

## MATH'S EYE VIEW:

FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES, EDUCATOR EMBUES PASSION IN STUDENTS

Enter the classroom of Mrs. Marlene Wasserstrom, and one finds a learning environment that is wholly her own. With materials and textbooks that she creates, her teaching style of mathematics is unlike any other.

"I teach looking at the world through mathematical eyes. I call that a 'math's eye-view' of the world," she says. "The world revolves, literally, around mathematics."

Mrs. Wasserstrom, who began teaching at ICJA in 1975, imparts her love of math to her students by engaging them in multiple facets.

She teaches problem solving, engages students in discussions and answers questions by asking students more questions. She discusses mathematics of the world and the history of the subject. She even reads to them about Plato and Archimedes and celebrates Pi Day. "I make math come alive. That's my intent. I don't want the kids to be afraid of it."

In her tenure at ICJA, Mrs. Wasserstrom estimates she has taught 2000-3000 students, many of whom she remembers. In some families, children, parents, aunts and uncles have all been in her classroom.

One aspect of her career that makes Mrs. Wasserstrom particularly proud is her work with the modified program. It's a program that she initiated at the Academy. "If I can take a student in modified classes and then have them become a surgeon, a CPA or an optometrist, then I know I've been successful. They were pigeon holed when they were younger, but I can take them and nurture and encourage them. I can make them feel good about themselves."

Mrs. Wasserstrom was honored for excellence in teaching at the March 25 Women's Luncheon. She commented then that while she is part of Academy history, receiving the teaching award was in no way a sign of her retirement. "The older you get, instead of being burnt out, which I'm not, there's love...I love being a part of academia."



Rabbi Matanky presents the Educational Excellence Award to Mrs. Marlene Wasserstrom.

## WOMEN'S LUNCHEON FEATURES BESTSELLING AUTHOR, HONORS WOMEN

Nearly 150 women gathered for the 2nd Annual ICJA Women's Luncheon on March 25 at the Bryn Mawr Country Club. The Academy honored Mrs. Marlene Wasserstrom, ICJA mathematics teacher for over 35 years, and presented Senior Leadership Awards to Ariel Besser, Hallie Dobkin, Sara Goldberger and Sarina Miller. Students were selected by their teachers for overall excellence. "We are so proud of you and look forward to celebrating all of your accomplishments and all of those of your peers in the class of 5769," said Rabbi Dr. Leonard A. Matanky, dean of ICJA.

In presenting the Educational Excellence Award to Mrs. Wasserstrom, Rabbi Matanky said, "For over 35 years at the Academy, you have devoted time and energy to the school, responding to the sacred call of our profession."

Mrs. Wasserstrom is known especially for all of her work with students who need extra academic help and for her work in developing new teaching methods. "When textbooks didn't meet her expectations, she used her God-given talent to write new ones," said Rabbi Matanky.

In her acceptance speech, Mrs. Wasserstrom said, "Not only do I love to teach, but I am in love with teaching." She joked that coincidentally, March is Women's History Month, and "at the Academy, I am history."

(Read more in the sidebar) Also featured at the luncheon was Dr. Aliza Lavie, bestselling author of *A Jewish Woman's Prayer Book*, in what was her only appearance in Chicago. Lavie's book is an unprecedented collection of prayers that commemorate every occasion and life cycle.

That she spoke for the Academy audience



Dr. Aliza Lavie, author of *A Jewish Woman's Prayer Book*, spoke about her work at the luncheon.



Sarina Miller, Sara Goldberger, Hallie Dobkin and Ariel Besser all received the Senior Leadership Award.

MANY THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS LUNCHEON SPONSORS

**DIAMOND:** LESLIE SILVERSTEIN, MARLENE AND HENRY WASSERSTROM.

**OPAL:** ROBIN BERMAN, JANE BEST, MARLEEN LIPSCHULTZ, BARBARA AND RICHARD ROSENFIELD, PONDY AND STEVEN ROSENFIELD.

**GOLD:** JUDY DANIELS, DEBRA DOBKIN, LAURIE HASTEN, CAROL LEVENBERG, AMY LOWENSTEIN, RUTH LODGE FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN, LYNN STEIN.

