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A Great School



Annual Report

5770 • 2009/2010



Message from the President

PRESIDENT

David Wm. Brown

It is with mixed emotions that I am writing this, my last address as President of Associated Hebrew Schools. As a student, parent, Board member, Executive member and most recently President, I watched Associated grow into the best Jewish day school of its kind in North America. In my 20 years as a lay volunteer, I have worked with professionals and volunteers who represent the best that this community has to offer, and for that, I am proud.

I am proud of the students and graduates; proud of the parents who make sacrifices to send their children to Jewish day school; proud of our volunteers, teachers and administrators. Proud of our donors who've supported and helped integrate exciting new programs, new technologies and new capabilities into our school. And I'm proud of our partners in the Toronto Federation who do their utmost to ensure the viability of the Jewish day school system.

During my presidency, the school experienced many challenges, many victories and many wonderful milestones. We have introduced newer, cutting edge educational programs that enhanced our educational product, and allowed us to address the needs of more students who otherwise might not have been able to learn in a Jewish environment. We celebrated our Centennial anniversary and we continue to forge ahead into our second century with confidence and determination. All of this, while maintaining our identity.

There are, however, more great challenges ahead. The cost of a Jewish education continues to rise. Fewer people are able to make the financial commitment without suffering a

significant decline in their standard of living. Funding from the community, already at the highest level ever, is straining; and we will not be able to maintain our high number of subsidized students without intervention from either government or community donors.

It is a recognized fact that Jewish education is the single strongest factor in Jewish continuity. We cannot give up our belief that in order to ensure a strong Jewish community, more children must be given the opportunity of attending Jewish day school. We must strive to maintain steady growth and enroll as many children as possible while still preserving our viability and financial integrity.

During my years as President of AHS, I had the distinct pleasure of working with a number of meaningful individuals. My friend Arthur Landa has been Executive Director of Associated Hebrew Schools for the past 21 years. I believe that due to his dedication, knowledge and foresight, hundreds of additional students have been welcomed through the doors of our school. This is his legacy to our community.

I have learnt a great deal from Rabbi Dr. Mark Smiley and my Chairman, Shelly Carr. Under their guidance, the School continues to grow and enhance its position amongst the great educational institutions of our country.

Finally, my thanks goes out to the dedicated Board members, teachers and staff, and, of course, to my loving wife and daughters, who have allowed me to experience some of the finest moments of my life as President of this great school.

Report from the Director of Education

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
Dr. Mark Smiley

A HEARTFELT FAREWELL

This fall, Arthur Landa will retire after serving as Associated's Executive Director for the past 21 years. For Arthur, his work in the field of Jewish communal service has always been about serving a higher purpose. "What sustained me throughout was the feeling of excitement I would wake up with in the morning - knowing that in some small way, I was going to make a contribution to the future of the Jewish People." Although Arthur's term as Executive Director was marked by many achievements, he believes his greatest accomplishment was his ability to support and facilitate the efforts of Associated's lay leaders.

David Wm. Brown, Associated's outgoing president, has become a close friend, and feels that Arthur has had tremendous impact on the school. "He has been instrumental in directing our school and has distinguished himself with the skill, insight, professionalism, sensitivity and commitment he brings to his work every day at Associated."

It's no surprise that when asked to talk about his most meaningful or touching moments at the school, Arthur recalls the many occasions on which he was thanked by parents, teachers and staff for his efforts on their behalf. Ultimately, Arthur feels he should be thanking them. "I look back at my time at Associated with a deep sense of gratitude – to the organization, to the people. I am tremendously indebted for the purposeful experience I have enjoyed [here]."

The Officers, Directors, Governors, parents, teachers, students and staff of Associated gratefully recognizing Arthur's tremendous contributions to the Associated community and wish him a wholehearted hatzlacha rabba – all the very best in the future.

This Annual Report is being published in the week that follows our reading of the Torah portion of *Chukat*. One of the themes of the parasha is the higher standard to which the leaders of the Jewish people were held. Hashem demanded of Moshe, Aaron and Miriam a standard of behaviour that clearly exceeded that which was expected of any other of *Bnai Yisrael*. In fact, Hashem's judgment that Moshe will not enter *Eretz Yisrael* because of striking a rock to bring water, seems so exacting that it has produced volumes of commentary with dozens of potential explanations.

The truth is that we do hold our leaders to a higher standard of accountability. That fact makes it all the more admirable that individuals take upon themselves the responsibilities of volunteer leadership. At Associated in particular we are blessed with so many of our parents and stakeholders who are willing to devote their time to the School.

