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HAppenings

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Contact Information:

Hebrew Academy
L'Académie Hébraïque
5700 Kellert Avenue
Côte St. Luc, Québec
H4W 1T4

Tel.: 514.489.5321
Fax: 514.489.8607

Email:
alumni.office@ha-mtl.org

Website:
www.ha-mtl.org

Dear Hebrew Academy Alumni,

This issue of HAppenings is all about you! We are very fortunate to have several interesting and newsworthy Alumni and future Alumni who allowed us to glance into their lives. We journeyed with them from Montreal to Louisiana, to the Ukraine, to Haiti and back, and joined in their endeavours. We hope you enjoy this issue and we look forward to hearing from you.

Marian Segal, Director of Development

A word from our Alumni



Jason Portnoy ('99) has a soft spot for Hebrew Academy. Jason has continued his involvement with Hebrew Academy on many levels. For the past 3 years he has printed the shirts for the annual Oren Grunbaun-Barry Mishkin Memorial Basketball Tournament, and as an Alumnus, actively participates in the basketball tournament where he has played on Team Lehrer for the past 10 years. Jason can also be found at many of the Hebrew Academy golf tournament demonstrating his golfing prowess while supporting his alma mater.



After leaving Hebrew Academy Jason spent a year and a half at Bar-Ilan University. In Montreal Jason attended Concordia University where he studied Political Science. Jason was the first Concordia student to become President of Hillel Montreal. He then served on the Hillel Board of Directors for 3 years once he graduated. As president of Hillel Jason was instrumental in filing a media campaign against Concordia for FREE SPEECH violation when they refused to allow former Israeli PM Ehud Barak to speak. He was also the Manager of Advocacy for Hillel Montreal covering all the campuses in Montreal (English and French). Jason was the first and only Canadian to win the prestigious AIPAC Advocate of the Year Award and The Jon Roskies Award for Leadership in 2006 from Federation CJA.

Today Jason is the President and CEO of True Rivalry www.truerivalry.com, a company he founded in 2008. True Rivalry specializes in sports apparel and under Jason's creativity, True Rivalry created (and owns the copyright for) the famous Halak Stop Sign T-shirt that was worn by fans all through the Canadiens playoff run last year. He has been the "go to" person for the printing of the Hebrew Academy golf shirts through True Rivalry. Jason can be contacted at jason@truerivalry.com.

A word from our Alumni cont'd...



Yaffa Spinner Blanshay ('88) has been intertwined with Hebrew Academy for the past thirty-six years. From age three her life has been involved with the school as a student, parent, lay leader and staff.

After graduating Hebrew Academy and spending a year at Midreshet Moriah in Israel, Yaffa completed degrees at Concordia and McGill Universities including a Masters of Education in Administration. However Hebrew Academy was never far from her heart and as a result she worked at HA briefly during her Masters Program. Yaffa took time off to have 4 children with Yaacov Blanshay ('87) her husband of eighteen years, who are presently students at Hebrew Academy; Aryeh (Grade 10), Eliana (grade 9), Racheli (grade 6) and Meir (grade 3). When the children were young, and at the Hebrew Academy pre-school, Yaffa was involved in the school as a volunteer on the Education Committee, Technology Committee, Personnel and Board. As the children grew up she was then engaged as Director of Administration and Student Programming, a post which she still holds today. In addition to having the unique opportunity to be involved with her children's daily activities Yaffa's position at Hebrew Academy has included working closely with students and staff on Bat Mitzvah, zimria, graduation, various enrichment activities, general administration and admissions. Yaffa most recently joined the Alumni committee and is hard at work collecting information for HAppenings (the Alumni newsletter).

While wearing a dual hat at HA (as parent and staff) can sometimes be challenging, it gives the right insight to act as a guide to fellow staff and to many other parents. Family continues to be the number one priority for Yaffa and between home, work, school, and community activities sprinkled in between, Yaffa's life which started at age three at Hebrew Academy continues along a very interesting and Hebrew Academy – filled path.

