



NEW WEBSITE ATTRACTS THOUSANDS OF VIEWERS

We are thrilled to announce our new ICJA website at www.icja.org. The site welcomes viewers with a fresh look at the Academy, including photos, news and animation on the homepage.

The website includes photo albums, videos, a calendar, staff emails and many other useful features for parents, alumni and community members alike.

Many viewers have already used our secure e-commerce tools to buy concert tickets, make scholarship donations and purchase mazal tov or commemoration tribute cards. Users can also stay informed about Good & Welfare news and post their own.

It's now easier than ever to stay informed about all of the exciting news at ICJA. If you have not already checked out the site, be sure to go to www.icja.org.

ANOTHER STRONG YEAR FOR THE ACES

According to Coach Howie Braun, varsity basketball coach, the Aces athletic program, while always strong, has become even more successful over the last few years. "The sports program has gone up the ladder to the upper echelon," says Coach Braun.

Last winter, under the leadership of Coach Braun and Assistant Coach Dov Pinchot, the Aces defeated top-seeded HANC in the championship game with a score of 69 to 52, securing Yeshiva University's 2008 Sarachek High School Tournament Championship, for the first time. The team finished second in the 2007 Sarachek tournament. "We are recognized as one of the best Jewish high school basketball programs in the country, out of about 85 other teams across North America," says Coach Braun.

Just before the unprecedented Aces basketball victory, the wrestling team, coached by Doug Klein, won the 2008 YU Henry Wittenberg Wrestling Invitational XIII. The competition was tight, with the lead changing hands a number of times, going into the final round with the Academy down by only a few points.

Coach Braun attributes the athletic teams' successes to several factors: the student athletes are more serious and the national wins by the basketball and wrestling teams have uplifted the athletic program as a whole. Coach Braun adds, "There is tremendous spirit and backing from the administration, which shows the athletes that the school cares about their success."

A testament to that commitment to athletics is last year's expansion of the program with two new competitive spring teams. Nearly 25 girls participated in the girls' soccer team, and 30 boys participated in the baseball program. Mr. Dave Koder, a well-known AYSO soccer coach, coached the girls' soccer team, and Mr. Jeremy Newman, a former semi-pro baseball player and ICJA gym teacher, coached the boys' baseball team.

A high percentage of the student body participates in sports, and many more join the games as fans. The wrestling team alone is made up of 40 boys, a significant portion of the male student body. "Our wrestling team is larger than schools ten times our size," says Coach Klein.

Fourteen girls play on the varsity basketball team and another 17 girls play on JV basketball team. Mark Wax, varsity girls coach and ICJA athletic director, says he expects the varsity team will play hard, smart and as a team throughout the season. He hopes they will win the Houston Tournament and the IHSA regionals, both in early February.

The athletic program is essential to many of the student athletes' Jewish educational experience. "Sports is what gives students a breather away from their studies, while still in a Jewish environment," says Coach Braun. He adds that the exercise and competition involved contributes to a healthier, better-rounded individual as well.



JV boys warm up for a game



The Varsity Girls' Basketball team.

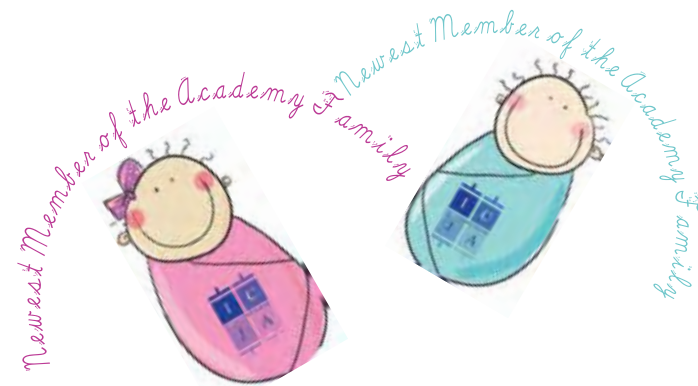


The Varsity Boys' Basketball team.



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MAZAL TOV!

We want to hear about your simchas!
Contact us at www.icja.org or email us at icjanews@icja.org to share your news. For new babies, we'll send you an adorable baby onesie gift.

See www.icja.org for more details.

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DO YOU KNOW WHO?

The first to correctly identify the alumni in the photo below will win an ICJA prize!
Send your answer to icjanews@icja.org.