This Annual Report is testament to the calibre and conviction of Associated's lay leadership. Their inspired efforts are a key factor in Associated being recognized as a great Jewish day school. Moreover, in this publication they demonstrate their accountability by reporting to you on their abundant activities of the last year.

On behalf our students, parents, staff and supporters, I salute the tremendous dedication and commitment of our lay leaders and all our volunteers. May your great work continue to lead to great results and with the help of Hashem may Associated continue *michayil ad chayil* - from strength to strength.

Report from Va'ad Hachinuch (Education Committee)

CO-CHAIRS

Ita Kleiner & Elaine Osher

During the 2009/2010 school year, Va'ad Hachinuch (Va'ad) has overseen sub-committee work, policy reviews and received reports on ongoing educational initiatives.

Anti-bullying update

The new anti-bullying policy was implemented at the Bet Hayeled, elementary and middle school levels in September. Each branch is working within the guidelines of the policy to ensure compliance. Proactive educational programs have been implemented and are ongoing. Recognizing the importance of a safe and secure environment, anti-bullying initiatives are a high priority for the School.

Cell Phone Policy

The School's Cell Phone Usage Policy outlines guidelines and consequences for students and staff regarding the use of all personal communication, game and video/listening devices (including but not limited to cell phones, iPods and active personal electronic equipment). A copy of the policy can be obtained from the branch principal and will be distributed more widely in the fall.

Class size

The Va'ad was asked to consider increasing the class size by 1 student in grades 1-2, as a means of maximizing capacity. After assessing the impact of the proposed increase, the Va'ad was confident that the quality of the educational program would be maintained. The new maximum class size in grades 1-2 is 25.

Collaborative Professional Learning (CPL)

AHS has implemented CPL programs to help focus professional development. CPL targets student learning, connects to school-wide visions and goals, is targeted,

teacher-driven and uses the coaching and mentoring methods. Currently, each branch offers a collaborative strategy that teachers can use to investigate problems or areas of interest specific to their professional context. CPL provides the structure to engage in a planned, systematic and documented process of professional growth. The goals for the upcoming year include: implement a system-wide leadership dialog; provide opportunities for professional learning for every teacher (including cross-campus); and facilitate and provide coaching as well capacity building for teacher leadership and middle management.

Graduate Survey

Each year the Va'ad conducts a survey of Grade 8 graduates. The 2009 graduates completed an in-school (online) survey during the last week of school. This survey focused on their experiences at AHS. The following March, these same students received a survey (online) focusing on how they felt the School prepared them for high school. The results of the survey (for 2009 graduates) were reported to Va'ad. The graduates agreed the Associated experience had been very positive. The students further responded they felt comfortable and safe in the school. The survey also reported that Math improved in its overall ratings as well as the Science Fair experience. The students also developed a greater understanding of School policies. In response to the students' comments and the School's ongoing curricular assessment and review, some of the focus for improvement in the coming year will be on Hebrew language, French and improving the test and assignment coordination system.

Keter and Ra'anah

Keter and Ra'anah are programs that were developed (at Posluns and Kamin, respectively) that incorporate specialty

Continued on next page



**Report from
Va'ad Hachinuch (Education Committee)**

**CO-CHAIRS
Ita Kleiner & Elaine Osher**

courses (Art, Music, Drama, Phys. Ed, etc) into the curriculum. These programs have operated as pilot projects for the last number of years. Following assessment and review that revealed the educational value of such curricular enhancements, the Va'ad passed a motion to have these programs incorporated into the curriculum on a permanent basis.

Report on the Centre for Diverse Learning (CDL)

The CDL was established 3 years ago in recognition of the growing number of students with diverse learning needs. This report focused on the programs currently established by the CDL and the vision of how to strengthen these programs even further in the future. Overall, the CDL is recognized as a critical entity of the school. The CDL supervisors and remedial staff work closely with parents, teachers and administrators to ensure the needs of identified students are met. The CDL acknowledges challenges such as consistent implementation in the classroom, accountability and professional training and will focus attention on these elements in the course of the next several months.

