

V'ahavta... ואהבת



"Stellar Education for Every Jewish Child"

Nov. 18, 2016 17 Cheshvan, 5777

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Team Building Program

Challenge Discovery - Team Mobile

RTA second through eighth grade students had the privilege of participating in a team building program led by the Challenge Discovery Team.

The morning began with a giant Cheer Squad - Rock, Paper, Scissors Challenge. Each student found a partner and challenged them to a game. If you were not the winner, you became the winner's cheering squad. This kept going until giant cheering chains were formed, and everyone was cheering for the remaining challengers.



Second - fourth graders started out with a speedy, exciting game of tag. The challenge was to find a partner to join with until you were "it" and it had to be a friend who didn't yet have a partner. Everyone had to work together to find an available partner and of course cheer each other on. The next game involved the entire group working together to organize themselves into birthday order, all while being as silent as possible. Once that was done, the group had to toss a ball around while recreating the exact order the second time around. In addition, the challenge was to see if the teams could beat their own times.



It seemed the favorite game was the Big Frog Air - Parachute Frog Toss. Everyone had to work together to toss the frog without letting him fall to the ground. The team was then challenged to see if they could toss the frog all the way onto the next group's parachute. Truly challenging!

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Candle Lighting

Friday, Nov. 18
4:38 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 19
Shabbat ends
5:41 p.m.



Friday, Nov. 25
4:35 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 26
Shabbat ends
5:38 p.m.



Saturday, Nov. 19
PCL Program
6:45 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 21
Soccer
3:40 - 4:55 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 22
Chess Club
3:40 - 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 23
Professional Development/
Clerical Day
No Classes

**Thursday, Nov. 24-
Friday, Nov. 25**
Thanksgiving
No Classes

Saturday, Nov. 26
NO PCL Program

Monday, Nov. 28
Soccer
3:40 - 4:55 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 29
Chess Club
3:40 - 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 1
Mishmar
3:45 - 6:00 p.m.

Team Building Program

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Fifth - eighth students participated in a series of collaborative games where they worked with a partner. They counted, clapped, jumped and meowed - yes, meowed. The activity showed them how to work on being focused together without missing a beat. The students then juggled a variety of other items such as Pokémon, a creepy hand, a little foot, a football, and a spiky ball. The teams had to keep everything in motion without having any of them touch the ground, while at the same time calling out to friends. This encouraged the students to work together to find things they had in common with friends that they didn't know much about.

The next activity involved a "Chocolate River." The students were given "roasted marshmallows" and they had to cross the river standing on the "roasted marshmallows". If a roasted marshmallow was left empty, it would float away. This activity strengthened the students ability to strategize as a group and work in unison to make it across the river.

There were also several rope challenges - Yurt Circle, Inhuman Knot and Turnstiles - where the students had to trust each other to pull together as a team in just the right way to achieve their goals.

For the final fifth through eighth grade challenge, everyone had to work together to get under a spinning rope. That might seem easy but the rope was turning and they had to travel as a group, and go under, all without it touching anyone. It took coordination, persistence, strategizing and leadership!

As a whole, the students of RTA were able to lead, learn, problem solve, innovate and emerge as a TEAM -Together Everyone Achieves More.

Thank you very much to the RTA-PVA for helping sponsor Challenge Discovery, and special thanks to Mrs. Plotnick for working so hard to bring this important program to our school.



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The Second Grade Explores Science

Mrs. Plotnick's second grade class had a fun filled afternoon of science exploration this past Tuesday when they visited the Science Museum of Virginia.

We loved every single minute! First we visited a math exhibit, "Do the Math!", where we measured, calculated, balanced and estimated our way through hands-on activities.

Then we headed to a lab on magnets. We discussed where we find magnets and identified and sorted which items were magnetic and which were not. We learned the history of when magnets were discovered and had an opportunity to work with magnets in various different forms and see how they attract and repel each other.

Our next activity was in a train - that's right! We went to the Science Museum of Virginia's "Light Place". It is an old train car, used to carry mail, that has been converted into a classroom. During this activity, we had a series of stations all about Ancient Egypt and Ancient China! We learned about the paper (papyrus) used by Ancient Egyptians and the life cycle of the silk moth. We had an opportunity to build our own Great Wall of China and our own Ancient Pyramid. We were able to make our own kites similar to the ones created in Ancient China.

Then we headed to a brand new exhibit: "The Science of Speed"!! We raced each other and played air hockey with a robot - seriously, you have to try it one day!

A huge thank you to the Sheldon family for their generous sponsorship of our wonderful trip. Thank you to Mrs. Yael Sheldon and Mrs. Rachel Coon for driving and chaperoning this second grade adventure.