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ICJA'S DR. EDWARD A. CROWN DINNER TO CELEBRATE SCHOLARSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

On Sunday, February 22, 2009, Ida Crown Jewish Academy will celebrate 67 years of educational excellence at this year's Dr. Edward A. Crown Scholarship Dinner. We invite you to join us in honoring Leslie and Tom Silverstein, Robin and Yossi Azaraf and Rabbi Zev M. Shandalov as we recognize their accomplishments and their dedication to the Academy.

Robin & Yossi Azaraf

For nearly a decade, Robin and Yossi Azaraf have been Ida Crown Jewish Academy parents and advocates. Three of their children, Tamar, Ariella and Natan, graduated from the Academy, while Shira is currently a junior. They recognize ICJA as the ideal place to integrate Torah and general studies, allowing students to become successful in a



variety of fields and roles. And they are committed to keeping ICJA strong, as it is the best institution to educate future generations to be committed Jews and positive, productive citizens. It is for these reasons that Robin and Yossi have played an integral role in ICJA's functions. As the immediate past chairman of the Society of Patrons, Yossi raised record-breaking funds. He is also a member of the Board of Directors. Both Yossi and Robin are actively involved in the Central Avenue Synagogue and the Chabad in Buffalo Grove, where they are known for their warmth and hospitality. The Azaraf's home is always open to guests. In addition, Yossi is a member of the *Chevra Kadisha* and committed to this *chesed shel emet*, The Academy is honored to present Robin and Yossi with *The Crown Award* to celebrate the values and principles of a family who has supported the Academy for many years.

Leslie & Tom Silverstein

Leslie and Tom Silverstein are known for their unwavering commitment to family and Jewish education. Tom has been active on the school boards of Hillel Torah and ICJA as well as the AYSH synagogue board in Northbrook. Leslie volunteers on various AYSH, Hillel Torah and ICJA school committees. Both Leslie and Tom graduated from the Academy in 1981, and their children are third generation Academy students. Their eldest daughter, Beth, currently at Midreshet Harova in Jerusalem, is a recent ICJA graduate, while their younger daughter, Ariella, is a sophomore at ICJA. Their youngest son, Joey, a future Academy student, is currently in fourth grade at Hillel Torah. Leslie's father, Jordon Ross, is an Academy graduate as well. The Academy is proud to present Leslie and Tom with *The Parents of the Year Award* for their continued efforts to guarantee that the Academy remains a premier center of Jewish learning for many years to come.



Rabbi Zev M. Shandalov

Rabbi Zev M. Shandalov is a renowned educator par excellence. He is a gifted and dedicated teacher, as well as a spiritual leader, who has taught Talmud at ICJA for five years. Rabbi Shandalov's father was a member of the first Academy graduating class in 1951 and his wife, Andy, and his eldest daughter, Daniella, are alumnae. Ayelet Shandalov is currently an ICJA senior, while the youngest Shandalov, Eliana, is at Arie Crown. Rabbi Shandalov's impact extends far beyond the classroom. He has been the rabbi of Congregation Kehilath Jacob Beth Samuel since May of 1999 and is currently Chairman of the Board of the Chicago Rabbinical Council, the co-chair of the Rabbinic Action Committee of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, a member of the advisory boards of Yeshivot Bnei Akiva, the Board of Education of Arie Crown Hebrew Day School, Hanna Sachs Bais Yaakov, and a member of the Rabbinical Council of America's Executive Board. As Rabbi Shandalov and his family prepare to make aliya in the summer of 2009, we are privileged and honored to name him the 2009 Educator of the Year.



SAVE THE DATE FOR FEBRUARY 22!

The Dr. Edward A. Crown Scholarship Dinner will take place on Sunday, February 22, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. This premier charitable event attracts almost 500 business, community and civic leaders and offers one of the finest silent auctions in Chicago.

For over 65 years, ICJA has provided thousands of students with an exemplary Jewish and general studies education. Currently, over half of the student body receive some scholarship assistance, totaling over \$1.2 million a year. Proceeds from the dinner and auction raise crucial funds for the ICJA Scholarship Fund, allowing ICJA to continue providing the best education to students from all religious backgrounds.

To place an ad, purchase tickets to the dinner or for more information, go to www.icja.org or contact Melissa Lipschultz, senior development associate, at (773) 973-1450 or mlipschultz@icja.org.



Find Out About Our
New Website at
www.icja.org
on Page 5!