A word from our future Alumna

Hebrew Academy students travel to the Golf Coast



Eliana Blanshay ('13) In the early fall I was chosen to participate in the **Jewish Eco-Leadership Training Program (JELT)** along with 4 other HA students from grades 9 and 10. A total of 23 Jewish teens from Montreal attended weekly sessions at the Shaar Hashomayim on various topics relating to Judaism, water and the environment. The highlight of the program was a 4 day trip to New Orleans where we helped restore the areas damaged by the oil spill and by Katrina. We spent a lively and spiritual Shabbat in New Orleans and we got to witness a beautiful relationship between the Orthodox Congregation whose shul was completely destroyed by Katrina, and a Conservative Congregation who is allowing the Orthodox Beth Israel to use a room in their shul for their minyan.



The Cavedwellers as recounted by Erin Grunstein ('04)

My grandfather and 37 other individuals, including his family, survived the Holocaust in 2 different caves in the Ukraine. They lived in the first cave for 6 months and in the second for 344 days. To sustain themselves, the men went out at night and risked their lives to get food and supplies in any way that they could.

Chris Nicola, a caver, began exploring the second cave in 1993 and discovered our family's story. He felt compelled to reveal what he found to the world, so along with Peter Lane Taylor, he wrote a book entitled "The Secret of the Priest's Grotto", highlighting the story of the 38 survivors. Janet Tobias, a freelance film director contacted by Nicola, is now working on a documentary film.



In October 2010, four of the 38 survivors along with four additional family members joined the film crew in the Ukraine to capture the memories of the events on film. I was fortunate to be part of this incredible experience.

We began our trip with a visit to the first cave. Unfortunately, the survivors did not recognize anything in the first cave; everything as they remembered had changed. I learned subsequently that cave interiors shift often completely changing what was once familiar. The experience for me was surreal - I couldn't believe that I was in the cave that they survived in. We then went to their hometown of Korolowka. Here, we saw where their home had stood, as well as where their fields had been located. I was amazed by how beautiful the area was - there were lush green mountains and valleys, where I had always imagined depression.

Entering the second cave was more physically challenging for the elderly survivors, despite world-class cavers who were there to assist. Only 2 of our 8 family members were sure footed enough to climb down into the cave. I was one of the fortunate ones. I had to climb down into the depths of the cave and then walked and crawled through very narrow passageways until I entered a large room, which had been one of their living areas. I had always envisioned this place as magical; a place where my family was safe from their aggressors. I imagined Sima Blitzer (my grandfather's niece) singing as a little girl in there. I continued and saw artifacts that the cavers had found, including the ~150lb millstone that my great uncle carried for miles to the cave, as well as a piece of their bed built by my grandfather. Upon leaving the cave we were told that we had missed a hailstorm - I was protected from the outside world just as the survivors had been protected during the Holocaust.



On our last day, we went to Bilcze Zlote, the town where my grandmother and great-grandmothers were born. I saw the home where my grandmother grew up and the school that she had attended. I also saw the location of the home where my great-grandmother grew up, as well as the water-well that my great-great-grandfather had built. Finally, together with my grandfather, I visited the granddaughter of the Ukrainian woman who saved the lives of my grandmother and great-aunt during the war. She knew the stories of what her grandmother had done and recalled receiving parcels over the years from my grandmother, including the material with which she made her wedding dress and veil. This was one of the most moving moments of the trip - meeting the descendant of someone so special to my family.

I returned home to Montreal a changed person. I have gone on my own personal March of The Living and have gained a new level of understanding of what my mother's parents went through, as well as what was lost. I feel that the family torch has been passed onto me. It is now my responsibility to bring my cousins and in the future, my children and grandchildren back to Ukraine, so they too learn the heroic survival story and so that they never forget.

Tikun Olam: A word from David Tordjman in Haiti, a parent at Hebrew Academy and husband of alumna Stephanie Assouline ('94)



People often ask me how I could leave my family and good job for a difficult job in a dangerous environment in Haiti. My answer doesn't come easily, as it's not an easy one to explain. Following the devastating earthquake on January 12th 2010, I volunteered my services to a few agencies that were travelling to Haiti in the first steps of the emergency response. My experience and knowledge as an engineer, as well as my Jewish education that has always lent to helping others in need in the spirit of Tikun Olam, put me in a situation where I could not help but offer my hand in the efforts.

