

LOOK

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LOOKSTEIN CENTER
FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

Hogwarts, Harvard and Hebrew School – and Facebook???

On January 4-6, 2008, The Lookstein Center partnered with The Shul of Bal Harbour in a creative, enlightening and very informative weekend of lectures, activities and interactive learning entitled *Hogwarts, Harvard, Hebrew School*.

With a byline *Jewish Education in the 21st Century*, the topics discussed centered around what is at the heart of Jewish education in the 21st century, the values schools should be pushing, and why the key word today is "Jewish education" and not necessarily just "Judaism."

Presenters included Jeffrey R. Woolf, a senior lecturer at Bar-Ilan University, as well as the Lookstein Center's own Shalom Berger, Esther Feldman and Stuart Zweiter. The Saturday night *Evening of Comedy and Edutainment* was opened by Israeli comedian Yisrael Campbell who described his journey from American Christian to Orthodox Jew living in Jerusalem – and followed by a discussion of the broader themes of education and belief in today's world.



Saturday night edutainment program

The Sunday agenda explored issues concerning exposure to the Internet and how adults can cope in the new world so easily embraced by modern youth. Most participants admitted to being concerned, perhaps even threatened, about kids' safety when it comes to Internet exposure. But as Esther Feldman of the Center summarized, "The virtual world of today is no different than the playground or school yard of yesterday. Parents just need to know who their kids are hanging out with. And just remember," she continued, "if a child were caught with a questionable book or magazine, no parent would forbid the child from reading altogether – with the same reasoning, if a child does not behave prudently or carefully on the Web, there is no justification for forbidding all Internet use."

Educators, teachers, and lay people who have questions and/or concerns regarding technology and 21st century Jewish education are welcome to post on *Lookjed*, The Lookstein Center's online community, by writing to lookjed@mail.biu.ac.il.

Ninth Annual Principals' Program Mid-winter Seminar Welcomes Second Year Participants

On February 24-26, 2008, a highly select group of seventeen principals hailing from top Jewish day schools in the United States and Canada participated in the mid-winter component of the Principals' Program, made possible thanks to the Avi Chai Foundation. The group had previously convened for ten days in July 2007 at The Lookstein Center's Ramat Gan base for the summer seminar.

This year, the group was joined by three second-year participants who decided to further extend their action research – bringing about even greater change in their schools.

The principals presented their action research projects that began in the summer (or last year, in the case of second year participants) and have been developing all school year, with the guidance of mentors provided by The Lookstein Center.



Participants discussing their projects at the Florida component of the Principals' Program

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From the Director



I just returned from a visit to the United States and wanted to share two experiences with you. The first reflected what we may call one of the more challenging sides of Jewish education – the never ending concern about how to recruit and retain quality people in the field; the other was a celebration of some of the extraordinary talent that is currently serving in the field.

My first experience was at a presentation of a study about Jewish day and supplementary school educators, entitled *Educators In Jewish Schools Study (EJSS)*. It provided some data about the educators who teach in Jewish schools, what led them to careers in Jewish education, how they perceive their current positions, and what factors influence their decisions to remain in the field. The data essentially confirmed much of what is already known about the high level of motivation of the Jewish educators who responded to the study, but the sorry state of serious professional development for them. It suggested yet again that the community must focus on recruiting and retaining many more talented quality people into the field.

The second experience was The Lookstein Center's mid-winter Principals' Program seminar (featured in this newsletter). The quality of the dialogue and the extraordinarily high level of the participants stood in marked contrast to the discussions that took place surrounding the study. The seminar was uplifting and concretized what is vibrant and spirited in Jewish education – the incredible potential that exists and can be realized by outstanding people who enter the field and continue to learn and engage in ongoing professional development. The seminar sent a clear message that Jewish education can be a very serious profession and provide for a meaningful and satisfying career. The Principals Program is one of the many Lookstein Center programs (several of which are described in this newsletter) that contribute towards enhancing and enriching the work of the Jewish educator.

A serious and reputable profession is characterized by its ability to maintain high standards, set rigorous criteria for those seeking to enter, to insure that those standards continue to be met – and to make sure that members of the profession are not allowed to stagnate. We must honestly ask ourselves, how does Jewish education measure up to these criteria?