ICJA IS PROUD TO WELCOME 100 NEW STUDENTS FOR THE 2008-2009 SCHOOL YEAR

The Academy was extremely proud to welcome 100 new students to ICJA this past fall, including freshman and upper classmen. This year's freshman class is one of the largest classes in recent Academy history.

While the Academy is renowned for academic excellence, part of what has drawn so many students to the school is the outstanding recruitment program for middle school students. For the past three years, the Academy has received a special grant from the AVI CHAI Foundation in New York to fund recruitment programs. The grant, aimed at increasing the number of students in Jewish middle schools who continue to Jewish high schools, has allowed the admissions department to develop creative and meaningful programs.

A fall program for girls included a luncheon with two guest speakers, followed by a trip to see *Cinderella* performed by the Chicago Women's Charity Players. That program was filled to capacity, with a waiting list of 25 girls. A program for boys featured lunch at Ken's Diner, a performance by the Chicago Boyz Acrobatic Team and a program about making tzitzit. Two more programs are scheduled for the spring.

"We're trying to attract students by having them associate Ida Crown with experiences that are both Jewishly purposeful and a whole lot of fun," says Rivkah Rabin, director of admissions who initiated and developed the programs.

Students attending ICJA recruitment programs have come from Hillel Torah, Arie Crown, Bais Yaakov, Akiba Schechter and Solomon Schechter. "By the time these students have to choose a high school, they may have attended three or more Ida Crown programs. Our hope is that they will be well informed about all that the Academy has to offer," says Rabbi Matanky.

In addition to these programs, students came with their middle schools to spend a morning at the Academy, and many attended Get to Know the Academy evenings at lay people's homes. Over 150 people attended a successful Open House program in the fall as well.

Seventh and eighth grade students will also have the opportunity to meet with Ida Crown Aces athletic team members and coaches for sports clinics in late February and March.

SMART BOARDS COME TO THREE ACADEMY CLASSROOMS

The Academy is thrilled to incorporate SMART Boards into the Judaic and general studies classrooms this year, thanks to a grant from Legacy Heritage Fund. SMART Boards are whiteboards that have touch sensitive screens to invite student participation in the learning process.

Mounted on the wall in three classrooms, the SMART Board is a large, interactive screen that works with a projector and a computer. The projector puts the computer's desktop image onto the whiteboard, which acts as both a monitor and an input device. Users can write on the whiteboard in digital ink or use a finger to control computer applications by pointing, clicking and dragging, just as with a desktop mouse. Buttons launch a popup keyboard and a right-click menu for more input options.

Teachers using the technology joined a training session in the beginning of the year. Since then, teachers and students have claimed increased interest in classroom presentations.

The equipment is just one of several technology-related opportunities available to ICJA students. In addition to a fully-equipped computer lab, videoconferencing equipment--given to the Academy by Yeshiva University--has allowed faculty and students to participate firsthand in lectures that take place anywhere in the world.

That the Academy was selected for these grant programs is just another example of how the school is one of the premier day schools in the country.



Junior Shani Abramowitz uses the SMART Board for her presentation in Rabbi Reuven Gross' Judaics class.

NEW YU TORAH MITZION ENHANCES ACADEMY, COMMUNITY

For a decade the Kollel Torah MiTzion of Chicago has been an incubator of Torah learning in Chicago, and now the kollel, with a new name and makeup, has an even greater potential to enhance and influence the community. Beginning this past Elul, the kollel was renamed YU Torah MiTzion Kollel of Chicago, representing the hybrid of young scholars from Yeshiva University and Israel's from Kollel Torah Mitzion. Ten families, many of which are new to Chicago, joined the kollel, under the leadership of Rosh Kollel Rabbi Reuven Brand and Executive Director Rabbi Phil Karesh.

Rabbi Brand says the Kollel is now positioned to have an even greater influence on the community. Fellows, who commit to two or three years in the Kollel, are no longer transients and many of them may stay on in Chicago. "These fellows are training to be future rabbis, educators and leaders. We're hoping they will become leaders in the Chicago community for the long term."

In addition, says Rabbi Brand, the Kollel is contributing to the Torah environment in many existing Chicago institutions. "Part of why we don't have our own building is because wherever we are, we are adding value. When we're in synagogues, we're adding value; when we're at the Academy, we're adding value."

