

Dear Parents

I write in the midst of Chanukah, a festival which some may argue has assumed a greater profile in recent decades than it perhaps deserves in terms of religious significance. Quite apart from any thematic overlap to Christmas, this year for the first time since 1888 the first night coincided in the USA with Thanksgiving. (If you missed it, there's another chance to experience this coincidence in the year 79811: will there be any oil left at all by then?) Needless to say, this has been dubbed "Thanksgivukah" and there is a nice irony to it all: a politically secular nation gives thanks for the spirit of religious freedom that inspired its founders, while an ancient religion gives thanks for overcoming oppression by the surrounding political culture.

Mr Rosenberg and I were delighted to represent JCoSS at a Chanukah Reception at 10 Downing Street where the candles were lit by the Prime Minister and the brachot (blessings) were led by the new Chief Rabbi. A mixture of the political and the religious, and also a mixture of the public and the private, since (as Rabbi Mirvis pointed out) 10 Downing Street is David Cameron's family home whilst in office as well as his place of work. And all of this fits Chanukah too, since it is the festival which more than any other spills out of the home into the public arena, taking the theme of Jewish distinctiveness and resilience amidst whatever might seek to assimilate or compromise its integrity. JCoSS, of course, upholds the integrity of the individual and of the community in a fruitful balance, and we hope our students may one day fill both these august offices: now there is an aspiration!

We have been celebrating in new ways at school, gathering the entire community of 800 students into the Heart Space at the end of each day with a series of guest speakers addressing us before the candle lighting. The Chanukiah on our Greetings email to parents and friends of JCoSS was the work of Josh Samuels, one of our Year 10 Art students, and has been enlarged to festoon the Heart Space. As the students leave each day amidst the gathering gloom they can see our wonderful outdoor Chanukiah and, we hope, pausing for thought that they too might be lights to the nations.

Reflecting the centrality of the Jewish Ethos to JCoSS, we have taken the decision that the post of Director of Jewish Education should have the status of Deputy Head. I have pleasure in announcing that Elaine Robinson has been appointed to that post, building upon the excellent work she has done thus far as Assistant Head. Her professional and personal qualities have contributed hugely to the success of the school and it is wonderful to be able to recognise that in this way.

Meanwhile, Mike Grabiner has stepped down from the role of Chair of Governors which he has filled for almost as long as JCoSS has existed and considerably longer than we have had a building or students. He has been a gigantic source of support, wisdom, expertise and acute strategic thinking for the school, and a very significant personal support to me as Headteacher. We are glad that he will continue as a Governor and as a JCoSS Trustee and continue his distinguished contribution to the JCoSS Community.

His place as Chair is taken by Jeremy Kosky: Jeremy is Litigation Partner at Clifford Chance, and has been working closely with Mike and myself in his role as Vice-Chair. I am delighted to have this continuity of stalwart support and professional expertise, and this is a good opportunity for me to pay tribute to the whole Governing Body whose critical friendship and generosity of time and spirit are so important – though often out of the public eye – to what goes right at JCoSS. You can read the outcomes of recent elections of parent and staff Governors on later pages of this newsletter.

I wish you all Chanukah Sameach and best wishes for the rest of the term and for the holidays.

Patrick Moriarty
Headteacher

Back to School for Grandparents

Over 180 Grandparents went back to school on Wednesday 6 November and enjoyed an afternoon of tea and “kvelling” both over the school and - at the end of the afternoon – with their avidly awaiting grandchildren. The Caterplus team provided tea and cake, whilst our guests were serenaded by Ben Feigenbaum playing piano in the cafeteria and entertained by Jay Sand’s magical skills.

The Annual Grandparents’ Tea is always popular, and this year was no different. There was a palpable sense of enjoyment and delight as Natalie Sternberg sang a beautiful song from Carousel, Jamie Lesser played some Mozart and Ben Feigenbaum some Chopin.

Mr Moriarty shared his vision for the school, but also showcased the remarkable achievements made by JCoSS students and thanked the grandparents for allowing us the privilege of teaching their grandchildren.

At the end of the afternoon, grandparents met up with their grandchildren who joyously schlepped them around the school. The children were so proud of JCoSS, and this pride was shared and enjoyed.

Many thanks to all the staff who helped in

the organisation of the afternoon, to CaterPlus for the tea and to The Flower and Balloon Room for donating the beautiful balloons.

Huge thanks also to our student ambassadors who ‘metted and greeted’ and made sure that our guests were comfortable.

Thanks also, of course, to the enormously talented musicians, Mr Rosenberg for his compering skills and our ‘in-house’ magician who entertained our guests.

Everyone’s hard work contributed to a lovely afternoon and

as more than one grandparent

mentioned on their way out “I wish I could go back to school!”



IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR ALL PARENTS

As we are now entering the winter months, please ensure you check our website for updates regarding any adverse weather conditions affecting the school.

www.jcoss.org

Hackney Picture House – Cinematic Delight

Last Half-Term saw the first JCoSS trip to the Hackney Picturehouse in conjunction with UK Jewish Film and Hackney Roots. Students viewed 'Sixty-six' - a film in which a boy's Bar-mitzvah looks set to be a disaster when it coincides with the 1966 World Cup Final. 185 students, 21 staff and 2 coaches combined to create an absolutely fantastic trip, thoroughly enjoyed by students and staff alike. The notion of schlepping the whole of Year 8, and Mr Rosenberg, across London was a somewhat daunting prospect but, thanks to the outstanding contribution of staff and superb behaviour of students, everything went swimmingly.

We were joined by Year 8 students from King Solomon High School and were hosted by Rachel Burns and Sam Palis – both of whom have been visiting JCoSS over the last half-term teaching about Jewish roots in Hackney. Year 8 engaged with the film brilliantly and it was pleasure to see them roaring with laughter at the funny parts, weeping at the sad parts and cheering with great gusto when England scored the winning goal in the World Cup final.

Thanks to our students, who were a credit to the school, and particular thanks to their Year Learning Coordinator Miss Nathan.



JCoSS First university applications

The 6th form team have been busy helping our first cohort of students complete their university applications this term.

The preparation started in June when our students returned to school after their AS exams. We set up a six week programme of events to help the 6th formers work out what they wanted to do after completing Year 13. If they were considering university we discussed what to study and where to go and for those not going to university other options were discussed.

We invited admissions tutors from Kings College London and Middlesex University to talk to students and parents about higher education as well as a speaker from Student Finance England.

JCoSS prepared a handbook "UCAS Apply 2013-14. Student Information, Advice and Guidance" and each student received a copy of this. Included in the booklet was a step by step guide to applying to university, space for them to log their choices and registration details as well as top tips and examples of personal statements.

We invited a selection of current undergraduates from a variety of universities and courses to JCoSS to talk to our students about what university life is really like. We have also run sessions on looking after yourself on campus and gap year programmes.

All students were offered a one to one interview to discuss their choices, help with selecting the right universities as well as advice with their personal statements.

Our first cohort of students are applying to a wide range of universities with approximately 10% applying to Oxbridge. They are applying for a variety of courses, ranging from Engineering and Chemistry to Interior Architecture, Sociology and Economics. Some students are taking gap years and others are applying for vocational courses such as *cordon bleu* cookery and apprenticeships.

Commenting on the UCAS application process our Year 13 students have said "Everyone has been really supportive", "Teachers respond quickly to questions", "We have had "First class support", and "Teachers and support staff are approachable and available to help"

Busy Charity month at JCoSS

***"It is not what one says, but rather what one does, that makes a difference."* Ethics of the Fathers 1:17**

This month JCoSS students have been getting their teeth into a wide range of charity and social action opportunities in school and beyond. For Mitzvah Day, they collected toys and games for the Noah's Ark charity shop in Barnet and toiletries for JWA shelters. Many students also volunteered to pack Chanukah boxes for Gift at lunchtime. We also went to local school Livingstone Primary, where JCoSS year 9 students read with Year 6 students and then treated them to some close up magic before finishing up with a football game in the playground! Other JCoSS students donned bright orange vests and took part in a local clean up as part of the Mayor of London's Capital Clean Up project. On Sunday 17th November students from JCoSS visited Jack Ruben House in Finchley and Lady Sarah Cohen House in Barnet, befriending residents and learning some first-hand history into the bargain.



A group of students from Year 8 (Ella Nourmand, Amy Somekh, Lily Sheldon, Gaby Vides and Gil Krikler) also took the initiative to make and sell bracelets in aid of our chosen charity, Save the Children. They put in a huge amount of work and sold them in the Heart Space, raising well over £350 for the charity.

After Typhoon Haiyan hit, another group of sixth formers took the initiative to make and sell cakes for disaster relief through Save the Children. They put a huge amount of effort into making some delicious treats and raised almost £400 for the Philippines. A second fantastic cake sale was run by the PSRP students raising £83.

In addition, JCoSS students raised £111 for the Poppy Appeal this year – many thanks to those students who gave up their lunchtimes to sell poppies.

All the sixth formers had a great opportunity to make new volunteering contacts at the annual volunteering fair which was also held this month with representatives from over 20 charities coming to JCoSS to meet students and talk to them about various volunteering and internship opportunities. Many thanks to JLGB for their help in organising this event.

We had our first recipients of the Jack Petchey award in school whereby students are voted by their classmates and the Student Parliament. Our first winner is Lily Sheldon (8B) who received her Year 8 Jack Petchey Achievement Award for all of the volunteering work that she has done – including selling friendship bracelets for charity, packing bags for the homeless and being a great friend.