To achieve this kind of standard we all must work to raise awareness in the community that professional development is as important as creating schools, and that raising the caliber and quality of Jewish educators is the most effective tool in effecting change in the system. The directors of the study hope that their work will lead to energizing the community in this direction. The study will have great value if it can result in such an effort. Working together towards these goals will go a long way in attracting more high quality people into the field.

Bivrakha,

Stuart Zweiter, Director

PrinSem *(continued from front page)*

This winter, the seminar focused on the theme How to Build Staff Collaboration (working with parents and boards, and building and spreading an educational vision). The participants had the unique opportunity and privilege to learn from Lisa Lahey, Ed.D., associate director of the Change Leadership Group at the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. One of Dr. Lahey's specialties is "why people don't change" and she led the participants in thinking constructively about their schools and how to make positive change.

More information about The Lookstein Center Principals' Program (as well as an online application) can be found at <http://www.lookstein.org/principals1.php>, or contact Zvi Grumet the associate director of the program, directly, at zvi@lookstein.org.

OUR MISSION

The Lookstein Center for Jewish Education of the School of Education at Bar-Ilan University is a service and research center deeply committed to enhancing the quality of Jewish education in the Diaspora. The Center seeks to develop and facilitate programs and projects that reflect, encourage, and foster ongoing growth and learning for the Jewish educator. The Center's work is driven and inspired by the belief that there is much to be gained by creating frameworks that nurture and support the symbiosis between:

- The rich educational and spiritual resources in Israel and the particular experience of the Diaspora
- Educators from the broad range of the Jewish community
- The worlds of hands-on practice and Jewish and general theory

As technology advances and becomes easier to attain, making it easier for us to offer a broad range of resources to our growing community of Jewish educators - we invite you to join us (or renew your membership if it has lapsed).

Membership packages are offered to individuals, companies, organizations and schools - and when a school joins, all of the school's educators automatically become members too.

If you have read this newsletter, or even just skimmed it, you are obviously interested in Jewish education and concerned about its future. So join us now, and partner with us, in our common goal - helping Jewish education and in particular, the Jewish educator.

www.lookstein.org/joinus

Meet our Mentors: An Interview with Shana Harris

Shana Harris has been our colleague for many years. Most recently, she has shared her experience with us by mentoring Principals' Program participants. She agreed to be interviewed for this issue of *Look*.

Q. Tell us a bit about yourself

I was born and educated in South Africa and came to Bialik Hebrew Day School as vice principal in 1986 when I immigrated to Canada from South Africa with my husband and two sons. Before I came to Canada, I was a Latin and English teacher as well as vice principal in Johannesburg. I was also coordinator of general studies at the South African Board of Jewish Education. After being principal of general studies at Bialik for six years, I am now proud to be Bialik's head of school.



Shana Harris

Q. How did you become acquainted with The Lookstein Center?

I had not had the privilege of a Jewish Day School education as a child. I attended daily heder classes at our synagogue in the small town of Witbank (about 100 miles from Johannesburg). As a general studies principal, I wanted to become more involved in the Jewish aspects of day school education, and I learned about the Lookstein Principals' Program. I participated in my first Lookstein program in the summer of 2000, and have continued to develop my relationship with Lookstein ever since. I have been a mentor for the past three years.

Q. To which program do you feel most connected?

I thoroughly enjoyed Part I and II of the original Principals' Seminar, and continued to maintain a relationship with the Lookstein Center, participating in subsequent programs. I value being a mentor, as it allows me to continue to learn as I work with the Lookstein faculty. I also value the opportunity to mentor colleagues at various schools as they work through their action research projects.

Q. What have you learned from your work with the Center? How have you grown personally from this relationship?

I have learned about my own leadership style, and who I want to be as a leader who can influence the growth and development of students and staff in a Jewish Day School. I have learned, and continue to learn, about how to bring about constructive change in a school environment. I have also learned the importance and value of networking with other leaders and educators who are dedicated to Jewish education.

Q. How would you like to see the world of Jewish education 50 years from now?

I would like to see Jewish Education in the hands of a wealth of talented, committed and knowledgeable educators. I would like to see Jewish Day Schools of excellence with rich programming that will attract 100% of Jewish students to want to be in Jewish Day Schools. I would like to see Jewish Day Schools that have the human and financial resources to meet the learning needs of every Jewish child.

Q. What special message would you like to send to our readers?

If you have not yet participated in the Principals' Program, and are looking for an opportunity to grow as an educator, apply for this program. If you have already participated in a program, I hope that you are using the knowledge and skills that you learned.