**PEARL:** SUSAN AMENT, ROBIN AZARAF, VIVIAN BLOCH, ROZZI BORNSTEIN, DR. SHERRI BRESSMAN, MARY FRIEDMAN, MICHELLE FRIEDMAN, SHARON GILMAN, DR. SHARON SHOLITON GOLDBERGER, CONNIE KADISH, DR. TAMMY KAPLAN, DEBRA KORMAN, MELISSA LIPSCHULTZ, MARSHA MAYEFSKY, JUDITH MILSTEIN, WENDY MARGOLIN, MARGARET MATANKY, DVORA NUSSBAM, MIKI SCHREIBER, LYNN SHAPIRO, BETHIA STRAUS, CINDY REDLICH, JOYCE RUBEN, ROSALIE AND SHELWIN SAMUELS, SUE STRULOWITZ.

is a testament to the fact that the school is a leading Modern Orthodox institution in Chicago.

In his introduction to Dr. Lavie, Rabbi Matanky said, "My first prayers were taught to me by my grandmother, which she learned from her grandmother. Thank you for your important contribution to Jewish prayer and Jewish creativity."

Lavie opened by explaining, "I had questions, and as I tell my kids, when you can't find an answer, go and do your own research. No one will do it for you. I didn't know in the start of my research that prayers would be the answer to my questions."

What started with questions, led to a bestselling book, published first in Hebrew and now in English. The prayer book recently won a National Jewish Book Award.

Through her research, Lavie was introduced to women like Fanny Nueda, the 19th Century author of a bestselling prayer book in German, and a Crypto-Jewish woman of Portugal. She traveled to many different countries, reading ancient Jewish prayer books and writings. Each prayer in the book includes a description about the author and the time period and circumstances in which the liturgy was written.

In a synagogue in Italy, Lavie heard a beautiful *mishberach* prayer written by a woman named Paula, daughter of Avraham from the end of the 13th Century. Proving the importance of her work, Lavie asked women at the luncheon, "So why do women in Italy deserve such a nice *mishberach*? And in Chicago, no?"



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### Educational Opportunities

Rabbi Dr. Leonard Matanky  
Dean  
(773) 973-1459 x113  
matanky@att.org

Mr. Daniel Harris,  
Associate Principal  
(773) 973-1450 x112  
dharris@icja.org

Dr. Jeremy Kahan,  
Assistant Principal, Curriculum  
and Instruction  
(773) 973-1450 x144  
jkahan@icja.org

Admissions  
Rivkah Rabin,  
Director of Admissions  
(773) 973-1450 x152  
rivkhar@icja.org

Development  
Carol Levenberg, CRSW  
Development Director  
(773) 973-1450 x115  
clevenberg@icja.org

Jane Best  
Project Campaign Director  
(773) 973-1450 x136  
jbest@icja.org

Melissa Lipschultz,  
Senior Development Associate  
(773) 973-1450 x133  
mlipschultz@icja.org

## 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](mailto:icjanews@icja.org).



### Ida Crown Jewish Academy

2828 West Pratt Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois 60645  
Phone: (773) 973-1450 Fax: (773) 973-6131  
[icja@icja.org](mailto:icja@icja.org)

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## POWER OF THE PEN

CHARLOTTE'S WEB LITERARY MAGAZINE PROVIDES INVALUABLE LESSONS

By Sarina Miller, ICJA senior, *Charlotte's Web* editor

Essays, papers, projects—these are perils for a high school student. But after two years of serving as editor in chief of *Charlotte's Web*, the literary magazine of Ida Crown Jewish Academy, I have realized that if the deadlines, instructions, and boundaries disappear, writing becomes an outlet that students treasure. *Charlotte's Web*, dedicated to the memory of ICJA's beloved English teacher Charlotte Rosenwald, is a precious opportunity for students to express themselves through writing and artwork.