RTA Chess Club Reaching New Heights

Now in its third year, the RTA Chess Club continues to grow and adapt. Our club members now utilize the internet as part of our learning. We can take lessons, do puzzles, and play against each other and against players from around the world. We can log on to the chess web-site during the club or from home.

Under the guidance of our volunteer coach, Mr. Keith Rakofsky, we continue to learn and have fun in the club. We play chess, work on puzzles and challenges, take quizzes, and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere.

Each child goes at their own pace, growing from whatever level they are starting from.

The multi-week RTA Chess Tournament begins soon, so look out for the results in December.

Checkmate!



RUN-A-LATKE

FAMILY FUN 5K AND ONE-MILER

To benefit Weinstein JCC and Rudlin Torah Academy



**Sunday,
DECEMBER 4**

**One-Miler:
9:30 a.m.**

**5K:
10:00 a.m.**

**Start and Finish
at Weinstein JCC
5403 Monument Avenue**

After the run,
stick around and enjoy a post-race
party with food and fun for the entire family,
and of course...latkes!

Runners of all levels take part in the Run-A-Latke! Our 5K and One-Miler are also accessible to the special needs community. Volunteer buddy-runners will be available upon request. For more information contact Missy Bunce at 545-8658.

One-Miler

\$20 Before Nov. 1
\$25 Nov. 1 - Dec. 3
\$35 Race Day

5K

Individual	Family (up to 4 entrants)
\$35 Before Nov. 1	\$110 Before Nov. 1
\$40 Nov. 1 - Dec. 3	\$125 Nov. 1 - Dec. 3
\$50 Race Day	\$140 Race Day

**Sign up today at runsignup.com or call
Margret O'Keefe at the Weinstein JCC at 545-8609.**

Run-A-Latke Volunteers Needed - Volunteers are needed for setup along the course during the race and to serve food. Please contact Diane Goldberg to signup ([804.929.7951](tel:804.929.7951) or pdgoldberg@hotmail.com).

Team Building Program

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Challenge Discovery Quotes

I like the games we played and teamwork got things done faster. *Eliyahu*

The program was fun because the games taught us how to work together and it's not always about winning. *Izabella*

I learned that teamwork is the best way to do something. And that teamwork is the only way to do something fast. I love playing together is well awesome. It is best to play with a team. *Zemorah*

That when working together is better. Because when you work together you will accomplish things. *Skyler*

I thought it was good to exercise to test our trust in each other. I think the activity will not be forgotten so easily. *Chana Reinke*

I enjoyed how the program actively encouraged self discovery as well as team cooperation, in a fun, healthy, non competitive fashion. *Esther Miller*

I think it helps people learn to work together. *Amalya*



YVA Basketball 2016-2017 Game Schedule

	Opponent	Date	Time	Location
1	New Bridge	November 14th	7pm	Away
2	New Life	November 21st	715pm	WJCC
3	Elijah House	November 22nd	7pm	Away
4	Guardian	November 28th	7pm	WJCC
5	West End	December 5th	715pm	WJCC
6	Grace	December 12th	715pm	WJCC
7	Grove	December 13th	7pm	Away
8	New Community	December 19th	715pm	WJCC
9	Grace	January 5th	7pm	Away
10	James River	January 9th	715pm	WJCC
11	Spirit	January 23rd	815pm	WJCC
12	Grove	January 30th	7pm	WJCC
13	James River	February 9th	7pm	Away
14	Spirit	February 13th	715pm	Away
15	New Community	February 14th	7pm	Away
16	Church Hill Academy	February 20th	715pm	WJCC
17	Veritas	February 21st	7pm	WJCC

*Playoffs begin week of February 27th



Parsha Points

Each week we feature an article on the weekly Torah portion.

Vayeira (Genesis 18-22)

Abraham is on a mission to teach the world about God. But God is an infinite force Who encompasses everything and lacks nothing! He doesn't get tired, thirsty, restless or cold. So how can He possibly be described?

The answer is found in what motivated God to create the world in the first place. He wasn't lonely. He wasn't bored. And it wasn't a science experiment. But God did lack one thing, so to speak. He lacked someone outside of Himself to nurture and bestow kindness upon. Thus the attribute of "giving" is the most essential thing we can say about God!

Abraham's Spiritual Greatness

Abraham emulated God by performing endless acts of kindness. His tent, pitched in the middle of an intercity highway, was open on all four sides so that any traveler was welcome to a royal feast.