For ICJA students, the advantage of having the Kollel in the building is tremendous. The students have multi-layered interactions with the fellows, including: *chavrutot*, *shiurim* and special high school programming. One of the most important interactions, says Rabbi Karesh, are the casual encounters that happen daily in the Academy hallways. "There are no kollelim with such young guys [most fellows are right out of college] engaged in the community, making the role model factor so unique. We are young enough to relate to the students and old enough to be their role models."

The Kollel programming for youth is geared at boys and girls irrespective of their school, but ICJA students are uniquely positioned to interact with the fellows. "We have grassroots connections to ICJA students, and walking in the hallways is a breeding ground for relationship building," says Rabbi Karesh.

Each week the kollel offers nearly 25 classes geared specifically to youth, women and to men, including: Torah Learning Network with *chavrutot* and Chinese dinner for students, Breakfast and Learn, Parsha and Pizza, *machshava*, Tanach, and Gemara.

For more information or to join the mailing list, email info@chicagotorah.org or go to www.chicagotorah.org.

ICJA WELCOMES 10 FAMILIES TO THE NEW YU TORAH MITZION KOLLEL OF CHICAGO

- RABBI REUVEN AND NECHAMA BRAND
- RABBI PHIL AND RACHIE (SCHECHTER)* KARESH
- RABBI NOAH AND TOVA BARON
- RABBI MENDEL AND ABBY BREITSTEIN
- RABBI AARON AND AYELET LEIBTAG
- RABBI DAVID AND TAL PRI-CHEN
- RABBI YOSEF AND BECKY (SCHECHTER)* SCHWARTZ
- RABBI AARON AND CHAYA (POUPKO)* SEGAL
- RABBI MICHAEL AND YAEL SHTIGLITZ
- RABBI IRA AND BATSHEVA WALLACH

*ACADEMY ALUMNAE

ICJA HOSTS SPEAKER OF THE ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MIKE MADIGAN

On Friday, Oct. 24, Ida Crown Jewish Academy was privileged to host Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives Michael Madigan. Rabbi Matanky led Speaker Madigan on a tour of the school to gain a sense of the outstanding education that Ida Crown -- representing the Orthodox Jewish community as a whole -- provides our students.

At the time of the visit, Rabbi Matanky said, "It is a privilege of the Academy to be able to host dignitaries from around the world. Historically, Ida Crown Jewish Academy has always been a showcase of the Jewish community. Speaker Madigan has been very supportive of the Jewish community, and we are so happy to have him here."

Speaker Madigan was visiting the Orthodox Jewish community on a trip organized by the Agudath Israel of Illinois. Other stops included Joan Dachs Bais Yaakov Elementary School and the Chicago Chesed Fund.

Rabbi Yehiel Kalish, Agudath Israel's National Director of

Government Affairs, was instrumental in bringing Speaker Madigan to West Rogers Park. "The Speaker has been involved for years in issues important to our community, including: mandated services funding, funding for uninsured youth and transportation funding. He heard of the explosive growth of our community and wanted to see for himself."

At the Academy, Speaker Madigan toured the school and also visited the technology lab, the gym and spoke to Senator Ira Silverstein's children who attend ICJA, Joey and Shelby Silverstein.

In addition to Speaker Madigan's visit, President-Elect Barack Obama, while still campaigning, mentioned ICJA during a call to rabbis. Following a conference call with Obama and 900 U.S. rabbis, a rabbi on the call told the JTA, "Obama showed an impressive 'depth of knowledge' -- at one point referring to the largest modern Orthodox high school in Chicago by name, the Ida Crown Academy, when discussing faith-based schools."



Rabbi Matanky leads Speaker Mike Madigan into the Academy, with Rabbi Yehiel Kalish, Adudath Israel's national director of government affairs, following.

ICJA STUDENTS RECEIVE TOP ACADEMIC HONORS

We are so proud of our many students who were recognized on a state and national level for their academic achievement.

National Merit Honors

Mazal tov to eight ICJA seniors who were recognized by the 2009 National Merit Scholarship Program. Shayna Otis, Sara Goldberger and Eric Silberman are National Merit Semifinalists. Talia Alter, Jacob Lewis, Sarina Miller, Natan Rosenberg and Netanela Weiss-Farcti are all Commended Students. We are so proud of you!

Semifinalist are among 16,000 academically talented high school seniors who are eligible to be Merit Scholarship winners, earning the Merit Scholar title. Finalists will be announced in the winter.