Our second winner is Pandora Molteno (9R) who received her Year 9 Jack Petchey Achievement Award for giving up her time for charity and being really positive. Pandora has completed the Yoni Jesner Award, now doing Duke of Edinburgh and is known to never give up. Pandora is a real mensch.

Our final winner received the whole school Jack Petchey Achievement Award and had more nominations than anyone has ever received at JCoSS. The winner is Tshepo Raphael- Khara (9W) who received his award for being an all-round mensch. The staff and students alike share the view that he is kind, sweet, strong and funny. Tshepo is a real asset to the school community.

Finally a large number of students have already signed up for the Yoni Jesner programme, where students in Year 7 and Year 8 are given recognition for completing either 20 or 50 hours of volunteering in the year. Whether through school or in activities beyond school we applaud everyone who is working towards their hours this year and remind you that it's not too late to sign up!

ASC Ambassadors

At the end of last academic year, Miss Gustard and Mrs Dennis recruited 12 students, now all in Year 10, to become ASC (Autism Spectrum Condition) Ambassadors. On returning to JCoSS this September the group embarked on a 3 week training programme to learn about Autism and to use this knowledge to develop an Autism Awareness session for Year 7 students. The ASC Ambassadors then went on to deliver the session to all Year 7 forms over four Kvutzah lessons. They did an amazing job and it was wonderful to see older students talking about Autism in such a positive way and giving practical advice about how the Year 7 students can support their friends on the autism spectrum both in and outside class. It has been very good to see such tangible and 2-way benefit from the presence of the Pears Special Resource Provision at JCoSS.

The Year 10 ASC Ambassadors are:

Daniel Marcus
Ryan Peltz
Breta Sulejmani
Harley Benson
Zoe Hamlyn
Sophie Irwin
Lottie Fishman
Lucinda Bathie
Ayala Gottlieb-Alter
Ella Levene
Grace Soning
Raphy Attan



Miss Gustard (YLC Year 10) and Mrs Dennis (Senior LSA - PSRP)

Delegation to Israel

Mr Lyons and Mrs Eyres spent their half term break in Israel as part of the UJIA Senior Educators Delegation. As well as seminars on the Israeli education system and a superb tour of Tel Aviv, the focus of the trip was building our partnership with Western Galil High School. Following the successful visit by our Year 9 students in June, both schools are keen to run more joint activities this year. JCoSS teachers worked with their Israeli colleagues on a number of exciting new initiatives such as a media project and a Skype meet-up at Chanukah. An assembly was given to Year 9 students who were fascinated by the similarities and differences between the schools; JCoSS's no-phones-allowed policy was greeted with gasps from students and teachers alike!



LRC News

Book donations



Many thanks and Mazel Tov to the following students and their families who donated books to the LRC this month: Ruby Shefras (7B), Elaine Miller (7R), Billy Oliver (8B) and Dora Hirsh (8W). Our JCoSS wish list on Amazon is updated regularly: please log on to <http://www.amazon.co.uk>, click on gift and wish lists and enter JCoSS into the name bar. Thank you in advance.



LRC OPENING HOURS

The LRC new opening hours are:
Monday to Thursday: 8.35 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Friday: Lunchtime only.

After School Clubs

We would like to clarify that after school clubs are NOT compulsory. This includes clubs linked to GCSEs.

We are looking into the feasibility of additional transport for after school clubs and will let parents know if this is possible in early 2014.

Many thanks

Parents needed for focus groups.

We are starting the process of changing our website and producing a JCoSS App and we would like to gather the views of our parents before we fully embark on this project.

We would also love to hear the views of prospective parents regarding the website, so if you have any friends who have children in Year 5 or 6, we would be very grateful if you could ask them to get in touch.

If you would like to be involved, please contact Jenny Cohen, JCoSS marketing manager via email: Jcohen@jcoess.barnet.sch.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

JCoSS students touch planet Mars

Exciting rare samples of moon rocks and a collection of impressive meteorites landed at JCoSS this month. Students were able to enjoy a unique, interactive experience of astronomy during their lessons. Highlights included getting up close and personal with some hand-sized meteorites and enabling students to touch a real piece of space. This included a 1.2 billion year old piece of Mars and a 4.3 billion year old nickel meteorite – the oldest object you will ever hold in your hands!

The lunar samples, provided by the UK's Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) were collected in the late 1960's and early 1970's during some of NASA's first manned space missions to the Moon.



Pause for Thought

The Year 13 religious Studies A Level class are learning about the Shoah (Nazi Holocaust) and the theological question of faith in light of such a human tragedy. With Chanuka upon us it reminded me of the testimony of Israel Cohen a Polish-born survivor of three concentration camps.