As G-d's hand works, the volunteer organization's efforts were delayed and my email landed in the hands of a UN agency. The offer came through for a short term contract with UNOPS, to work with the Ministry of Public Works on a project to evaluate and tag safe buildings in Haiti's affected zones. To date, as project manager of this project we have assessed over 360,000 buildings which has allowed many residents to feel safe in returning to their homes. We have also finished a repair guideline for the reconstruction efforts and thereby helping in the reconstruction efforts to allow more people to leave the camps and back into safer homes. Another project that has been hugely successful has been the cleaning of flood canals. We have cleaned out over 100,000 cubic meters of debris from these canals allowing the rainwater to flow out to the ocean and thereby avoiding major flooding of the displaced persons camps. These canals were clogged from many years of lack of maintenance as they are used as local garbage and human waste disposal. This has been particularly important in the latest Cholera outbreak and in the minimizing of the risk that the poorest of this country are exposed to.

I have learned from the time spent in Haiti and away from my family, that the strong community and friends we have, have truly helped me out by inviting my family for Shabbat, taking my sons to Shul and offering to pick-up or take the kids home from school. My work here is made possible only by my wife's strength and the support she has received from the community and friends and that with their help I know, I have not worked here alone.

I have learned so much from being here, how resilient the people here are, how much 'the right help' is appreciated and how we take basic things for granted.

I know its cliché, but when you see people getting their drinking water from a dirty stream, people dying from easily treatable diseases, or living in tin shacks that constantly leak during the rains, you have to ask yourself 'Do I really have anything to complain about?'. This experience has reinforced my daily prayers and truly feel that I thank G-d for everything He has given me.

Regards,
David

David Tordjman, ing. | Project Manager | Haiti Operations Center |

Mazel Tov to:

Linda (Shoham) & Willy Lieberman (both '76) on the recent marriage of their son Yoni & Jessica (Rogozinsky) Lieberman (both '05)
 Linda (Shoham) & Willy Lieberman (both '76) on the recent birth of their grandson, Noah Eliezer, son of Daniella (Lieberman) ('03) & Aryeh Schwebel
 Tamara (Drazin) ('87) & Joe Berkowitz on the birth of their daughter, Michal
 Nancy (Rouimi) ('88) & Reuven Singer on the marriage of Naomi to Yehuda Frist
 Daniel Lieberman ('05) on his engagement to Dina Westreich
 Eli Tabac ('95) & Stephanie on the birth of their daughter, Ryva Lilly
 Aaron Weisz ('05) & Shayna Aster on the birth of their daughter Lielle Tziona
 Avi Spitzer ('87) & Carrie and their 3 children on making aliyah
 Brian Spira ('86) & Atara Gorsetman on their daughter, Ayelet, becoming a Bat Mitzvah
 Brian Cale ('83) & Michelle on the birth of their daughter, Tina Livia
 Alvin Suissa ('86) & Lauren on their son, Binyamin, becoming a Bar Mitzvah
 Vicky (Honigwax) ('87) & Jimmy Shizgal on their son, Joshua, becoming a Bar Mitzvah
 Sharman (Drazin) ('72) & Moishe Stern on the upcoming marriage of their son, Pinchas
 Sari (Stern) ('78) & Perry Newman on the birth of their grandson, Michael Oliver
 Amir Lehrer ('97) & Carla on the birth of their son, Asher
 Yoni Lehrer's ('99) marriage to Sara Bracha Levin of Los Angeles
 Lorne Lieberman ('90) & Chaya on the birth of their son, Tobias

Alumni Donations

The Hebrew Academy Alumni Fund

We would like to acknowledge the very generous donation made by **Helen Lewandowski ('92)**
 Thank you to the **Alumni** who donated to this fund and wish to remain anonymous.

If you would like to celebrate a life-cycle event by making a donation to the Alumni Fund, please email alumni.office@ha-mtl.org. An acknowledgment card will be sent out on your behalf.

