

News from Admissions

We've had a wonderful season so far with particularly strong Open Houses, both in attendance and content. Our parent ambassadors, Rashi students and alumni who participated in this fall's Open Houses brought the Rashi story alive. They spoke about why they chose Rashi, what keeps them here, and what makes the Rashi experience so special. Students spoke about their close relationships with faculty and the depth of learning and inquiry they experience here. We even had a first grader help with our tours! Now that's Rashi. Prospective families commented on the passion and sheer happiness our students and parents expressed.

A big *kol kavod* to the families that have volunteered to help in admissions – from speaking at an Open House to hosting a parlor meeting, to calling prospective parents. The parent-to-parent connection is what truly brings in new families. If you would like to help out in admissions, call or email us.

Just as our Open Houses get the Rashi story out to prospective parents, this past week our Rashi faculty helped get the Rashi story into the hearts and minds of local preschool educators at our fifth professional workshop for preschool faculty. Designed by our own Janice Hirshon, organized by Anne Puchkoff and starring Rashi teachers Serena Androphy, Heidi Estrada, Michelle Lambi,



Sharon Miller, and Learning Specialist Marlene Moyer, the workshop presented a series of hands-on interactive activities designed to develop literacy skills in young children. Based on the most current educational research, the activities emphasized phonemic awareness – concentrating on sound units as opposed to teaching individual letters – through rhyming, awareness of syllables, beginning and ending sounds, and segmenting.

The visiting preschool teachers were inspired and impressed by the talent of our Rashi staff. Each year we showcase our faculty at this workshop to reach out into the community and solidify Rashi's growing reputation in the Boston educational community. Many return participants said they had used the activities taught at last year's workshop in their preschool classes with great success. Programs such as this solidifies Rashi's reputation as a cutting edge school committed to excellence and to creating a community of learners.

Susan Benett, Director of Recruitment and Admissions

Design Day in Grades K-2

A first grader was busy creating a shelter with two friends as part of Design Day. With enthusiasm he approached me and said, "This day should not only be called Design Day. It should be called build friendship day." There is nothing like the words of a young child to capture the essence of what makes Rashi the special place that it is. Yes, Design Day was a day to think, create, test, redesign and share – but it was also a different way to build relationships.

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Coming Up

Nov. 30

Traveling Theater Troupe at Temple Beth Elohim

Rockin' Shabbat with Jon Nelson

Tzedakah Heroes at MS Kabbalat Shabbat

Dec. 1

Grade 2 Family Havdalah and Potluck Dinner 4:30-6:30 pm in the cafenadium

Dec. 3

MS parent workshop with Jenni King at rear of auditorium 7:30-9 pm

Dec. 4

Hanukkah First Candle: Gr. 3 & 4 Concert and Candle Lighting 2:30 pm

Dec. 5

Yachad Latke Lunch

Dec. 6

Leo Baeck students arrive

Pizza Thursday

Dec. 7

Curious Minds Preschool Program: Hanukkah Celebration 1 pm

Tzedakah Heroes

Zander Sebenius, Rashi alum, and his friend Tarek will be our guest teachers/tzedakah heroes at the Middle School Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday, November 30 at 2:15.

Zander and Tarek are students at BB&N and have been doing some powerful social justice work there.

First graders are learning about shelters. Working in groups, the children created blueprints and then built different type of shelters. Some children built shelters out of clay, some built igloos out of sugar cubes, and others worked with stone, straw and cloth. What structures would best withstand the heat and wind? They tested their shelters, made predictions about what they thought would happen and graphed the results.

In Second Grade the children have been learning about the Charles River and have recently been studying the water cycle. Using different materials – coffee filters, gravel, cotton balls, etc. – the children designed water filters that would clean dirt and tea leaves from a bottle of water. This project was based on the *Engineering is Elementary* curriculum from the Museum of Science.

Kindergarten, First and Second Grade had the opportunity to share their designs with each other. As a class came into their room children shared their design challenges and processes. Watching a shy first grader describing in detail and with enthusiasm the design process to a kindergartner was precious. This was integration at its best: science and friendship!

