

## The NC Hebrew Academy Is A Rich Experience

By Eleanor Weinglass, Academy Director

*This is from Mrs. Weinglass's Yom Kippur speech.*

"Educate a child when he is young, and he will not depart from it" we learn in Proverbs. We all, to borrow jargon from contemporary psychology, follow tapes of messages, some positive and some negative, that were imprinted within us long ago. There is no question that we, as parents, are making tapes for our children. The question is: What kind of tapes are we making?

Many of us come from an environment in which we were able to absorb a sense of Jewish identity, even without an intensive Jewish education. It was in the aroma of the delicatessens; it was in the accents and shtetl stories of parents and grandparents. And perhaps it was in seeing people walk to the synagogue as a normal course of life. Today we are largely acting out the behaviors we observed or participated in as children, the habits we unconsciously learned.

Consider how much energy it takes for a parent to teach a child to clean his room. Consider also how much effort and time it takes to teach a child to write neatly or speak politely...

Is it not the same for Jewish activities and Jewish habits? "The boy is the father of the man"...What the child does now, he will do later...If children's early associations with Judaism are satisfying, and if children spend a considerable amount of time in a Jewish environment, the more likely they will continue this behavior as adults.

A strong habit is powerful. Bad habits, like smoking, excessive drinking, or sloppiness, are hard to break. A good habit that is instilled will also be difficult to change.

As exposure to Jewish experiences becomes less intense in each successive generation, we must find a way to compensate.

Consider how being in a warm, caring Jewish environment on a daily basis, practicing our customs every day, can make the tapes your children will eventually play back. Picture life in a school where behaving Jewishly is normal...where baking a Rosh Hashanah honey cake becomes a lesson in math and reading and High Holiday customs...where fourth graders learn more world geography and history, as they follow their forefathers in the diaspora, than many teenagers...where second graders can read stories from the Torah in Hebrew...where children go home able to lead Passover seders.

I'm referring, of course, to Charlotte's Hebrew Academy. And the beautiful part of this rich experience is that children

can have it without compromising their secular education. Academy children, in fact, from kindergarten through sixth grade, benefit from a more sophisticated education than their peers in other schools. Best of all, they enjoy being there.

The children at the Academy are the beneficiaries of individual instruction and are able to progress at their own pace. Our students usually do exceedingly well in national exams such as the California Achievement Test. They have a solid introduction in the Hebrew language, learn about Jewish history, and develop pride in their Jewish heritage. Our graduates do well in both public and private schools.

We believe that our children are very lucky to have the opportunity to go to the Hebrew Academy. Indeed, many of the children's parents tell us they wish they had been able to attend a school such as the Academy when they were children.

The English novelist, John Galsworthy, once stated: "If you do not think about the future, you cannot have one." In the prayer that follows the Shema Yisrael, the Veahavta, we say: V'shinantem l'vanecha...and you will teach them unto your children...That is what we are commanded to do; that is our responsibility.

Create the tapes you want played back...enrich your child's life with a strong and vibrant Jewish experience...create the habits.



In the future Hebrew Academy classrooms in Blumenthal Jewish Educational Building. Ruth Goldberg (L) and Carol Waldman, cochairs Academy Recruitment.

## Hebrew Academy News

### Academy Seeks The Best Curriculum

By Arny Pickholtz

Each year since 1976, the Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education has attracted thousands of Jewish educators. This year's event was held in Chicago where staff from the Hebrew Academy traveled to experience the latest in Jewish teaching methodologies, alternative life patterns, textbooks, media materials and teacher training materials.

Ziva London, Hebrew Education Instructor at the Academy, who attended, states that, "At this conference, we learned how to make a school look like a Jewish school. I attended classes on how to organize celebrations using drama, music and creative writing, and I have brought back ideas and methods to explore the delicate relationship between a child's Jewish education, parental participation and the school environment. A good example is the Pesach seder. I have brought back a plan and materials to create a seder which resembles, in form, a game of monopoly. The children will love to play and learn at the same time."

The CAGE organization inventories a total range of Jewish curricula from nursery to adult education. Judaic and Hebrew studies can be accessed with a call to the CAGE curriculum bank which mails the materials to member organizations. The University

of Chicago also offers college credit for the study of CAGE curriculum.

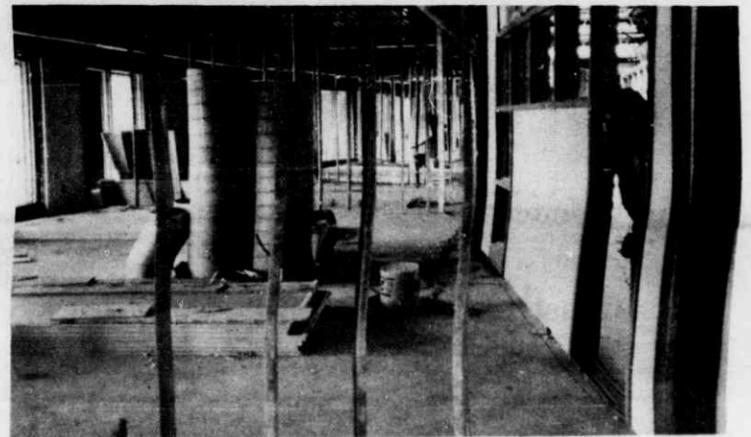
Ziva adds, "Whether it is the creation of stories or games or just learning new Jewish songs, the teaching and learning methodologies I explored emphasized the child's feelings of accomplishment, individualization of learning experiences and creativity. Of course, we teach Hebrew as a second language and one of the most valuable

tools displayed at the conference was a single language curriculum which is designed to be used for beginners in 1st grade, progressing all the way through 7th. This is a tremendous improvement toward maintaining quality and consistency in our approach to teaching Hebrew."

Mrs. London teaches grades 2 through 5. The conference was attended by educators and administrators from the USA, Canada and Europe.



Eleanor Weinglass, Academy Director, at Academy corridor of educational building.



Mrs. Weinglass looking out from a future Academy classroom.

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