Calendar and Upcoming Events

Hebrew Academy Raffle / Tirage de l'Académie Hébraïque

Tuesday December 14, 2010 / Mardi le 14 décembre 2010
 5700 Kellert Avenue Côte St. Luc, QC H4W 1T4 7:30 pm / 19:30h

1st Prize \$10,000 - 1er prix 10,000\$

2nd Prize \$1,800/2ieme prix 1800\$ - 3rd Prize \$1,200/3ieme prix 1200\$ - 4th Prize \$1,000/4ieme prix 1000\$

Tickets are \$125 each (tax receipt for \$75 will be issued)
 Les billets sont à 125\$ chacun (un reçu d'impôt sera de 75\$)

**ONLY
3 WEEKS
AWAY**



<u>2010</u>		<u>2011</u>	
Wednesday	December 1	1st night Chanukah	Monday April 18 – Tuesday April 26 Pesach
Tuesday	December 14	Annual Raffle	Monday June 13 Golf Tournament



Hebrew Academy
L'Académie Hébraïque
מדרשה עברית

בס"ד



5700 AVENUE KELLERT, COTE ST-LUC, QUÉBEC, CANADA, H4W 1T4 · TEL: (514)489-5321 FAX: (514)489-8607

Shlomo Drazin
President

Linda Lehrer
Executive Director

Rabbi Boruch Perton
Educational Director

Dear Friends,

We need your help to get the word out. We are currently seeking a Vice Principal, for our High School for the next school year. Please share this job posting with anyone you think may be right for the position.

*Thank you in advance,
Morrie Levy ('93)*

High School Vice Principal **Hebrew Academy of Montreal**

Hebrew Academy of Montreal, a Modern Orthodox, Torah U'Mesorah, Trilingual Day School, providing pre-school, elementary and high school education, is seeking a dynamic educator to assume the role of High School Vice Principal (VP) beginning 2011-2012 school year.

The High School VP will be part of a talented and vibrant administrative team and will be involved in every aspect of High School life. Working together with the principal, coordinators and department heads, the VP will supervise academics including curriculum, extra curricular activities and student discipline. The VP will also serve as a religious role-model and will supervise daily tefila.

Applicants should have Semicha in addition to an academic degree in administration or education, and several successful years of teaching experience at a Day School or Yeshiva High School.

All inquiries will be kept strictly confidential.

Salary and benefits commensurate with experience & qualifications.

Send curriculum vitae to: adele.sidel@ha-mtl.org

Rabbi Boruch Perton, Educational Director

The Hebrew Academy Alumni Update

PLEASE HELP US UPDATE OUR RECORDS

We would like to keep you informed of Hebrew Academy events and news.
Please complete this form and e-mail it to alumni.office@ha-mtl.org, fax it to 514.489.8607 or mail to:
Alumni Office, Hebrew Academy School, 5700 Kellert Ave., Cote St. Luc, QC H4W 1T4

Date: _____ I was a member of the Hebrew Academy Class of : _____

Title (please circle one) Ms. Mrs. Mr. Dr. Rabbi. Name: _____

Maiden Name (if applicable): _____

Spouse Title and Name (if applicable): Title _____ Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

Cell: _____ Marital Status: _____

Children's Names (if applicable):	Male/Female	Age	School Attending
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

College/Major/Degree/Year: _____

Post College Study: _____

Occupation: _____ Title: _____

Business Name: _____

Business Tel. #: _____ Business E-mail: _____

Would you be willing to participate on our Alumni Committee: _____

Where is the best tel. # or email to reach you? _____

Please let us know what you would like printed about yourself in upcoming alumni updates of HAppenings (e.g. professional accomplishments, awards / honors, marriage information, birth of a child)

Please return to: Jacqui Silbiger c/o Alumni Office
Hebrew Academy 5700 Kellert Avenue, Cote St. Luc, QC H4W 1T4
Telephone: 514.489.5321 ext.255 Fax: 514.489.8607
E-Mail: alumni.office@ha-mtl.org