Writing is a means of expression that does not require the immediate presence of a listening ear. The writer captures thoughts, feelings and emotions at the time that he or she experiences them. When students channel these experiences into words or images, they create snapshots of these moments that they can cherish forever. Compiling all of these pieces into a single magazine creates an album of thoughts that represents our student body.

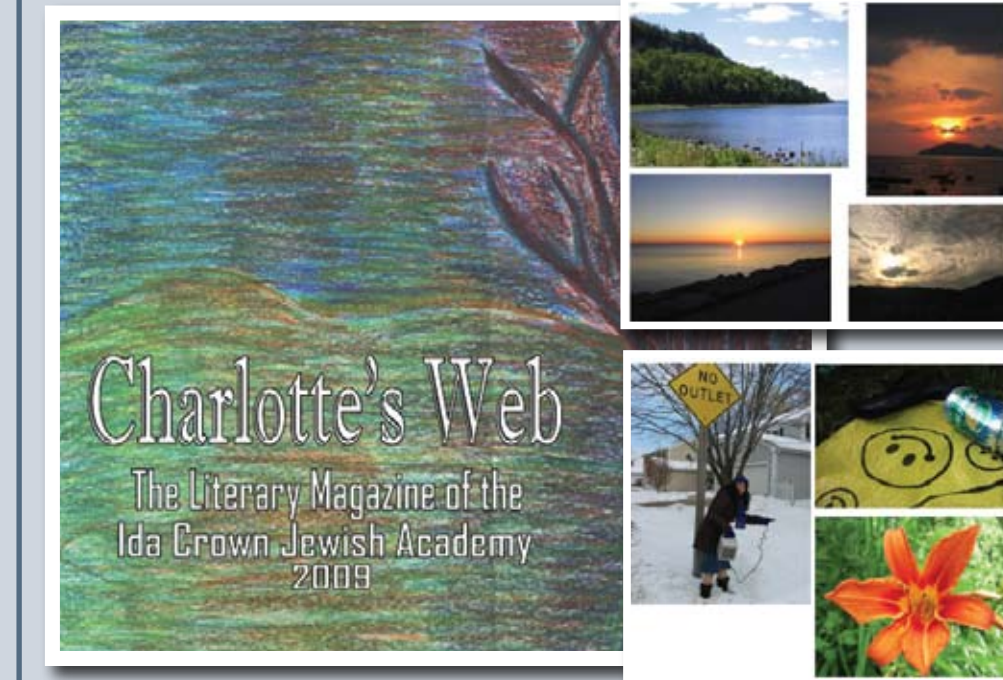
The beauty of *Charlotte's Web* is that students walk away from the magazine in awe of their classmates' talents. Students learn from each other's unique experiences, and see an artistic or creative

side to a student that was not apparent from a first meeting. After seeing the writing and artwork that a student chooses to publish, readers achieve a greater understanding of the student and his or her values and often view the author or artist in a new and more revered light.

As students decide what to submit to *Charlotte's Web*, many use their own creative pieces, while others adapt assignments that they completed for class. Nevertheless, no matter what the medium, students discover their own creative ability by publishing, and they realize that they have the power to produce something great.

I saw this happen in person to a student who submitted a poem last year. After she read her piece aloud at a showcasing of *Charlotte's Web* at Barnes and Noble of Evanston, a complete stranger approached her and complimented her writing. I still recall the glow on that student's face. When students see others enjoying their work, they gain tremendous self-confidence.

Over the course of my past two years leading the *Charlotte's Web* staff, I have learned much more than how to edit mountains of papers. I have seen the beauty of the pen and the paintbrush. I have seen the skill of the artists who make their thoughts come alive so that others can learn from their lessons. And I have seen the importance of opening a world of creativity to students who could once only see the imprisoning chains of writing.



*Charlotte's Web* is the award-winning literary and art publication of ICJA. Last year, the publication ranked "Excellent" in the 2008 Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines, a contest held annually by the National Council of Teachers of English. The program is open to all Illinois high schools, both public and private and, in 2008, received almost 500 submissions.