Inevitably, at the end of the meal, the grateful guests would want to thank Abraham. "It is not I who you should thank," Abraham replied. "I am only emulating the Almighty Who gives us life, provides our food, and sustains us moment by moment. To Him we should give thanks!" To those who balked at the idea of thanking God, Abraham offered an alternative: Pay full price for the meal. Considering the astronomical price tag for a fabulous meal in the middle of a barren desert, Abraham succeeded in inspiring even the skeptics to "give God a try."

Talking to God?

Our Parsha begins with Abraham having just circumcised himself at age 99. We'd expect anyone in this condition to be in bed recuperating. Instead, Abraham is sitting at the entrance of his tent in search of guests!

But on this day, no guests are in sight. Because God made a heat wave to ensure that no travelers were on the road - in order to give Abraham some much-needed rest. Except for one problem: The ploy didn't work. Because for Abraham, the pain of circumcision was nothing compared to the anguish of not doing kindness for others. So now God has to send guests in order to spare Abraham pain!

"God appeared to Abraham as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men passing by. Abraham ran to greet them and said, 'Please come in! I'll bring some water, and you can wash up and rest..' Abraham hurried to Sarah's tent and said, 'Quickly make three cakes.' Abraham ran to his cattle, selected a choice one, and gave it to his son who rushed to prepare it..." (Genesis 18:1-8)

There's a lot to talk about here: How Abraham treats the guests royally and serves the finest foods, how he involves his family in the mitzvah, and his incredible zeal in making it all happen.

But something about this sequence should be bothering us: At the beginning of the story, God appears to Abraham, and the next thing you know, Abraham leaves to attend to three strangers. Imagine you're in the middle of speaking to the President of the United States.

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Would you ever say, "Hold on a second, there's some strangers walking by. I'll get back to you later!" So what made Abraham think leaving God was the right thing to do?

The answer is that there is an experience even greater than talking to God. And that is to be like God. Human beings are created in the image of God. God is a giver. Thus, giving is basic to human nature. It is our greatest form of spiritual expression.

The Need to Give

Abraham was a wealthy man who had many, many servants. If so, why doesn't he just issue orders to his staff to serve the meal?

We mistakenly think that "giving" is a drain on our resources. On the contrary, it energizes and enlivens us. At the beginning of our Parsha, Abraham is in such pain from the circumcision that he is only able to sit by the door of his tent. But when the guests pass by, he runs to greet them! And his energy is infectious: His family also hurry to perform the Mitzvah.

Imagine being born into great wealth and given a monthly allowance of \$10,000. You'd never have to work a day in your life. You could play golf, go shopping, travel, lie on the beach. Everything easy, everything handed to you. That's the good life!

Actually, it's not. Because after awhile, you'd get tired of "taking" all the time. A nagging voice persists: What's my contribution?

The Talmud says there are four individuals who are "considered dead even while they're alive." The common denominator of these people is that (due to circumstantial limitations) they are unable to give.

Of course, the reason to treat others kindly is because we care about them. But just as crucial is what it does for me. The act of "giving" makes me more sensitive, caring and compassionate. More God-like.

The Basis of it All

Giving is the foundation of any relationship. When two people are focused on giving to one another, then the relationship flows in two directions - connecting, linking and forging the bond. But when the focus is on taking, then the dynamic pulls in opposite directions - creating strain and tension.

This is illustrated later in our Parsha with the story of Sodom. What was the terrible sin that caused this city to be destroyed? The Talmud (Sanhedrin 109) says that in Sodom it was illegal to welcome strangers. For example, one Sodomite woman who gave bread to a poor person was punished by publicly being covered with honey and devoured by bees.

Geographically, Sodom is located next to the Dead Sea. In Israel, there are two seas connected by the Jordan River: The Sea of Galilee in the north, and the Dead Sea in the south. Since the Dead Sea is the lowest point on planet Earth (396 meters below sea level), water flows in, but no

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water ever flows out. This inability to "give" is why it's called the Dead Sea.

When God sends a sulfur rainstorm to annihilate Sodom (Genesis 18:24), in a way the city had already been destroyed. Because any society that eschews giving is on a path to self-destruction.

Making it Real

Practically speaking, how do I become a "giver?" The answer is simple: Start giving. Some people say, "I can only give to someone I love." This is incorrect. The Hebrew word for "give" - *hav*, is the same root as *ahava*, which means "love." Giving is what leads to love. When I give, I invest a part of myself, making you more precious to me. This is why parents love their children most of all; it is their greatest investment.

A few suggestions: Visit some patients at the local hospital. Invite your friends to a Shabbat dinner. Volunteer to serve meals at a homeless shelter. Or do the dishes at home even when it's not your turn. Emulate God and be a giver. Do it with zeal. Do it as if your life depends on it.

Adapted with permission from the award winning website, www.aish.com.