



מה חדש Ma Chadash?

A newsletter from Talmud Torah to the parents & students

February 9
25 Shevat

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Vav Washington D.C. Trip - An Amazing Opportunity!

After learning about the *Shoah* (Holocaust), you might think you know and understand all of the atrocities and social injustices that took place leading up to and during the *Shoah*. However, it was a visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in January that put it into perspective for the twenty-one Vav students who traveled to Washington D.C. with parent chaperones; Sheila Derechin, Sonia Galinson, Jennifer Gray, Debi Lehman and Dana Mirviss, faculty and administration; Mary Baumgarten, Nechamit Yaari and Terry Kleinbaum. The students experienced a wide range of emotions as they viewed the artifacts, photographs and listened attentively to first-hand accounts of what happened.

In addition to the Holocaust Museum, the group visited the Capitol and a host of historical monuments and sites with a private tour guide while deepening their connections with one another and to Judaism.

We were so grateful for this amazing opportunity given to the Vav class through a grant from an anonymous donor in honor of Mary Baumgarten.



Tu Bishvat Seder in Bet

written by Bet students:

Grant Cohen, Michael and Shayna Korsh

Bet had a great *Tu Bishvat seder*! At the beginning of the *seder*, we each received a plate of special foods that grow on trees. First, we ate food with an outer shell or a peeling such as nuts or bananas. Then, we said the blessings over the fruit and white grape juice to represent the cold winter. After that, we ate a food that contains pits or seeds inside such as apples, olives, peaches, pears and dates. Next, we said a blessing over the red grape juice to represent the warmth of the new season. We learned that *Tu Bishvat* in Biblical times was a season for taxes on fruit. In addition, we planted herbs which we hope will grow so we can use them for our Passover home *sedarim*. We learned a lot about *Tu Bishvat* and why we celebrate this holiday. We sang songs and had lots of fun.



Gimel Classes Counting in Hebrew

Numbers took on a whole new meaning in *Gimel* as the students learned Hebrew numbers from zero to 1,000,000 and beyond. The children played games, sang songs and other fun activities to practice learning how to say numbers and count in Hebrew. Students also proudly recited their *bar/bat mitzvah* dates in Hebrew.



Hey Students Perform Mitzvot

All of us know that visiting someone who is ill, or residents in a nursing home, is not always easy or pleasant.

It is for this reason that some shy away from performing the *mitzvah* of *bikkur holim*, *visiting the sick*.

We are so proud of our students who are making regular visits to Sholom Home and Roitenberg Assisted Living, practicing all the things they learned during our study of the *mitzvah* of *Bikkur Holim*. They play Bingo and other games with the residents as well as celebrating holidays with them.

The interactions between students and residents are heartwarming to see. On a recent visit one of the residents said to one of our young men, "could I have a kiss"? He was more than delighted to oblige. Another resident who was engaged in playing a game of cards remarked: "I haven't had so much fun in years."

Rebecca Bender, a parent who served as a chaperone on a recent visit, said the following: "Parents are always asking why their kids seem so self focused. Giving our children opportunities like this help them to see beyond their issues and problems and appreciate the youth, energy, and mental and physical capabilities that they have, while at the same time performing a *mitzvah*. Saying "It's so hard for me or my child," misses the point. "It may be hard, but nonetheless, we are not doing this for ourselves," commented Rebecca.

We plan to continue our visits to Sholom Home and Roitenberg Assisted Living throughout the year.

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Questions or comments regarding the **Ma Chadash**? Email them to schalom@talmudtorahmpls.org

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