Serena Androphy, Division Director



Second graders explained to younger students how they designed their water filters on Design Day.

Engineering Design Day

Rashi's first Design Day was a huge success! Students at all grade levels spent November 20 learning an eight-step design process, and then applying it to age-appropriate engineering design challenges.

Students in grades K-2 tackled the problems described in Serena's article in this issue. Third graders explored concepts of force and motion as they designed protective devices to enable Egg Rovers to safely land on a surface after being dropped from a designated height. Fourth graders reread the story of Noah's Ark and then designed and tested shelters to see if they could withstand rainstorms. Fifth graders created wind dispersal systems designed to carry seeds the farthest distance possible. Middle School students researched the history of bridge development and studied different types of bridges before building their own bridges that could withstand the weight of several batteries.

All students worked in small groups, strengthening their teamwork as well as their science skills. The day included time to reflect on the process, revise prototypes, and share findings with classmates.

Design Day was an outgrowth of last year's science committee, which worked to strengthen the technology component of Rashi's science curriculum, and discussions with Dr. Ioannis Mialouis, Director of Boston's Museum of Science, who spoke at last year's Annual Dinner on the importance of including engineering and technology in the K-12 science curriculum. He visited Rashi's Science Fair last spring and advised the school on structuring Design Day activities.

Design Day photos can be seen on the www.rashi.org website. Go to News & Events, then click on Photo Gallery.

MS Parent Workshop

High School and Beyond: Parenting Through the Next Two Transitions

Jenni King, middle school and high school counselor and guidance counselor for over 30 years, will be running a workshop for parents of Middle School students on Monday, December 3 at 7:30 pm at the rear of the auditorium.

Jenni will reflect on her experience as a parent and as a counselor and guidance department head in Newton. Topics to be covered will include: private and public high schools, high school registration and course selection, services for students with learning differences, and parenting adolescents, especially during transitions. A list of suggested readings will be provided and ample time will be allowed for questions.

Note from the Nurse

Once again, Yachad will be providing latkes for students during lunch on **Wednesday, December 5, 2007**.

Below is the list of ingredients that will be used. These latkes will be made at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for Aged in their kosher kitchen:

Potatoes	Onions
Whole Eggs	Soybean oil
Matzo Meal (enriched unbleached wheat flour)	
Salt and Pepper	

Applesauce also will be available for those who wish.

The chef assures me that the latkes will not contain nuts or come in contact with any nut derivatives. They will be prepared on the same grill as in past years. The grill will be cleaned and washed thoroughly before cooking our latkes.

Please let me know if your child will not be able to eat these latkes. You might want to send in alternative latkes or appropriate snack.

Again, thank you for your cooperation in keeping Rashi a safe, happy, and healthy place.

Happy Hanukkah!

Coral Ambuter, School Nurse

Jewish Studies

Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, is around the corner. We all know that Hanukkah gives us the opportunity to celebrate the victory of the few over the powerful. We all know that on Hanukkah we light the Hanukiah (the menorah) and sing about the Maccabees and their great victory. Hanukkah also is a time that we take upon ourselves the promise to be a 'light among nations'. It is our time to find personal and familial ways to bring light into dark places. In an ongoing effort to raise our consciousness for social justice, the Reform Movement developed a Ner Shel Tzedakah (a candle for Tzedakah). On the sixth night of Hanukkah, we ask families to take whatever money they might have spent on gifts for themselves and give it to tzedakah.

At Rashi we are celebrating Hanukkah in several ways. We will, of course, light candles, sing songs, study the history, play dreidl, and eat latkes and sufganiyot. This Hanukkah we will have special guests. The eighth graders will welcome their Israeli friends from the Leo Baeck School in Haifa, Israel. Among other things, the Haifa students will participate in classrooms throughout the school. We hope you will join us for our special Hanukkah assembly on Monday, December 10 when we formally welcome our Israeli students and introduce them to you.

