Much has happened at Hillel since the Thanksgiving/Hanukkah edition of Ma Nishma. Follow your Dreams programs, Mock Trial victories, guest speakers, a trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Seminar, and more. Enjoy scrolling through this Winter Break edition of Ma Nishma and learn about all that’s happening at Hillel Yeshiva. I would like to personally thank Dorothy Newman for her contributions to this edition. Have a restful vacation.

Rabbi Howard Bald

SEMINAR!!!

by Dorothy Newman

With over 100 kids in attendance, this year’s Hillel Seminar was certainly a weekend to remember. The fun started in school on Friday with a student council organized game of Hillel themed Family Feud. Hosted by our very own Rabbi Feldman and Mr. Puglisi, students and teachers alike competed during our own Hillel spin on the famous game show. Shabbat started with a beautiful prayer, delicious meal and of course the famous singing circle that makes seminar so special. Over the course of Shabbat we were inspired by the fantastic speaker who gave us an understanding of our Jewish identity, played board games, and sang songs, all while enjoying each other’s company and creating memories that will last a lifetime. As Shabbat came to a close, with one final singing circle, the weekend was not over yet. The jam packed Saturday night included snow tubing, dancing and hilarious comedy videos. Though many of us could barely wake up on Sunday morning, we all went home with smiles on our faces!
The “View From Hillel”

These days it seems that “The View from Hillel” is amazing. Students and guests gathered at two programs to participate in Hillel Yeshiva’s own “take” on the popular TV program “The View.”

The guest speakers included both graduates and involved members of the community who captured everyone’s attention as they spoke about the challenges they faced deciding on a career path to follow. Candidly answering questions posed by the hosts, Dr. Gayle Krost and Mrs. Elaine Parker, the panelists shared who inspired them with the confidence to go after their “Dream” and gave powerful advice to the audience.

Panelists included community organizer Alissa Shams, cookbook author Victoria Dwek, fashion blogger Lainey Hedaya, and graphic designer Camille Saka.

“…students should become a force for their generation” - Alissa Shams

“Students should never give up—sometimes it takes a long time to find the right path…” – Camille Saka

Follow Your Dreams . . . Boys’ Program

The Boys’ program was impactful, with powerful messages and personal experiences from speakers Dr. Alan Nasar, Mr. Ralph Tawil, Rabbi Richard Tobias, and Mr. Myron Rumeld. One of the more memorable quotations from this unbelievable program: “Keep Shabbat. There will always be a crisis. There will always be someone who says you have to…but Shabbat is the time to decompress, reenergize with family and realize what is important.” --Myron Rumeld

Dr. Alan Nasar, Orthopedic Surgeon
Mr. Ralph Tawil, President of Centurion Realty
Rabbi Richard Tobias, Educator
Mr. Myron Rumeld, Attorney
FROM THE EDITOR

As a student in the 1970s, I remember attending a rally at the UN to free Soviet Jewry. Imagine my pleasure when I learned that one of the famed Russian Refuseniks, Rabbi Yosef Mendelevich, wanted to come and speak at Hillel Yeshiva.

We were honored to have the revered Rabbi, a man of incredible historical importance, appear at Hillel, and his speech will not soon be forgotten by the students and the many community members who attended this once in a lifetime event.

FROM THE EDITOR

Mabrouk and Mazel Tov to our Girls' Rikudiah Championship Team. This is our girls' second championship victory in the short four year history of the competition, and we could not be more proud. Congratulations to captain and choreographer Teri Shamah who has led our team since its inception.

Hillel Wins The Rikudiah! Again!

For the second time in the Rikudiah’s four year history, Hillel Yeshiva’s Dance Team came home with the 1st Place trophy! How do you win? Practice, practice, practice! And practice is just what the team of Sharon Betesh, Gabrielle Franco, Shelly Nahama, Joy Saka, Marilyn Seruya, Jacqueline Shabot, Teri Shamah, Deedee Shammah, Stella Sitt and Ruth Tawil did. Beginning in September, the team practiced 2 hours a week learning the dance steps choreographed by talented captain, Teri Shamah.

The girls chose a marionette theme and used contemporary music to enhance their dance moves. The sleek black costumes and themed make-up by the talented Lindsay Tillis contributed to the win.

“The collaborative effort of the team is really what made our dance so special,” said Teri proudly “or, maybe it was the ending shower of glitter to ‘Pop Goes the Weasel’ that gave us the winning edge!”

Hillel does more than dance! Mock Trial Team Wins!

The Mock Trial Competition is a statewide public and private high school level competition that puts the participants in actual court rooms before New Jersey judges. Last Monday, Jacob Wasser and Talya Ben-Haim served as the state’s prosecutors and Brooks Tawil, Irving Hanan, and Aaron Chaiklin were the state’s witnesses. The team won.

On Tuesday, Sean Haimowitz and Dorothy Newman served as the defendant's attorneys. The defendant's witnesses were Millie Hakim, Gordon Adelson, and Perry Halawani. Hillel won again, and for the first time in Hillel history, we won two trial performances.