Funding for publishing the magazine each year is generously provided by the Susan and Joseph Ament Foundation, which supports arts programming at the Academy. *Charlotte's Web* was named in honor of beloved former ICJA English teacher Charlotte Rosenwald ז"ל, who inspired her students to push their own limits and to have confidence in their abilities as writers, artists and thinkers. The literary magazine honors Mrs. Rosenwald's memory by providing a forum for young writers and artists to shine. Open to ICJA students in all grades, the 2009 magazine showcases the work of over 50 participants. Editors in Chief were Sarina Miller and Zach Milunchick, and Mrs. Marsha Arons, sophomore English teacher, serves as faculty advisor.

## 2009 BONNIE DAYAN ז"ל FUND FOR THE ARTS

IDA CROWN JEWISH ACADEMY VISUAL ART COMPETITION

### 1ST PLACE:

Dafna Farkas – Senior (acrylic painting titled "Rebecca on the Camel")  
Chaia Wiznitzer – Junior (acrylic mixed media titled "Complicated Journey")  
Ariana Yudkowsky – Senior (photography titled "Hope")

### 2ND PLACE:

Shira Storz – Senior (printmaking Untitled)  
Hanah Brasch – Junior (watercolor titled "The Sky is Falling")  
Gabriella Elkaim – Senior (pencil drawing titled "The Baby")  
Yonina Sakols – Sophomore (pencil drawing titled "A Jewish Bride")  
Josh Glickman – Junior (oil pastels titled "Scream Away")

Mr. Harvey Saltzman of Triangle Printers established this competition in memory of his daughter, Bonnie Saltzman Dayan ז"ל, a former ICJA parent. View all artwork at [icja.org](http://icja.org).

## TRIBUTE CARDS



Send a meaningful gift to benefit the ICJA Scholarship Fund in honor of a loved one. Beautiful certificates

are available for simchas or to commemorate a loss. Go to [icja.org](http://icja.org) to purchase donation cards or contact [icja@icja.org](mailto:icja@icja.org)

## ACADEMY STUDENTS JOIN ISRAEL IN JOY, SORROW

This spring several moving programs connected ICJA students to Israel, both in joy and in sorrow.

In Adar, the Talmud's dictum that one who enters the Jewish month increases his joy was unparalleled for those who joined March's worldwide dedication of eight Torah scrolls in memory of the eight young boys killed one year ago at Jerusalem's renowned yeshiva, Mercaz HaRav.

It was a tremendous demonstration of Jewish unity, with thousands of yeshiva students, families and individuals joining the event at the Mercaz HaRav yeshiva. Thousands more joined via live webcast organized by B'lev Ehad. Locally, students and staff from ICJA, Hillel Torah and Arie Crown joined the thousands of other schools and institutions hooked up on the webcast.

For the local middle school and high school students who were able to participate in the event, the program was especially moving. Students and staff in the Academy gymnasium shed tears of joy and sorrow along with the participants in Jerusalem. The Chicago audience was able to recite Psalms and prayers in unison with those around the world, thanks to the live video feed.

In an event on Yom Yerushalayim, our YU Torah Mitzion Kollel of Chicago led Academy students in a yom ivun of learning. The program culminated in a video with interviews and live footage from the Six Day War. Prior to that, and on the heels of the historic opening of Skokie's Illinois

Holocaust Museum and Education Center, ICJA students and faculty gathered on Holocaust Memorial Day, Yom HaShoah v'HaGevurah, to hear from Mr. Walter Reed of the museum's speakers' bureau. Reed, of Wilmette, spent more than an hour describing his personal story, as part of the kinder transport to Belgium, and the story of the heroes he encountered.

On Yom HaZikaron students gathered to watch a moving film, *A Hero in Heaven*, about Michael Levin ה"י, a lone IDF soldier from Pennsylvania who made aliyah and was killed serving in Lebanon. Thousands attended his funeral, held on Tisha B'Av in 2006 on Har Herzl.

