



Stellar Education for Every Jewish Child

U'ahavta... ואהבת

Jan. 24, 2020 27 Tevet, 5780

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RTA Spelling Bee

This year's RTA Spelling Bee featured incredible performances by our talented students, and the event was a rare treat for every single person who watched.

Prior to the school-wide competition, grades 1-8 had held their own in-class spelling bees to determine the winners to represent their respective classes. They were:

- 1st Grade: Maya Farzad & Yali Plotnick**
- 2nd Grade: Nossan Gruber & Josh Korshin**
- 3rd Grade: Leah Habib & Sarah Korshin**
- 4th Grade: Elana Asher & Sruli Mayer**
- 5th Grade: Zemorah Coon & Elina Habib**
- 6th Grade: Chanah Rochel Follick & Avi Gruber**
- 7th Grade: Salome Eichelberg & Skyler Legano**
- 8th Grade: Chaviva David & Avi Greene**



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Candle Lighting

Friday, Jan. 24
5:06 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 25
Shabbat ends
6:10 p.m.



Saturday, Jan. 25

PCL Program
6:45 pm

Monday, Jan. 27

First Grade PEP
6:30 - 7:45 pm

Absolute Final Mishloach Manot Deadline

(Please see order form on p.4)

Tuesday, Jan. 28

Computer Coding
3:40 - 5:00 pm

Soccer
3:40 - 5:00 pm

RTA vs. TNCS Black
6:00 pm @ Waldorf School

Wednesday, Jan. 29

Spanish (gr. K-3)
3:40 - 5:00 pm

Thursday, Jan. 30

Spanish (gr. 4-8)
3:40 - 5:00 pm

Mazel tov to Dr. Neil Sonenklar & Ms. Anne Woods on the engagement of their daughter, Lydia, to Robbie Shorr of Potomac, MD.

Mazel tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Yisroel Meir David & family on Miri becoming a bas mitzvah.

Third Grade Guest Speaker

The Gelt Stops Here!

While learning Parsha with Morah Perel, the third grade class touched on the topic of money. When Lot chose to live in Sodom, an area known to be wealthy but not saintly, we realized that wealth mattered most to Lot.

Yaakov, on the other hand, was penniless when he had to leave his family. Alone, Yaakov asked for Hashem's help in buying basic necessities - such as food and clothing. Yaakov pledged 10 percent of whatever he would acquire (which is the mitzvah of *Maaser/tithing*) and give it to Hashem.

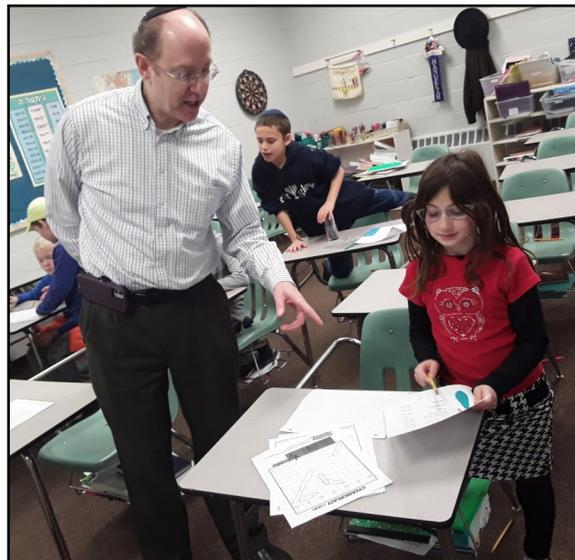
Before Chanuka, we invited a guest speaker. Mr. Daniel Roth, an actuary in Richmond, was happy to offer a lesson to us about money.

Mr. Roth began with a discussion about what money is. Money is used to buy things. Years ago, people would barter - trade - for things they needed. This was complicated, because figuring out even trades wasn't easy to do.

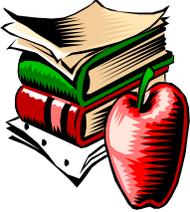
Money was created to help make exchanges. Money has to be agreed on - so it is accepted by all. The type of money a country uses is called *currency*. Money can be coins or paper. Money can be kept in banks to keep it safe.

After our discussion, Mr. Roth announced that it was time for a game! The class was divided into groups. Each group received \$3.60 in bills and coins. Each classmate had a chance to choose food and "shop" from a food menu. Each chose three different things from the menu, and added up the total. The rules were changed, and at one point there was a limit of \$1.00 to spend (which made choices harder).

From these activities, the students learned that you can't buy **everything** at once. You have to make choices in order to have enough money to shop.

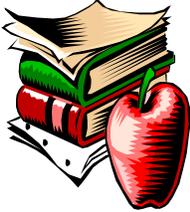


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The PEP Program

For Grades
K-3!!



WHAT IS IT?

The PEP (Parallel Education for Parents) Program is a nationally acclaimed program piloted by RTA in 1993. PEP is designed for parents to come together with their children and their Jewish studies teachers for an exciting evening of learning and fun!

The evening will be followed by tasty refreshments (including our traditional PEP M&M's).

WHY IS IT?