Illinois State Scholars

Congrats to the 23 seniors who were recognized as Illinois State Scholars: Talia Alter, Sarah Bernstein, Hallie Dobkin, Gabriella Elkaim, Joel Feigenbaum, Beni Glikberg, Sara Goldberger, Ari Gordon, Ariel Johnson, Tova Kadish, Sharon Layani, Jacob Lewis, Rafi Lowenstein, Elisheva Matanky, Sarina Miller, Tzvi Morgenstern, Seth Near, Shayna Otis, Natan Rosenberg, Scott Rosenfield, Alaina Rothstein, Eric Silberman and Shulamit Towb.

Winners rank in the top ten percent of the state's high school seniors. Students were selected based on SAT, ACT and/or class rank at the end of the junior year.

Senior Selected as Siemens Semifinalist

Congratulations to senior Eric (Ricky) Silberman on being selected as a Semifinalist in the 2008-09 Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology. With its high academic standards, rigorous judging process, and emphasis on authentic scientific research, the Siemens Competition is regarded by the most prestigious universities as the leading science and mathematics research-based competition for high school students.

Silberman submitted a research paper he co-wrote on the enzyme that affects the condition of the ends of yeast chromosomes. The research was part of an internship with the Legacy Heritage Internship for Young Scientists at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Submitting work to a rigorous competition was a requirement for the program.



ICJA boys learn with Rabbi Yosef Schwartz.



Sam Stelzer and Stanley Dayan learn with Rabbi Aaron Segal.



ICJA girls learn at Or Torah for Torah Leadership Network.



Eli Gold learns with Rabbi Yosef Schwartz in the ICJA Beit Midrash.

ALUMNI IN ISRAEL



Over 60 alumni gathered together with Rabbi Matanky over Thanksgiving in Israel. Ninety percent of last year's senior class are currently studying in Israel.

DONATE YOUR OLD JALOPY!

ICJA's new Vehicle Donation Program is in cooperation with North Shore Towing, Inc. Taxpayers who itemize deductions on their tax return can deduct, within limits, the fair market value of their contributions to ICJA. Please contact Michael London at mlondon@icja.org or call (773) 973.1450.



Middle school girls enjoy a lunch buffet and cookie decorating at Kirshner's Cuisine during "Princess for a Day with ICJA."



Hillel Torah Students join ICJA senior leaders for a snack before heading to classes at the Academy for the morning.



An Akiba Schechter student joins the Chicago Boyz Acrobatic Team performing for middle school boys in the ICJA gym.

MECHANECHET HELPS GIRLS TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

Throughout any afternoon in room 106, between 30 and 60 girls can be found studying, learning with *chavrutot*, baking cookies or just hanging out. But unlike a student lounge, the activity is staffed by Mrs. Elyse Litwack, ICJA's ninth grade *mechanechet*.

The *mechanechet* program is new for the Academy this year, developing out of a need for more girls' programming. "There are many families of girls at the Academy who want the caliber of education the school offers, but they also want more opportunities for their girls to socialize with one another," says Mrs. Litwack.

She added also that this year's ninth grade class is one the largest class in several years. The *mechanechet* program takes steps to ensure that these girls have a smooth transition to high school. "My room is neutral territory for girls coming from any grade school to hang out or to seek help with homework."

Mrs. Litwack always personally greets girls that enter the room, even if they've been there prior that day. "I try to welcome the girls when they come into the room so that they're noticed. They know that someone's looking out for them and someone cares," she says.

After promoting the *mechanechet* program through word-of-mouth and flyers, Mrs. Litwack says the girls are responding very well. In addition to the number of students who visit room 106 in the day, Mrs. Litwack's Parsha & Popcorn program on Thursday nights attracts 25 girls each week. The informal program takes place at different homes of ninth grade girls.

For Mrs. Litwack, who teaches fourth grade girls at Arie Crown in the mornings, the opportunity to work with ninth grade Academy girls is both a chance to do a job that she loves and a way to give back to ICJA. Mrs. Litwack graduated from the Academy in 1998 and says she had a fantastic high school experience. "Since I began teaching, I have wanted to repay the Academy for all that the school gave me."



Ninth grade girls bake cookies for Shabbat in Mrs. Litwack's room during their free period.



Mrs. Litwack (center) poses with ninth grade girls after Parsha & Popcorn.