Following the film, Rabbi Michael Shtiglitz from our YU Torah Mitzion Kollel spoke about the meaning of Yom HaZikaron and made a siyum of mishnayot in memory of those killed serving in the IDF. "This day is about the sanctity of life. It's not by coincidence that the State of Israel chose to connect the day to Yom HaAtzmaut because the link is Am Yisrael chai," said Rabbi Shtiglitz.

The following day, on Yom HaAtzmaut, ICJA students and staff gathered for an Israeli meal, prepared by ICJA's gourmet student chefs, followed by simcha dancing. Academy alum, Abe Lapson ('05), addressed the group in his IDF uniform about his experience in the army. The joy of the seniors singing, "L'Shana HaBa B'Yerushalayim" at the end of the event was palpable.



Current senior, Daniel Lapson, appears with his brother, Abe Lapson ('05), who spoke to ICJA students about his army experience.



Academy students show off the cake they decorated for the cake competition on Yom HaAtzmaut. The winning team got to choose where in Israel to send tzedakah funds that had been raised that day.



Academy boys dance in the gym on Yom HaAtzmaut.

## ICJA EMBARKS ON SEVERAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

We at ICJA are very proud of three concurrent initiatives to evaluate and improve our academic institution.

This spring we received renewed accreditation from the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) after several years of submitting materials and an intense on-site evaluation.

NCA CASI provides nationally-recognized accreditation to encourage continuous school improvement focused on increasing student performance. To earn accreditation, schools must meet NCA CASI's high standards, be evaluated by a team of professionals from outside the school, and implement a continuous process of school improvement.

At the same time, nearly 80% of our parents participated in a parent survey as part of a PEJE (Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education) initiative to help us understand the perceived value of our school.

Thirty-six other Jewish day schools throughout the country also participated in surveys for their respective schools, representing 6500 families and making this the largest known survey of day school parents.

Staff and lay leaders then met with the principal consultant of Measuring Success, LLC, the independent company who administered the survey, to ensure that we fully understood the data so that we can move forward in making our school the best that we can possibly be.

Concurrently with this survey, we are working with lay leaders, under the chairmanship of Kevin Kirshenbaum, to develop a strategic plan for our school. This strategic plan (at right) will focus on issues related to curriculum, professional development, student achievement and fiscal viability, and will now be able to incorporate the information we have learned from this most valuable survey.

For more information on the strategic plan, email [icja@icja.org](mailto:icja@icja.org).

### 1 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- Develop a formalized, continuous improvement process that uses data to determine student performance and school effectiveness.
- Establish and codify expectations relative to what ICJA graduates (of varying capabilities and backgrounds) will know, be able to do and value.
- Continue to evaluate and improve the college guidance program.

### 2 FISCAL VIABILITY

- The ICJA Board of Directors will develop long-term financial plans covering a range of potential scenarios.
- Identify, recruit and train a large and motivated cadre of in-person solicitors.
- Develop a planned giving endowment campaign.
- Codify contact and other personal information about alumni in a searchable, relational database.

### 3 PROFESSIONAL FACULTY

- Benchmark the teaching qualifications and compensation of ICJA's faculty relative to peer schools.
- Define strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in key disciplines.
- Design a fully operational differentiated supervisory program for all teachers.

### 4 CURRICULUM

- Develop a fully articulated, aligned scope and sequence for each curriculum discipline in Judaic and general studies that incorporates content, skills and values.
- Develop a plan for implementing updated curricula for two disciplines per year.

## ACADEMY STUDENTS RECEIVE TOP ACADEMIC HONORS

### NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS

Congratulations to three seniors at Ida Crown Jewish Academy who were recognized by the 2009 National Merit Scholarship Program as Finalists (from left): Sara Goldberger, Eric Silberman and Shayna Otis, pictured with Dr. Jeremy Kahan.



In addition, Talia Alter, Jacob Lewis, Sarina Miller, Natan Rosenberg and Netanela Weiss-Faratici are all Commended Students.

### JERUSALEM SCIENCE CONTEST

Senior Gabi Elkaim won the Jerusalem Science Contest - Chidon HaMada HaYerushalmi - a program of the Walder Science

Laboratory and Learning Center of the Foundation for Learning and Development.