He writes:

"Having always kept mental track of the calendar, I knew when Chanukah had arrived. During a few minutes' rest break, a group of us began to reminisce about how, back home before the war, our fathers would light their menorahs with such fervor and joy. We remembered how we could never seem to get our fill of watching the flames sparkling like stars, how we basked in their warm, special glow, how they seemed to imbue us with a special sanctity.

And then we got to thinking about the origins of Chanukah, about the war of the Hasmoneans against their Seleucid Greek tormentors, who were intent on erasing Judaism from Jewish hearts. We recalled the great heroism of the Jews at the time who risked their lives in order to keep the Sabbath, practice circumcision and study Torah. And we remembered how G-d helped them resist and rout their enemy, enabling Jews to freely observe the Torah and mitzvahs once again. And then we looked around ourselves. Here we were, in a camp where our lives were constantly in danger, where we were considered sub-human and where it was virtually impossible to observe the most basic practices of Judaism. How happy we would be, we mused, if only we could light Chanukah candles.

While we talked and dreamed, we were all suddenly struck, as if at once, by the same resolution: We simply must discover a way of doing the seasonal mitzvah. One fellow offered a small bit of margarine he had saved from his daily ration. That could serve as our oil. And wicks? We began to unravel threads from our uniforms. What, though, could be our menorah? I took out my spoon, and within moments, we were lighting the Chanukah "candle", reciting the blessings of "Lehadlik ner," "She'oso nissim" and "Shehecheyonu." We all stood around entranced, transfixed, each immersed in his own thoughts of Chanukahs gone by, latkes, dreidels and Chanukah gelt we had received as children.

And our unusual Chanukah menorah kindled in us a glimmer of hope. As we recited the blessing about the miracles G-d had performed for our forefathers "in those days," but also "at this time," we well understood that the only thing that could save us would be a miracle. A nes gadol -- great miracle -- like the one hinted at on the dreidle's acrostic. Even non-religious Jews stood near us watching the flame of the Chanukah candle. I am certain that none of us who survived will ever be able to forget that luminous moment in the darkness of our concentration camp lives".

In JCoSS this year we will be celebrating Chanukah each day, with the lighting of the Chanukiah, the eating of Donuts and the giving of Charity. We will be inviting our neighbours from Livingstone Primary school to enjoy the festivities with us. The Year 13's have been moved by the memoirs of Israel Cohen and the commitment the inmates of Auschwitz showed to Jewish tradition.

I am sure I will be moved in a different way, by the enthusiasm and celebration of the JCoSS community to a tradition of 2000 years, a celebration of life.

JPA – DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

YEAR 7 DISCO – Sunday 1st December
Last few tickets available

SAVE THE DATES:

SUPPER QUIZ - Sunday 9th March 2014

With guest quizmaster – tickets on sale in January

J- FEST with World Cup highlights and fun for all
Sunday 20th July 2014

Governor Elections

Following the recent ballot for Parent Governors, the following are elected:

Caroline Attan (re-elected)

Mark Freedman

Dr Ian Pollock

Lou Robey (re-elected).

Following a recent Staff Governor election, Mr B de Jong has been elected.

We are very grateful to all who stood and voted, and look forward to a constructive partnership for the years ahead.

JCoSS Sport

JCoSS WIN The Barnet District Schools Badminton Tournament - Tuesday 19th Nov 2013

The JCoSS Badminton Team flexed their sporting muscle over all other Barnet Schools earlier this month as they came away overall winners in the A team grouping. Winning such a prestigious tournament now means that the A team will represent the entire Barnet District in the National Schools Championships at Crystal Palace later on in the year. JCoSS A team won 12 out of 15 games in total; Ben Felt winning 4 out of 5 games, Sam Lachmann winning 3 out of 5 games, whilst the superstar pairing of Asher Kelvin and Gabe Cooke recorded an unrivalled 5 wins from 5 games. A fantastic achievement by the students involved and a feat they should be immensely proud of.

The teams were as follows:

JCoSS A Team : Ben Felt , Sam Lachmann, Gabe Cooke and Asher Kelvin

JCoSS B Team: Sam Hass, Eathan Earle and Grayson Kleiner

JCoSS C Team: Max Simmonds, Tshepo Khara Raphael, Tom Stepsky and Joshua Curiel



STOP PRESS: JCoSS Girls Football Matches in December.

11th Dec - Year 7 Away Vs Wren Academy

18th Dec - Year 8 Away Vs Wren Academy

19th Dec - Year 9 Home Vs Wren Academy

Ultimate Frisbee Club – Come and Join us on Wednesday lunchtimes at 12.45 – 13.15



For the full match report and all the latest news, go to our JCoSS Sport Facebook page