We will use our assembly and the celebration of Hanukkah to kick off another celebration that will continue throughout the rest of the school year. This year the State of Israel celebrates her 60th year. We will join the entire Jewish community by engaging in a variety learning opportunities that will connect the Rashi community (parents, students and faculty) to Israel in meaningful and engaging ways. The theme for us at Rashi is that Israel is central to the Jewish People. Every Jew is connected to Israel. It is our goal to open up opportunities of connection for your children and your families.

We are very fortunate this year to have Uri Feinberg, Interim Director of Education at Temple Israel and a Rashi parent (Meitav, Grade 2), join us in planning and implementing our celebration. Uri will lead a series of events for the Rashi students. The Middle School will learn about different periods of Israeli history through song. As Uri is a trained tour guide in Israel, we are working together to create a series of 'guided tours' for our lower school. We will keep you informed as we progress in our programming. It promises to be very exciting!

Other ideas for our ongoing celebration include: creating a large interactive map of Israel spotlighting different aspects of Israel; planning an evening of Israeli dance for parents, teaching our students how to write prayers for the State of Israel and using them as a *kehilla*.

I am looking forward to a meaningful Hanukkah with our staff and students. Celebrating the 60th year of The State of Israel will bring a new dimension to our school that will enlighten and enrich our entire *kehilla*.

Hag Orim Sameach! Happy festival of lights!

B'shalom,
Rabbi Ellen Pildis

Backstage in the Theater

On Thursday, November 15, the lights went up on the Middle School performance of "Gooney Bird Greene and Her True Life Adventures". Thirty-three Middle School students took the stage and an additional nine students worked backstage running lights, sound, moving scenery and assisting with all the costumes.

Before the curtain opens on the first performance there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes. Trying to find a script that works for a large cast (mostly girls), fun characters and dialogue with easy themes for the family audience to follow is a challenge. Bonny took twelve scripts with her to read on the airplane during summer vacation and Jenny was still reading scripts over Labor Day weekend. Once the script is chosen, the royalties paid (yes, you have to pay the person who wrote the script), then the auditions can be held.

This is the process that most directors love and hate at the same time. The director knows that only one person can be cast for a specific part, therefore, other people are going to be unhappy if they had their "hearts set" on playing that character. As an actor myself I always tried to "not set my heart on a part"; but being human we tend to do that, and it does hurt when we don't get that special part. This is all a great learning experience, and we haven't even started the eight weeks of rehearsals yet.

During the rehearsals we work hard and laugh, and work harder and laugh more. Even in the non-musical shows, we still stretch out our muscles and warm-up our voices. As an actor your voice and your body help to tell the story. Each rehearsal is spent blocking (staging) the play, learning how to develop the characters, how to project voices, and learning how to work with the props, scenery and costumes. "Tech Week" is the point in the process when the stress begins. Cast members are still trying to memorize their lines, the costumes are still too big, the scenery hasn't been painted yet and all the lights and sound equipment have arrived and the technical crew is trying to figure out how it all works. For most of the Middle School students this whole process is very familiar, because they have been working on the shows with Bonny and Jenny for the past eight years. The familiarity is evident in the confidence and stage presence that the cast shows as the lights go on. It's very exciting as it starts to come together and it really starts to look like a show. But, the magic truly starts the week of the performance.

We hope that you will come enjoy more of the Middle School productions this year, but the same process goes on in the Lower School with the Extended Day performances and the Class plays. So come be an audience member this year – you'll see some great theater at Rashi.

The Lower School Extended Day Drama Recital is Wednesday, December 12, at 1:15 and 7 pm. The cast members have been working on various scenes, songs and monologues from a variety of children's stories including: *Thumbelina*, *Ramona Quimby*, *Rapunzel or a Hairy Tale*, *Rumpelstilkskin* and *Puss in Boots*. Songs include "Be Our Guest" and "Gotta Have a Friend Like Me."

Bonny Goldberg and Jenny Lifson, Theater Specialists

School Lunch Forms

Order forms for school lunches for January are being distributed this week and are due back to the office by 9 am on Wednesday, December 12. In keeping with Rashi's core value of *Kavod* (respect), we respectfully ask parents to observe this deadline. In the past, we occasionally accepted orders after the deadline. We will no longer be able to do this. The office needs to have the appropriate amount of time to process the orders and notify staff as to which students have ordered lunches. Thank you in advance for your cooperation

REMINDER

Children go outside for recess and physical education on most days (even in the snow).