The Chidon HaMada HaYerushalmi is offered to all Jewish high school juniors and seniors attending Jewish high schools, with participants coming from 11 schools from across the US. Approximately 80 registrants across America took the qualifying exam in the fall, and 35 students completed the whole four-month curriculum of study.

Gabi, pictured with Rabbi Heschel Weiner, wins a full tuition scholarship to the Jerusalem College of Technology.

### NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

Congratulations to 28 ICJA students inducted into the National Honor Society: Talia Alter, Elliana Arons, Eran Ben-Simon, Ariel Besser, Tara Cooper, Stanley Dayan, Hallie Dobkin, Gabriella Elkaim, Rebecca Elkayam, Benjamin Gliksberg, Jonathan Goldberg, Sara Goldberger, Netanya Kapetansky, Ariella Kleinman, Daniel Lapson, Jessica Lerer, Sara LeVe, Jacob Lewis, Raphael Lowenstein, Sarina Miller, Shayna Otis, Sara Sayegh, Alaina Rothstein, Samuel Stelzer, Shulamit Towb, Ariana Yudkowsky, Joel Feigenbaum and Eric Silberman. (Officers are above)



## SENIOR GIRLS THRIVE IN HONORS TALMUD

Every morning at ICJA senior girls meet in Rabbi Matanky's office to "break their teeth" over the Gemara. They are there even when school is out, even after senior final exams and even when their peers are throwing Frisbees at the Lag BaOmer picnic. The dedicated bunch has completed Masechet Rosh Hashana for the Senior Girls Honors Talmud course, and in the process, they have competed in Yeshiva University's High School Girls Bekiut Program.

The competition, in its second year, includes over 140 girls participating from eight different high schools. Competitors complete one *daf* of Gemara per week to cover a masechet per year. There are five tests over the course of the year, each covering a number of pages. Students receive \$25 book store gift certificates for each test score above 75, plus an additional \$25 gift certificate for a score above 75 on all five tests. Three overall grand prizewinners receive \$5000, \$2500 and \$1000.

"The excitement of covering ground and different concepts as well as finishing a complete masechta should hopefully motivate the students to expand their horizons and continue to grow in their learning," says David Hellman of YU.

While the competition is a requirement of the ICJA course, it's not the goal. "We cover more in the class than what is on the tests, such as the Rishonim and the logic of the Gemara. This feels like a supplement to the class," says Shayna Otis who is taking the senior-level Talmud course for the second year. "Rabbi Matanky has made us overly prepared for the exams."

Rabbi Matanky, who has taught for more than 30 years, teaches entirely in Hebrew, which can be especially challenging since the Gemara is in Aramaic. "Nothing in Gemara next year will compare to this course," predicts senior Navah Weissberg.

Weissberg goes on to say, "This has been my most interesting class at the Academy. The Gemara is more logic based than fact based, like in other courses."

For Otis, the course helped her develop critical thinking skills that are applicable in any subject. "I took a mathematics proof class at Northwestern University this year, and [the Gemara] class prepared me for it. I think more critically now."

The class has offered the girls life lessons as well. As Otis says, "It teaches us to think like a Jew, the way the rabbis thought."

## CONGRATS CLASS OF 2009!



We wish you continued success as you head to the finest programs in Israel, including:

Aterez, Bar Ilan, Bnot Torah, Ein HaNatziv, Emunah V'Omanut, Eretz HaTzvi, HaKotel, Har Etzion, Hebrew U., Leadership Yeshiva Academy, Lev HaTorah, Machon Maayan, Machon Tal, Michlalah, Michlelet Esther, MMY, Midreshet AMIT, HaRova, Midreshet Lindenbaum, Midreshet Moriah, Yeud, Migdal Oz, Netiv Aryeh, Nishmat, Orayta, Or David, Reishit, Shaalavim, Mevaseret Zion, Shvilei HaTorah, Tiferet and Tafnit.

