

### Schedule of Events

Sunday March 30<sup>th</sup>: 11:00–12:30 Keshar-Konnections session 5. This time the teens will join a live videoconference with teens from Sderot, Israel who are under daily missile attacks.

Wednesday April 2<sup>nd</sup>: We will host a very special concert at the school.

### Past week's events

Friday March 21<sup>st</sup>: Our Purim party at the 'Jewish Home' was very nice. Fifteen residents came down and joined us. They heard Rabbi Joel Finkelstien read the Megilah; they twirled graggers and other noise-makers. The students all gave them Shalach-Manot and helped take them back to their rooms. The residents were very happy about it and they asked us to come back again.

### Welcome Back

Jessica, Courtney and Kevin from their trip to Israel. It sounds like you had a wonderful time. Nice to have you back.

### Mazal-Tov

To Ms. Ann Indingaro on her birthday this past week.

To Logan Bierman on his 15<sup>th</sup> birthday this week.

### Kol Hakavod

In last week's issue we reported that the total sum collected as part of the Purim fundraiser for 'Ezer-Mitzion' was \$540.

At the end of this week we counted \$670!!!

Thanks again to all of you.

This week the Israeli government announced that 'Ezer-Mitzion' organization will receive the prestigious "Israel Prize" on Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. This is a great honor and they really deserve it.

### Lipson

What is Parshat Parah?

This Shabbat is called Shabbat Parah because of the additional portion to the Parshah. Often times, this is the Shabbat following Purim, but sometimes it can be on the second weekend after Purim.

During this time, Pesach preparations are already in full gear. On Pesach all the Jews participated in a pilgrimage to the Holy Temple where the Paschal lambs were sacrificed and eaten by the Seder. Since many of the pilgrims were spiritually impure because they came in contact with a corpse, they had to be sprinkled and purified by the ashes of the Red Heifer before entering the Holy Temple and/or partaking of the Paschal lamb. So on this Shabbat we take out a second Torah from the Ark and read from it the rules pertaining to the purification process of the Red Heifer (Numbers, chapter 19).

[The purification power of the Red Heifer ashes is the ultimate קח "chok" (supra-rational divine command); it seems to make no sense whatsoever.

When King Solomon, the wisest of all men, reflected on this Mitzvah he exclaimed "I said, 'I will become wise,' but it is far from me" (Ecclesiastes 7:23). Many Mitzvot are difficult to comprehend, but this one really takes the cake. But as we know, these "chok" kind of commandments are part of the deal and maybe some kind of test that G-d gives us to see if we know how to accept and obey his commandments only because they came from him and we believe that's what he wants us to do.

## **Educational corner – Ms. Indingaro – Math**

### **100% Responsibility**

It's hard to believe that our Team Trek trip was over two weeks ago. One of the mantras of that event was "100% Responsibility." We all pledged to each other that we would take 100% responsibility for our own actions or inactions. How does that play out in the real world? Well, math teachers wouldn't hear the old saw that goes, "I had a hard time with math, so it's no surprise that my son is failing math!" Nor would we hear that the hours after school were so filled with obligations that there wasn't time for homework (or grading papers!) Low grades wouldn't be blamed on hateful teachers, and lack of student comprehension wouldn't be blamed on uncooperative students.

Another failure to take 100% responsibility is expressed when the need for serious effort or practice is confused with the need for talent or exceptional expertise. Do you have to be a concert pianist to be able to accompany a sing-along? Do you have to be a pro basketball player to enjoy a pick-up game at the gym? Do you have to be a professional photographer to take good family pictures? Do you have to be a Rabbi to offer heart-felt prayers? Do you have to be a rocket scientist to be able to understand and use high school mathematics? No, no, no, no, and NO! Anybody can do these things with effort, practice, and serious intent, if they want to.

As a career mathematics teacher and supervisor, I have heard all the complaints from students, parents, teachers, and administrators about who can and can't learn math and about who can and can't teach it and why. When students (and adults) hate and fear math it is certain that there is plenty of blame to go around. Taking 100% responsibility in this situation would mean that, instead of being accusatory towards and critical of each other, all parties would evaluate their own roles, behaviors, and relationships with an eye to improving their own attitude and performance. (It is, after all, nearly impossible to change someone else's attitude and performance.) But how can this happen?

The other goal of Team Trek was team building -- and that is the key. Everyone must be a part of the team. They must recognize that every team member is valuable: that they must trust and be trusted by every team member in order for the team to be able to meet and beat the challenges that come along. Trust? Basically trust that everyone will do his or her best to help the team succeed. That everyone is taking 100% responsibility for the success of the group. The problem, of course, is that most groups do not see themselves as this sort of trusting team. Instead of trusting each other they blame each other. At Team Trek we were able to experience the power of being a member of such a team. We were exhilarated at being able to stretch ourselves and leave our comfort zones to enable the team to succeed.

I submit that if we, the faculty, founders, students, and parents of MJHS, were all trusted and trusting members of such a team—each taking 100% responsibility for the success of the school—that this school would flourish and prosper like no other. Instead of there being no good solution to some problems, there would be multiple good solutions that could be implemented.

## **Shabbat Shalom**