PLEASE send your child with the appropriate clothing including jackets, hats, mittens/gloves, and boots, as needed.

It also might be a good idea to send a sweater or sweatshirt to be kept in his/her locker for a sudden change in the weather.

Yachad

The Scholastic Book Fair was a tremendous success. We totaled close to \$9,000 in sales which earned Yachad \$2,400 towards the many fabulous programs that our children enjoy. Our amazing Rashi parents, grandparents, and friends bought over 60 books for the library during Generations Day and 100 books were donated to our terrific teachers. In addition, the library was given an additional \$370 in books from Yachad and the JCL program received 14 wonderful new stories that the Middle School students will read with their buddies at the Maria Baldwin School in Cambridge from the "One For Books" program.

Thank you to the many volunteers who made the Book Fair possible: Nancy Buck, Diane Clinton, Sherri Goodstein, Johanna Gordon, Alla Grinberg, Eleanor Lewis, Barbara Litwin, Harriet Schechter, Isaac Sebenius, Julie Shane, Dave Sherman, Lois Sherman, Janet Taylor, and Elizabeth Wilson. *Toda rabah* to the entire Rashi *kehilla* for your generous support of the book fair.

Keep saving your Butcherie receipts and place them in the Butcherie envelope in the Yachad bin in the main office. Yachad earned \$190 from last year's receipts. WAY TO GO!!!

Fair Trade Hanukkah gelt will be here soon along with the regular offerings of chocolate, coffee and tea. There will be a limited supply of gelt.

Julie Kremer

Andie Insoft awinsoft@comcast.net

Susan Altman altman_susan@hotmail.com

Rashi Stories

We recently asked members of the Rashi community to share their stories of why Rashi is special to them. This week we are pleased to publish the story that Ellen May contributed.

My grandmother, Esther Kardon, was a resident at Hebrew SeniorLife (HSL) when my daughter, Julia was in preschool. At the same time, one of Julia's friends from preschool, Chloe, had an older sister, Mollie, who was a student at Rashi and was involved in the Mitzvah Makers program. One day, when I was speaking with Chloe's mother, Lori, about visiting my grandmother at HSL, she told me her daughter Mollie was involved with Mitzvah Makers at Rashi and connected with one resident, in particular, who spoke Hebrew to Mollie. In fact, this resident and Mollie had formed a very special bond. You can imagine my surprise, when she told me the resident's name was Esther! What a small world!

From then on, we would coordinate our family visits with the Mitzvah Makers program, so we could see first-hand the direct and powerful impact Rashi students were having with the residents of HSL. The program coordinators even let Julia and Chloe participate as well, even though they were still in preschool. Now Julia and Chloe, who met in preschool, are third graders at the Rashi School. Mollie recently became a Bat Mitzvah, and mentioned my grandmother in her D'var Torah. My grandmother did not live to see Julia attend Rashi, but I can only imagine that she would have been beaming with pride to know that her granddaughter is attending Rashi, where she is learning about core values in the most enriching way!

Ellen May, Parent of Julia, Grade 3

B'nai Mitzvah Dates

Please be sure to notify Adrienne Freedman as soon as you have a date for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. She maintains a database of all Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates and distributes updated lists periodically to families in the relevant grades.

Athletics

Basketball season begins in December! More than half of Rashi students in Grades 1-8 are participating in teams. Children in Grades 1-3 play on Sundays on coed intramural teams. Rashi is the only area Jewish day school to offer a school-run (as opposed to parent-organized) program for this age group. This year, we also have the following teams: Grade 4/5 Boys, Grade 4 Girls, Grade 5 Girls, Grade 6 Boys, Grades 7/8 Boys, and Middle School Girls. Students in Grades 6-8 play interscholastic games, including games in the newly formed Jewish Day School League, organized by Rashi Athletic Director Josh Horowicz.