And to the finest universities, including:

Barnard, Berkley, Binghamton, Boston University, Brandeis, Columbia College, Cornell University, Emory, George Washington, HTC, Hofstra, Loyola, Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State, Northwestern, NYU, OSU, Penn, Rutgers, Stern, Syracuse, UCLA, Touru, U of I, UMass, Wash U., Wisconsin, Yale and YU.



Senior Girls Honors Talmud meets daily in Rabbi Matanky's office, completing an entire masechta over the school year.



The girls' Talmud course meets at Lerner Park during the ICJA Lag BaOmer picnic.

## ICJA YEARS LEAD ALUM TO ISRAEL ADVOCACY

Zach Novetsky (class of 2005), now in his final year at New York University, was chosen this past spring as one of three U.S. student representatives at "Durban II"--the United Nations' 2009 World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Other Intolerance in Geneva. He joined the European Union of Jewish Student's delegation there and wrote a blog for the Jerusalem Post as the event unfolded.

In late June Zach is headed to the Vatican for a meeting on Catholic-Jewish relations as a student representative of the Orthodox Union. On campus, he is involved in Muslim-Jewish interfaith activities with Hillel, and is the 2009 Winner of the PANIM: Aaron Goldman Young Jewish Activist Award. In an interview with ICJA, Zach describes his Israel advocacy work.

*Q: What drives you to advocate for Israel?*

*A:* It was on the March of the Living that I first felt a strong connection with Judaism in the context of Israel. Rabbi Matanky had pushed me to go, and there my overwhelming feeling was anger. In my eyes, the fact that Israel didn't exist at the time of the Holocaust was the reason it happened. Seeing so much destruction and then going to Israel and seeing its beauty--the contrast was astonishing.

I had a good relationship with Rabbi Matanky after the March, which is why I headed to Eretz HaTzvi in Israel after graduation. He was always there to remind me that Ida Crown is a five-year program. Israel is essential for every Jew, especially for Ida Crown graduates. That year I read during all of my free time. It was a year of intellectual growth.

*Q: What kind of Israel advocacy do you do on campus?*

*A:* In my freshman year at NYU, I went on a Muslim-Jewish spring break trip to rebuild homes in New Orleans. I had strong feelings toward the Muslim community but had never actually spoken to anyone Muslim. That's when I began doing a lot of interfaith work.

I've developed dialogue programming for Jewish and Muslim students. We meet in small groups to discuss interests and religion, devoid of politics.

On campus I see left wing students who are more hard core against Israel than the Palestinians themselves. My goal is to combat that rise because it is really anti-Semitism and not just anti-Israel. I'm friends with a group of students who are all equally passionate about Israel. We do "chalking" on campus floors and counter protests to anti-Israel rallies. I'm hoping to develop a nationwide student activist group that would emulate the European Union of Jewish Students. My goal is to find 10 creative and proactive students per campus who would combat anti-Israel messages on campuses.

*Q: What was it like to attend the UN World Conference on Racism?*

*A:* I was one of three students there to represent the voice of American Jewish students. We protested UN inefficiencies and [Iran's President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad, who actually spoke there. The United States boycotted the conference, but we felt it was important to have Jewish student representatives.

At one point we were in the NGO room along with people like Alan Dershowitz and Elie Weisel. During Ahmadinejad's speech, the translation devices weren't working, and Alan Dershowitz stood up to protest. I thought he would be arrested, but all of a sudden some students dressed as clowns burst in. We were all cheering and then 200 of us walked out spontaneously. All of my feelings of Jewish unity and Jewish activism cohered at that moment.

Read more about Zach's experience in Geneva at [jpost.com](http://jpost.com).



Zach is pictured with Elie Wiesel at the UN World Conference on Racism.



Zach is pictured with Irwin Cotler, a Member of Parliament in Canada.



A candlelight vigil on Yom HaShoah in Geneva.

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JUDITH AND ALAN SIEFLER  
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MARLENE AND MORTON SKOLNIK  
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ETHEL AND LESTER SUTKER  
RIVA AND JOE WEISSBROT  
LINDA AND STANLEY WEISSBROT  
TINA AND JOE WOLF  
GAIL AND MARTIN ZIMMERMAN