No Resting on Laurels

"...And Ya’akov settled in the land (in which) his fathers had settled.” With these words, the Torah begins the story of the sale of Yosef and the subsequent events. Certainly a troubling time in the life of Ya’akov. In fact, Rashi quotes Chazal that Ya’akov wanted to live the remainder of his life in peace and tranquility; yet Hashem saw fit to bring upon him a time of unprecedented anguish.

The lesson that the Torah is teaching us is the same as that which is referred to at the beginning of Parshas Bechukosai. There, Rashi states: "וְיָשָׁמֶר תְּחִכָּת אֲבֹרֶךְ מָמוּר אָבוֹךְ - You should exert yourself in Torah." Torah and mitzvos are not a ‘sit-back-and-enjoy-the-show’ type of activity. They require toil and effort. They require commitment and constant checking.

The following behaviour has been described about many great people, however, witnessing this first hand made an even greater impression on me. One of my Roshei Yeshiva, Rav Reuven Gershonowitz, was always to be found in the Beis Hamidrash. While he did not give a formal class, he was always available for consultation. Throughout the hours of his learning, his back never touched the chair he was sitting on; he never slouched nor even rested against the back of the chair. He was always involved in Torah, applying all of his efforts to master whatever subject he was studying.

This is how we must also view our Torah and mitzvos experience. Especially when many of us will be away from home, it is even more crucial to make the extra effort needed to fix times for some learning, to get to minyan, and in general to make sure our Torah stays alive, vibrant and real.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Eleazar Durden
Judaic Studies Principal

MAZAL TOV

Mazal Tov to Rabbi Lipa and Dena Dubrawsky on the engagement of their daughter Mushky to Rabbi Berri Spitezki in New York. Mushky is a VHA alumni and former staff member. Mazal Tov as well to the entire extended family.

Rabbi Estrin’s Yiddle Riddles

When I stood for judgment,
I was one, but I was three.
The one who sat in judgment
Had lost two because of me.
In the end I held my tongue,
I said, “I’m better off dead”.
But the judge stood up in bravery
And took the blame instead.
Who am I, and who was the judge?
Log on to our website at www.vhebrewacademy.com to find the answer to the Yiddle Riddle.
THANK YOU
Thank you to Leah Estrin, Jim Horvath and Rabbi Yechiel Oirechman for driving on the Grade 4 field trip to the Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre.
Thank you to Leah Estrin and Shifra Feigelstock for their hard work evaluating the Judaic books in our library. Thanks as well to Andrea and Nolan Krombein for all their efforts in organizing our library.
Thank you to Morah Estarisa for organizing the visit of the Fire Safety House at VHA this week for students in Kindergarten to Grade 5.
Thank you to Rachel Sacks, Menachem Zhorntsky, Shoshana Freedman and Morah Brody for driving on the Preschool 4 field trip to Louis Brier.

CHANUKAH ARTWORK CONTEST
Congratulations to the following students who are winners in the Jewish Independent Chanukah Artwork Contest:

VHA FAMILY SHABBATON
BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND
Please reserve February 10th-11th, 2012 for a VHA Family Shabbaton. Please see the attached flyer for more information.

SAFEWAY CARDS ARE BACK
To purchase cards, please contact Emily or Irwin Vinegar at 604-734-3996 or Robyn Blicker at 604-224-1862. A limited number of cards are also available in the office. This is a great way to support VHA at no cost to you.

CHANUKAH TREATS
Thank you to the following families for sponsoring the special Chanukah Jelly Donut treats this week:
• Adele and Jose Heffes and family, Hatzlacha Ubracha, with blessings for success for their family and for VHA.
• Yaacov and Ronit Orzech and family in memory of Yaacov’s father, Yechezkel Orzech, z”l.

JEWISH READS
Our goal to buy 9 new Jewish books for our school by the end of December is well on its way. Thank you to Rabbi Eleazar and Shulamis Durden and to Tammy and Jim Horvath for purchasing a book for our “Light Up Our Library Campaign”. Even though school will be closed for the remainder of December, our campaign will continue. Books will be plated with your name and a dedication you choose. Help us light up our library by purchasing a book for $20. Please contact Morah Brody at MorahBrody@gmail.com. Thank you.
Your PTA

Avot Ubanim is Saturday, 6:15 p.m. at Beth Hamidrash
This is the last session until we return to school in January.

Preschool registration is now open for September 2012. Please contact the school office for further information. We have a limited number of spaces available for the 2012-2013 school year.

Please mark your calendar
January 2012
2nd Statutory Holiday (school closed)
3rd School Reopens
5th Lice Check
10th Hot Lunch
10th Kindergarten and Grade 6 Immunizations
10th Non-Uniform Day
17th Assembly at 11:00 a.m. led by Grade 4
18th Pro-D Session for Staff – Early Dismissal at 2:00 p.m.
29th Family Photo Day
Save the date: February 10-11, 2012 for the annual VHA Shabbaton, in partnership with Congregation Schara Tzedek.