a happy healthy sweet new year and a salute to our Chai High students for keeping that connection going.

Best wishes,

Rabbi Avraham Lehr

Director/ Teacher

Ken Grotell

Co Teacher & Guidance Counselor

## Meet the Teachers



### Morah Beverley's Stars

Beverley Del Greco is a certified Special Education Teacher. She has a Masters Degree in Special Education and Undergraduate Degrees in both Elementary Education and Psychology. She recently completed her coursework for her Board Certification in Behavior Analysis (BCBA.)

Beverley has experience teaching as the head teacher in typical classroom settings as well in self-contained Special Education classes. She also has experience providing Special Education and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services in home and school environments. Her experience also includes leading teams and consulting with families and school staff, evaluating children and developing appropriate curriculum and providing parent training to families. She has worked directly with children in Early Intervention, Preschool, Elementary and Junior High.

Most importantly, Beverley is passionate about helping children and families in the Special Needs community. She will ensure your children enjoy Hebrew School and have fun learning about Jewish traditions and culture.

### Morah Devorah K- 1st Grade

Hi, my name is **Devorah Donin** and this is my third year back at Chai Center Hebrew School. Every year, I return with new excitement. This year, I am teaching the Pre-k- 1st grade on Sunday mornings and there is a lot in store for a wonderful learning experience.

During the week, I work as an office administrator in a private school, and in the evenings, I work for an organization, Ten Yad, which helps brides prepare for their wedding. It is a wonderful organization and it's very fulfilling to know that you can help a bride in a pivotal time of her life.

That's how I feel about teaching these young and special Jewish children. I know that when they come to Hebrew School, it will make a difference in their Jewish life. I am looking forward to getting to know my students and making the most of our time to learn all about Judaism and the Jewish Holidays.

### **2/3rd Grade Judaic Teacher**

Hi, my name is Batsheva Lieberman, originally from London, England and currently living in Brooklyn, NY. For the past few years I have been studying and teaching Judaic Studies in England, Israel and the States. I am currently working in an all-girls Elementary school and organizing their extra-curricular activities both in and out of school. I greatly enjoy both teaching and interacting with children especially in a more creative and exciting environment. I am really excited about teaching in the Chai center Hebrew school and I hope to have a really great year with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

### **4th Grade Judaic Teacher**

Estee Goldschmiedt from West Hempstead who went to Hebrew Academy of Nassau County and then studied abroad for a year at a seminary in Jerusalem. She is finishing up her degree in Queens College majoring in Jewish studies. She has been teaching in Jewish Day Schools for the past three years and is a mentor in a girls high school. She enjoys painting, spending time with friends and family. She is looking forward to connecting with her class and encouraging them to value and love their Jewish identity.

### **4th Grade Judaic Teacher**

Nati Einav is from Pittsburgh it is her fifth year at The Chai Center and we are fortunate to have her. She has a BA in education and is a free lance editor. She has helped build up The Chai Center friendship circle that gives friendship to children with special needs. Currently she resides in Brooklyn and is working on her masters. Nati likes to read, play guitar, and go bicycle riding in her free time. She is excited to work at The Chai Center one again and share her joy of Judaism with her students.

### **5th Grade Judaic Teacher**

Hi, my name is Rabbi Avraham Lehr and this is my fifth year at The Chai Center. In addition to teaching in the Hebrew School I run the bar mitzvah lessons, Jewish Adult Educational classes, Hebrew High School and visit people weekly in the hospital. I am very passionate about Judaism and love to share my love, knowledge, and energy with my students and show them how Torah is relevant to their lives. I enjoy singing, learning, running, and spending time with my family. I studied for my rabbinate in Brazil and at The Rabbinical College of America in Morristown, New Jersey.

I look forward to a wonderful year with my students.

**Hebrew Reading Teacher**

Hi, my name is Chava Minsky and I'm from Milan Italy. My father is a rabbi there and I have 10 siblings, one of them being my twin sister! :) I really enjoy teaching and spent last year teaching in a school in Moscow Russia. I am very excited to be teaching Hebrew at The Chai Center this year! I learned in a special school in Vienna which taught Hebrew reading techniques and I am happy to share them with the students.

**6th Grade Judaic Teacher**

Hi my name is Mushka Kantor, this is my fourth year teaching at Hebrew school and first year teaching at The Chai Center I grew up in Thailand, studied in California and graduated from a teachers collage in Israel. I speak four languages and love children and teaching. I'm teaching the 6th grade this year, they are wonderful students and I look forward to a great year with them.

**7th Grade Judaic Teacher**

Hi! My name is Morah Leah (Abraham) and I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. I enjoy traveling and it is always interesting to meet new people in new places. I often travel to South Africa to see family and have been on all six continents in the past 10 years (I haven't been to Antarctica yet :) Traveling to teach in Dix Hills is a lot shorter of a ride but the experience meeting and teaching the students of the Chai Center has been just as meaningful and inspiring. I spend about 2 weeks a year on speaking tour but when at home, I like to cook and bake and host big parties and shabbos meals. I love to listen to music while I work and I am always thinking of games and activities to use with my family or students. I enjoy reading but I like story telling even more :) Most of all I enjoy teaching kids to love who they are and to stand up for what they believe in and it has been a pleasure joining The Chai Center family in doing just that.

# December & January Updates @ The Chai Center

**Monday, Dec.24th**

**Chinese and Chess 5:00-7:00 pm**

for more info or to make a reservation please call

The Chai Center at 631-351-8672

**Friday Night, January 18<sup>th</sup>**

Shabbat Friday Night Dinner hosted by 4th Grade.

All families welcome!

The Chai Center Hebrew School would like to give a shout out to **Cassandra Oberlender** and **Sasha Glickstein** who joined us at the Chanukah party for seniors at

Sunrise Assisted Living.



**Sunday Jan 27th- FED**  
Family Enrichment Day

**Sunday January 13th**  
**Chai Scouts**