The schedule of all games is posted on the www.rashi.org website. There is a link to Athletics at the top of the page. Come out and cheer for our teams!

Life Events

Our deepest sympathy to Rabbi Joe Eiduson (father of Rosie and Carly and former Head of School) and his family on the passing of his father, and Barry Michelson (father of Evan) and his family on the passing of his mother.

Website Update

New on the www.rashi.org website: **Design Day photos.** Go to the Photo Gallery page in the News & Events section. Watch this page throughout the year as we add more photos.

We are making every effort to keep the website calendar updated, including noting when a date has been changed. Please do check it regularly to confirm upcoming events.

Community News

Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center in Newton:

Sunday Funday Chanukah Celebration Open House, December 2, 11:30 am-3 pm. This celebration will include the Magic Ark Children's Series musical presentation of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. Tickets are available through the JCC Box Office at 617-965-5226 or online at www.lsjcc.org.

Sisterhood of Temple Shalom Milton: J. Hannah Orden, author of *Eve's Garden* will discuss her book on Sunday, December 2 at 2 pm at the Temple, 180 Blue Hill Ave., Milton, MA 02186, tel.: 617-698-3394. Members and guests are welcome. Autographed copies of the book will be available.

Tinokot U'Feotot and the Israeli House at the Israeli

Consulate present: MusiHanuKa! A Musical Celebration of the Holiday of Lights (Recommended ages 2-4 years)

December 4, 4:30-5:30, at Temple Emanuel, Newton Centre
Tuition: \$25.00 paid in advance

Song, dance and games led by jazz musician and instructor Tal Shalom-Kobi. Participants will create a Hanukkah and Sevivonim. All activities will be conducted in Hebrew. Enroll by November 20. For enrollment details, write Tinokot U'Feotot at:

[\[http://us.f302.mail.yahoo.com/ym/Compose?To=immaboston@yahoo.com\]](http://us.f302.mail.yahoo.com/ym/Compose?To=immaboston@yahoo.com)

JCC Maccabi Camp Kingswood Open Houses:

Sunday, December 9, 2-4 pm, at the Leventhal-Sidman JCC in Newton. JCC Maccabi Camp Kingswood is a Jewish, co-ed, overnight camp for children entering grades 3-11 located in Bridgton, Maine. We are a traditional camp offering a wide range of activities, from broad athletic to creative arts and cultural programs. Our caring and positive environment ensures that campers will develop independence, become more self-confident, learn cooperation and teamwork and strengthen their Jewish identity. We offer 2, 3½, 5½ and 7-week sessions. For more information, call 617.558.6528, email info@kingswood.org or go to www.jccmaccabicamp.org.

Temple Hillel B'nai Torah Hanukkah Party: Sunday, December 9, 5:30 to 7:30 pm, 120 Corey Street, West Roxbury, MA 02132. Latkes, music, dreidels, face painting and more! All welcome -- families, kids, adults, singles, interfaith families, etc. \$20/family suggested donation. Call 617-323-0486 for directions or other information. Temple HBT is a Reconstructionist urban synagogue with a diverse and welcoming membership. Rabbi Barbara Penzner, spiritual leader. For more information: www.templehbt.org

Gateways' PROGRAM FOR JEWISH TOTS WITH DISABILITIES and THEIR PARENTS 2007-2008

Introduce children with disabilities to the joys of Jewish tradition – Shabbat, holidays, and culture. Through music, movement, crafts and multi-sensory activities, Gateways presents an innovative program for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and their parents. Sessions are run by early intervention specialists and special education teachers. The program will be held on:

December 9	Hanukkah Happening
February 3	Sharing Shabbat
March 16	Purim Party
April 6	Passover Playtime
May 4	Israel Investigation

Sessions are held on Sunday mornings at 10-11am at Solomon Schechter Day School, Lower Campus, 60 Stein Circle, Newton. \$20 donation per session.

Gateways: Access to Jewish Education provides a Jewish education for children with moderate to severe special needs in our Supplemental program and our day school program supports students with educational challenges in a day school environment. Register at nancym@jgateways.org or call 617-630-9010.