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The Lookstein Center Introduces Its New Logo

With this issue of *Look*, The Lookstein Center is pleased to launch its new logo – to appear from now on in all official publications, correspondences and documents.

After much consideration, the Center decided to choose this logo for its symbolism: the letter *lamed* is at the core of The Lookstein Center's activities. Not only does "Lookstein" begin with the letter *lamed*, but the meaning of the root *lamed mem dalet* is "to learn" – our mission. Words that begin with the letter *lamed* are also considered "action words" – in Hebrew, a word that begins with this letter has a dynamic connotation. To network. To learn. To grow.

Lamed is also symbolic for the Center, as it completes its 30th year of activity (the numerical equivalent of the letter *lamed* is thirty) and embarks on its fourth decade of growth.

Finally, we chose the teal heavenly tone to symbolize the limitless possibilities that can be found in the field of Jewish education.

With the launch of the new logo, the Center hopes to embark on new activities and relationships, and strengthen existing ones.



ELAI is On Its Way

The Educational Leadership Advancement Initiative (ELAI) has gone full throttle since being introduced in the Spring 2007 issue of *Look*.

The Lookstein Center and the UJA-Federation of New York recently launched a new initiative to train promising teachers and administrators in New York area schools to take on larger leadership roles in Jewish Day Schools.

The ELAI program is designed for Jewish education professionals (such as teachers, department chairs, assistant principals, guidance personnel) who would like to increase their impact on their schools. The program that will take place from summer 2008 to summer 2009 will include local retreats, monthly workshops, visits to other schools, a week-long retreat in Israel and mentoring for a school-based project.

The program would like to introduce its new director, Mrs. Shonny Solow, who brings decades of experience as an educator and program director. Since September, numerous consultations both at the UJA-Federation of NY offices as well as at Lookstein's base in Israel, have been held with dozens of key educators, consultants and school leaders. The program's website is being launched – and your school should have received a brochure by now (if you are in the NY city region). The program is fully funded by the UJA Federation of New York and educators from Jewish day schools in New York City, Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk are warmly encouraged to apply.

"As one who visits Jewish day schools frequently, I am often struck by the untapped talent of our young teachers and administrators. I look forward to helping these rising stars reach their leadership potential," said Shonny.

For more information, see <http://www.lookstein.org/elai/> or contact Shonny at shonny@lookstein.org.



Shonny Solow

The Lookstein Center Salutes Its Donors and Partners

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Lookstein Center Delegates Participate in 2007-8 Jewish Education Conferences

The Lookstein Center's main offices may be located at Bar-Ilan University, situated in Ramat Gan, Israel – but this does not get in the way of the Center's active participation in North American Jewish education conferences.

On November 6, 2007 the Center sent delegates to the New Jersey Association of Jewish Day Schools (NJAJDS) conference that was held at the Kushner Academy in Livingston, NJ. As conference exhibitors, Chana German, Esther Feldman and Deanna Levy answered questions regarding Lookstein activities, distributed and sold books and journals published by the Center, and signed up new members. Teachers who attended the conference approached Lookstein staff with detailed questions regarding programming, and walked away with materials that would help their professional development.



Deanna Levy at the NJAJDS conference in November

Later, in January, Esther Feldman had the privilege to represent The Lookstein Center, an associate member of RAVSAK, at the 21st Annual RAVSAK Leadership Conference in Houston. Esther took advantage of the four-day conference to mingle with other educators, share ideas, and spread information regarding Lookstein Center programs. In addition, the Center was pleased to include a "packet" in the RAVSAK bag distributed to all participants. It included, among other things, a copy of the Center journal, *Jewish Educational Leadership*.

In April, Chana German and Esther Feldman look forward to joining the Center's colleagues, partners, community of members (PEJE is a member organization of The Lookstein Center), and friends – at the 2008 PEJE Assembly for Jewish Day School Education to be held in Boston. In addition to participating in the Assembly, considered the largest conference for Jewish educators, The Lookstein Center will also have an exhibition table at The LINC (the Assembly's place for Learning, Interacting, Networking, and Collaborating). The Center personally invites you to stop by our table for a chat.

If you are aware of any other conferences you feel The Lookstein Center should attend, or might be interested in attending, contact alissa@lookstein.org.

THE RABBI DR. JOSEPH H. LOOKSTEIN CENTER FOR JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE DIASPORA

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