Study Skills update

In the past year, administrators worked with staff to ensure that specific studying skills are integrated into the curriculum and taught by classroom teachers. Those skills include: note-taking, research skills, listen skills, maintenance of notebooks, use of agendas and homework books. As well, sessions on how to prepare for exams are given to all at-risk students as well as to the entire student body. Developing a strong, integrated study skills program is a priority of the School. The goals for the coming school year include: consistent implementation across grades and branches; ensuring that teachers provide clear goals and expectations for homework and assignments; and helping students create good daily work, homework and study habits.

We would like to thank members of Va'ad Hachinuch for their commitment to this important committee. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the work of sub-committee chairs and to all those who prepared reports and made presentations. Special thanks to Dr. Smiley and the entire educational team as well as Smadar Koral.

Report from the Marketing and Communications Committee

CHAIR

Randall Craig

Earlier in the school year, an invitation to become involved in the work of the Committee was delivered to stakeholders via our listserve network and resulted in the addition of several new members. Many of those that expressed interest work professionally in the field and will be able to make important contributions.

At our first meeting of the year, our Communications sub committee chaired by Sue Walsh presented its report. This will likely result in some changes to our branch newsletters and major changes to our newsletter, *We Are Associated*.

An exciting initiative that benefited from the call for new volunteers is the formation of a Social Media workgroup. To date, the group has met twice and plans are underway for the creation of an Associated online community that might include blogs, photo/video sharing, forums for sharing parenting resources, and of course a Facebook page.

The School's marketing activities were quite targeted this year. Initiatives were focused on particular geographic and demographic groups and included:

- Unaddressed airmail to key geographic areas in Toronto, Thornhill and Richmond Hill.
- Rink advertising in Toronto and Thornhill
- Advertising in key publications

- A large format trestle banner on Bathurst north of Steeles
- Several holiday-focused (Chanukah, Pesach) programs for children and parents in the community
- Promotion via several businesses providing services to young mothers

Perhaps the greatest measure of success for any marketing & communications initiative is the results that it brings. Enrollment for 2009-2010 withstood the challenges presented by the economy and remained relatively stable. Preschool numbers for both branches showed promising strength. Throughout this year, there has been significant interest demonstrated by prospective parents and while enrollment results for 2010-2011 are not final, indications are that enrollment will be strong.

The next several years will continue to be challenging, given both competitive and economic pressures. The quality of the "product" remains our greatest strength and a pillar of our brand; a key role of the marketing committee is to ensure that this is shared within the school community, and directly to our target markets.

I wanted to thank the dedicated marketing and administrative staff for their hard work over the last year, as well as my fellow committee members.



Report from the Development Committee

Over the course of the past year, Associated has received over \$700,000 in charitable donations. This represents payments resulting from donor agreements and pledges as well as new donations.

Our donors and our fundraising volunteers guarantee the future of the Jewish community – locally, nationally and globally. Dozens of studies confirm that Jewish day school education has a positive effect on Jewish continuity. Associated educates more children in our community than any other Jewish day school in the Greater Toronto Area. There is a clear link between our donors' support for Associated and future Jewish generations in our community.

The 2009/2010 year was a very exciting year for Development at Associated. There are a number of new and continuing projects we are proud of.

Kadima

By supporting Kadima - Associated's Annual Campaign, you support the school and therefore our own commitment to the next Jewish generation. Our children, as they grow, will themselves re-commit to maintaining our Jewish heritage, traditions, and values.

While most of our development projects run according to the school year, Kadima runs through the calendar year. We express our appreciation and gratitude to the over 600 donors who contributed over \$170,000 to Kadima 2009. Hundreds of parents, past parents, alumni, as well as staff, grandparents and many others have joined together to support the mission of Associated. To date, more than 200 of our supporters have already answered the call to contribute to the 2010 campaign. Over the past 10 years, the annual campaign has grown from one that raised a steady \$40,000 annually to a campaign that is envisioned to raise over \$500,000 annually. From the pool of nearly

2,000 donors, Associated has raised over \$1,000,000 in these unrestricted funds. The funds are used for programs and services, from SMARTboards to innovative programming; from financial assistance to new curricular material. We hope we can continue to count on our donors in the future and are always looking for new donors to join in supporting our School.

Development Strategic Planning Committee

Our Development Strategic Planning Committee ably chaired this year by, Daphna Grossman, Michael Kerzner and Renee Rosenzweig, is poised to unveil new fundraising strategies to attain greater support from our traditional donors as well as from new donors. Our new project, "The Boomerang Birthday" has already received many donations and is a forerunner to the upcoming Family Giving Campaign.