The next week, the representatives for the state from Hillel lost by only 2 points in the judges' evaluations. With the exception of Dorothy Newman, everyone else will be back to compete next year and we look forward to more successes.
On December 25, Hillel Yeshiva hosted students from Yachad. Our students entertained the Yachad members with arts and crafts projects, dancing, hand painting, and of course delicious snacks. This is but one of the many hesed activities that our students organize and participate in throughout the year. Thanks to Mrs. Chedva Perr for arranging this special event.
Rosh Hodesh Shevat

Rosh Hodesh Shevat was celebrated with a delicious luncheon and guest speakers. This impressive program was sponsored by Doris and Marc Dwek in honor of their children Sally, Gabrielle, Abraham, and Lauren, by Laurie and Joseph Sutton in memory of Cookie Massry, a”h and Diane Azrak Massry, a”h, and by Sally and Ralph Tawil in memory of Rabbi Ezra Labaton a”h. The guest speakers were Rabbi Harold Sutton and Mrs. Chani Shelby.

Many thanks to the PTA Rosh Hodesh committee members Sophia Serouya and Sophia Mizrahi, and also to PTA President Eva Michaele-Wasser.

Camp Out or Camp In? Hillel
Girls have a Great Time on Hanukkah!

Boys Hanukkah Party

The Boys’ Hanukkah Party took place at the Sephardic Social Center. Organized by Rabbi Joseph Dana, in collaboration with the West Deal Teen Minyan, the party began with fabulous mazza and a delicious Chinese dinner. There was a talent show and our Jewish Studies faculty performed some memorable acts.

The party lasted long after the program was finished and our students had a wonderful time bonding with their teachers. A tremendous amount of school spirit was exhibited by all.

Shabbat Hangout

In December, Rabbi Joseph Dana and the student council organized a Shabbat and Sebet Hangout at the West Deal Shul. Along with the West Deal Teen Minyan, over 110 boys and girls spent a meaningful Shabbat together, praying, learning, playing games, and singing. Thank you Rabbi Dana for making this happen.
How could the Holocaust occur in an enlightened society with a democratic constitution and freedom of expression? Who bears ultimate responsibility for the Holocaust? How did the Nazis’ find so many willing helpers? Why did so many individuals abandon their humanity towards their fellow neighbors and friends? And yet how did others make the choice to help? These questions and others were ones that were pondered when the senior class travelled to The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on December 10th.

The students began viewing the exhibition, which “explores how the powerful tools of a totalitarian state—propaganda, terror, violence and state-sponsored racism, allowed persecution to escalate,” on the top floor and then worked their way down to the main floor of the museum. Beginning with the rise of Nazism, the students explored, not only the events that led up to the Holocaust but also the American response.

The middle floor examined the escalation of Nazi policy toward Jews and others who they deemed “non-Aryan,” the expansion of the Nazi empire throughout Europe, the refugee problem and the Final Solution.

The exhibits on the last floor focus on the formation and rapid expansion of concentration camps: the dehumanizing treatment, the overcrowding, forced labor and death. The students also learned about those Jews that were able to hide and those Jews interned in the ghettos. The end of the exhibit highlighted The Righteous Gentiles, individuals that risked their lives and their families to save Jewish lives.

Morris Sitt remarked that “when we came in eighth grade we really didn’t have a grasp of the immensity of the Holocaust. This trip really made a difference in my understanding of this tragedy.”

The trip was organized by Mr. Tom Sheridan, who teaches the Holocaust Class. The students enrolled in his class met with a survivor and learned how he was hidden and survived the war. The other students were able to tour the Smithsonian Museum of American History, where they learned about the development of technology in transportation and the food industry. After a delicious dinner in Silver Springs they began the bus ride home arriving tired but enlightened by the day.

Thank you Mr. Sheridan for all your planning and to Mrs. Esther Tebele, Mrs. Jessica Mercuro, Rabbi Howard Bald, and Mrs. Elena Orgel for chaperoning.
Everybody at Hillel knows that our girls’ basketball team, the Hurricanes, is one of the best teams in the school. What most people do not know, however, is that the Hillel Hurricanes were not always tearing down trees and clearing everything in their paths in order to get to the championship. In fact, a few years ago, when this year’s starting five girls were freshmen and sophomores, the team lost all but one game of the season. So how did they go from a season with only one win, to a season with only one loss? Co-Captain and four year member of the Hurricanes—Norma Ashkenazi—has been with the team through thick and thin.

When asked what changed the underdog team into the team to beat—in just one summer—she answered, simply, “We became a team.” Before last year they played each game and tried just as hard to win, but they each played as a “me” and not as a “we.”

Last year, the Hillel Hurricanes brought a wave of spirit into the Hillel Hallways. The stands were filled at home games, and away games kept us anxious by the phone for the results. Expectedly, Hillel sent two buses full of students—with faces painted red—all the way to Great Neck to watch the championship game. The truth is that the Hurricanes have captured the hearts of every Hillel fan because of reasons that far surpass their winning streaks.

Sure, it took a nearly undefeated season to get our attention, but why is it that we keep coming back for more—even when they lose (that one game in a blue moon)?

The answer is simple. They are a team. The Hurricanes are a microcosm of the greater Hillel High School team that we create every time we dance our ways through Friday lunches, huddle in singing circles on seminar, or fill the stands at any of our sports games. They are a team. They bring out the inner teammate in all of us—whether it is in the form of a mascot, a fan, or even the kid who reads of a victory on twitter and smiles.

What can we expect from the Hurricanes for the remainder of this season? It doesn’t matter. Win or lose, they will always play as a team, and we will always be there to witness it. But of course, for our competitive readers, Norma does feel that the team has “a huge chance this year,” and will “make the best of every game.” The rest of us will do the same.