There is little that we as parents value more than our children's education, growth, and happiness. You know how excited children are when they come and share with you something they learned at school. Now you have a unique opportunity to have your children actually share their school, their classroom, and their learning experiences with you as they happen.

WHEN IS IT?

This year we are beginning a two year rotation: The current year will feature PEP for grades K-3, and next school year we will have PEP for grades 4-8. This year's schedule is as follows:

Mondays

January 27, 6:30-7:45 p.m.: First Grade - Morah Joan

February 3, 6:30-7:45 p.m.: Second Grade - Morah Aronowitz

February 10, 6:30-7:45 p.m.: Third Grade - Rabbi Sherman

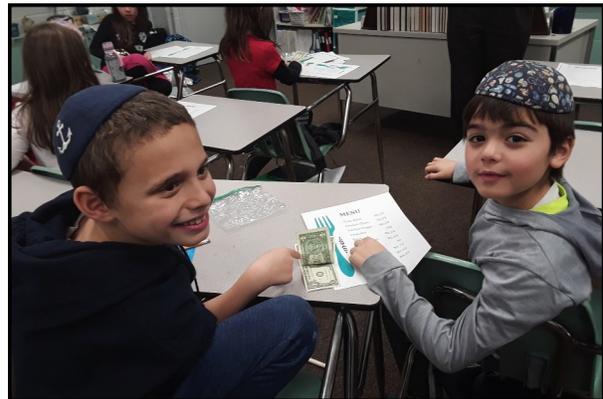
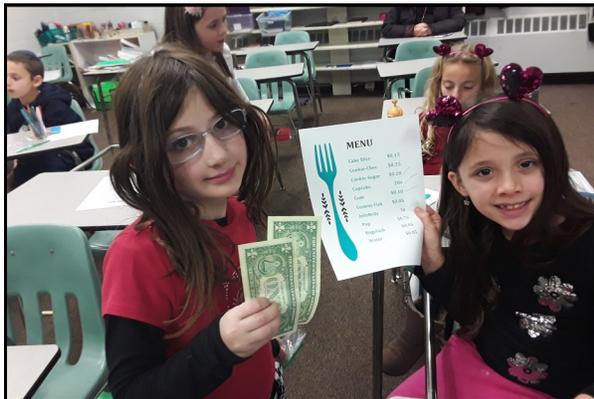
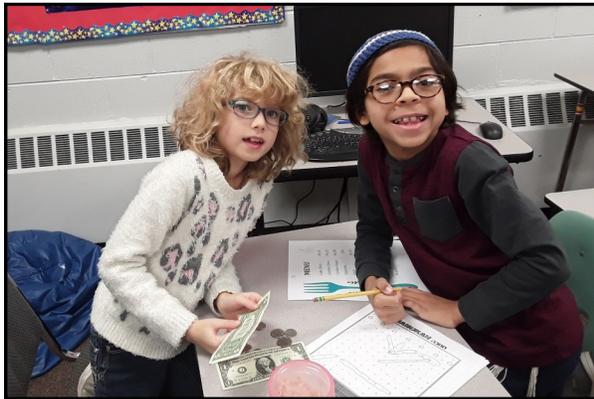
Come with your child and experience an unforgettable evening of learning and fun—together!!

Third Grade Guest Speaker

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Some of the 3rd graders receive allowances at home, and are trying to save money to buy something big. We discussed the importance of **saving** money. We also spoke about the *mitzvah* of giving one tenth of our earnings (**maaser**), as Yaakov had promised Hashem. For example, to take *maaser* from \$3.60, we had to figure out what one tenth of \$3.60 is. (It is 36 cents). Since there were no pennies in class, Mr. Roth rounded off the amount and put 40 cents in the tzedaka box to show us how taking *maaser* is done.

Thank you to Mr. Roth for opening our eyes to what money is, and how it can be used wisely.



RTA Spelling Bee

(. . .continued from front page)

Last Thursday was the school-wide competition with all class representatives participating. It was a truly stunning drama:

Every contestant successfully spelled their way through the first two rounds...

Seven students spelled their way successfully to round 14...

Three students made it all the way to Round 23....

And it wasn't until ROUND 36 that we had a winner...

Congratulations to the winner of the 2020 RTA Spelling Bee – Elina Habib!

A special shout out to our runner-up - Chanah Rochel Follick!

And an honorable mention to 3rd place - Salome Eichelberg!

Very special thanks go to Mrs. Williams, Rabbi Sherman & Mrs. Lessin for all of their help with the Spelling Bee!

Congratulations to all our participants, and best of luck to Elina in representing RTA in the next round, at the Richmond Private School Spelling Bee Finals!



Spelling Bee

RTA First Graders Perform at the JCC Preschool Shabbat Program

Morah Joan's first graders were invited to perform for the JCC preschool Shabbat program last Friday. They sang the Hebrew versions of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" and "If You're Happy and You Know it", after which they were joined by one of the preschool classes for "The Alef Bet Song".

A big thank-you to our drivers/chaperones: Mrs. Farzad, Mrs. Follick, Mrs. Gimpelevich, and Mrs. Winston!