Scholarship and Endowment

Over \$230,000 was contributed to Scholarship and Endowment funds in the 2009/2010 fiscal year. This year, the Scholarship and Endowment Fund committee, chaired by a Mr. Al G. Brown, disbursed nearly \$40,000 to alumni continuing their Jewish studies in Israel, current students attending Jewish camp programs, to enhance the School's professional development program, to help families with the cost of books and trips and to purchase gifts for our graduates.

Online Donations

We are very excited to inform our stakeholders that donations can now be made online by going to www.ahschools.com

Report from the Admissions and Tuitions Committee

CO-CHAIRS

Sheldon Parker & Mayeer Pearl

The Admissions and Tuition Committee administers the allocations and subventions received from The Centre for Jewish Education/UJA Federation to provide financial assistance to families enrolled in the School and unable to pay the full cost of tuition.

Through a group of dedicated volunteers, supported by experienced professional staff, the committee reviews applications that provide financial disclosure and where necessary, conducts interviews with the applicant families. All information received by the committee always remains confidential.

The committee assisted 493 students requiring some form of financial subvention to start the 2009/2010 school year. These students represented 38.5% of the overall Associated Hebrew Day Schools' population.

In the 2009/2010 school year, the overall Associated student population decreased by 5.7%, in the elementary grades and the amount of students requiring financial assistance increased by 2.2%. The Pre-School continues to grow in population with a 2.3% increase compared to 2008/2009. It is anticipated that enrolment for the 2010/2011 school year will decrease. This trend mirrors many Jewish day schools in the Greater Toronto Area. The reasons for the decline are varied and include: the economic downturn; changing demographics; the number of day schools in the Greater Toronto Area; and the high cost of Jewish education.

The chairs of the committee wish to thank all of the volunteers and staff for their hard work and devotion to a most worthy cause.

Report from the Parent Teacher Council

PRESIDENT

Tracy Zepp

The Parent Teacher Council is dedicated to enhancing the school experience for all of our children. As the voice of the parent body, we have representation on the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee and Va'ad Hachinuch.

The PTC supports many programs through a variety of fundraising initiatives, that are ongoing throughout the year. Every year, the proceeds of these fundraising efforts are directed toward the purchase of library books and author visits, Siddurim for the grade 1 ceremonies, graduation gifts for grade 8 students, holiday treats, the Welcome Wagon program for new families, as well as educational programs for parents and teachers.

PTC has given a total of \$30,000 towards its five year commitment of \$50,000 to the Associated Hebrew Schools Centennial Endowment Fund.

In a challenging economic time, PTC initiatives have managed to raise money through book fairs at each of our three branches, sales of the school calendar, Middle School text book sales, and the various food/lunch programs. In addition, the PTC held a Casino Night Gala in March 2010 which was a resounding success, raising \$25,000.

We are proud of our accomplishments and contributions to our School. I would like to thank all the parents, the administration and staff for their ongoing commitment to the success of our School.

**Report from the
Budget and Finance Committee**

CO-CHAIRS

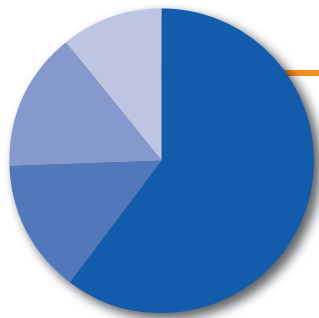
Shaun Kobrin & Mayer Pearl

Financial Summary

This financial summary is based on the Financial Statements for the year ending June 2009, which is the last fiscal period for which such statements are available.

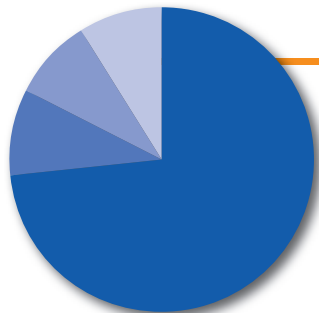
To view our full Financial Statements, please contact Arthur Landa, Executive Director, at 416-494-7666 ext.200.

Distribution of Operating Revenue and Expenditure 2008/2009



Revenue \$19,381,000

- 10.8% Other
- 14.8% Tuition: Preschool
- 14.1% UJA Federation
- 60.9% Tuition: Elementary and Middle School



Expenditure \$19,826,000

- 8.7% Educational programmes, Classroom Expenses
- 8.8% General Administration
- 9.0% Facility
- 73.5% Educational Staff



A Great School

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www.ahschools.com



UJA Federation provides funding for
Jewish education at Associated