Parsha Points

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

Va'eira (Exodus 6:2-9:35)

It often astonishes us how Pharaoh, ruler of Egypt, maintains his resistance to freeing the Jewish people. How is it possible that Pharaoh could fail to recognize the obvious hand of G-d Almighty as he and his struck are struck by plague after plague?!

Pharaoh epitomizes denial of G-d. This is evident from Exodus 5:1, the first meeting between Moses and Pharaoh, where Moses utters the immortal words: "Let My People Go!" Pharaoh responds with bewilderment: "Who is G-d that I should listen to him? I don't know this G-d!"

The purpose of the plagues, therefore, is to announce that G-d is running the show - Once and for all, loud and clear. The 10 plagues are actually a progression, a process bringing Pharaoh to recognition of G-d. Consider:

The first plague turns the Nile River into blood. Why? Because Pharaoh had been promoting himself as a deity who created the Nile, as he says, "I am the river and I created it" (Ezekiel 29:3). Pharaoh goes to such extents to preserve his G-dly image that he sneaks down to the river alone to relieve himself; hence G-d tells Moses to "pay a call on Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water ..." (Exodus 7:15)

Moses turns the Nile into blood but Pharaoh is not impressed. His magicians are called in and they do the same. G-d might be a good magician, thinks Pharaoh, but He's not out of my league!

G-D OF NATURE

As the plagues continue, Pharaoh is moved along a process of increasing recognition of who G-d is. When Moses brings the plague of lice, Pharaoh calls upon his magicians to reproduce the phenomenon, but they can't. "It is the finger of G-d," say the magicians to Pharaoh." (Exodus 8:14)

Why were they unable to make lice? The Talmud (Sanhedrin 67) says because magic has no power over something tiny.

Like modern science today, Pharaoh's magicians can gather and manipulate existing energy, but they can't create the building-blocks of life itself. No matter how small a particle is discovered, there is always a foundation of smaller particles below that.

When Pharaoh's magicians say "It is the finger of G-d," they refer to G-d by the name of Elokim, which represents the power of G-d acting through nature. Pharaoh and his men had advanced one huge step along the continuum. They recognized G-d as the force controlling nature. But this was not sufficient. Pharaoh still refuses to let the Jews go.

ONE STEP CLOSER

The climax of our Parsha is the plague of hail, where Egyptian resources are totally wiped out.

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Parsha Points

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Every tree is smashed, and every man and animal caught outdoors is killed (Exodus 9:25). As Pharaoh stands amidst the rubble of a country in ruins, he now declares, "I am wrong and G-d is right." This time Pharaoh refers to G-d by His ineffable Name - the transcendent aspect of G-d that we cannot comprehend.

It took a lot of pounding over the head, but Pharaoh has finally matured in his recognition of G-d.

Yet somehow, he still refuses to let the Jews go! How great is the human ego and the power of rationalization...

G-D'S AWESOME WORLD

In many respects, Pharaoh's process is our process, too. When we are children, we think we are the center of the universe. Then, through experience and trials, we become increasingly aware of things beyond our control. Whether earthquakes, cancer, the rise and fall of fortunes, even life and death itself ... these can only be ascribed to a Higher Power.

In short, life is a series of such recognitions. But sometimes we get confused, we forget, and slip back in the continuum.

Why? Because with each technological advancement, we sense the unlimited potential of man: The 4-minute mile. A robot to Mars. Cell phones and the internet. We are in awe of what is humanly possible.

But where is our awe of that which only G-d is capable?! Gravity ... eyesight ... snowstorms.... sunrise & sunset.... the birth of a baby animal – or human ...

LESSONS TODAY

The commentators say that the 10 plagues were not only for the sake of Pharaoh. They were for the Jews as well. To watch and to absorb the lessons of who G-d is. That training was a prerequisite to the revelation at Sinai.

We've all got to reach that recognition. One way or the other, Pharaoh is going to acknowledge G-d and let the Jews go. The only question is whether Pharaoh's route to that end will be in cooperation with G-d, or in opposition.

The Talmud says that "each person must see himself as if he personally came out of Egypt." Our lives are filled with messages from the Almighty, designed to teach us His ways and draw us near. He has a plan, and we have the choice: To fit in, or to be cut out. The choice is clear if we just open our eyes....

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



Join Us For

B'H

ShabbaTTogether

Community Havdalah Celebration

Saturday, Feb. 29 7:30-9 PM

Weinstein JCC

Join the RVA Community-wide Inclusive Havdalah program celebrating Disability Inclusion and Mental Wellness. This event is in honor of Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month, the ReelAbilities Diversity & Inclusion Festival and ShabbaTTogether around the world.

Highlights Include:

- *Musical Havdalah
- *The Interviewer: 10 min short film
- *Film followed by a brief Q&A
- *DIY Havdalah Kits
- *Dessert Reception

Free Admission! Family Friendly!

RSVP: <http://tinyurl.com/RVAHavdalah>

Co-Sponsored by The Jewish RVA Inclusion Taskforce



Jewish Community Federation
OF RICHMOND



ReelAbilities
FILM FESTIVAL

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Rudlin Torah Academy, Temple Beth-El,
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