



NORTH SHORE HEBREW ACADEMY

**EDITOR: MICHELLE RUTTA****LAYOUT & DESIGN: RACHEL SPINNER****FRIDAY NIGHT CANDLE LIGHTING: 4:09PM** הדלקת נרות:**SHABBAT ENDS: 5:17 PM** זמן הבדלה:**Parashat Vayishlach**

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SQUINTING: A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Dr. Jeffrey Kobrin

One of my greatest teachers was the late Edward Tayler, a professor of Renaissance literature at Columbia. In his Hamlet lectures, he memorably distinguished between what he called a "Polonius couplet," or pair of lines, and a "Hamlet couplet." Polonius, a bit of a doofus, talks a lot but says very little. He tells his son Laertes: "And it must follow, as the night the day, / Thou canst not then be false to any man." Polonius could have just said "tell the truth," but he can't help blathering on and on. A "Hamlet couplet," Tayler told us, is a different story. When Hamlet tells his mother, Queen Gertrude, "I must be cruel, only to be kind / This bad begins, and worse remains behind," Hamlet says two things at once. "You have to squint to see two things at once," Tayler explained in his cigarette-stained voice, "Hamlet makes you squint."



We all have developed the ability to see two things at once. Ramban, in his introduction to this week's parasha of Vayishlach, says that Yaakov did precisely that in preparing to meet Esav after more than twenty years. Ramban writes that Yaakov did not rely on his own righteousness for protection. Rather, Yaakov squinted: he looked in several directions at once. Ramban writes that Yaakov hizmin et atzmo le-tefila u-ledoron u-le-hatzalah be-derech milchama, "he prepared himself with prayer, with bribes, and for battle." We need to learn to do the same.

One thing Coronavirus has taught me is that we all need to squint. A friend commented that these days are a nightmare for people who are planners; they are much better for seat-of-the-pants, last-minute people. (Since I'm one of the first type, that insight was not very helpful.) We all have learned to pivot, to dance, and to look in (at least) two directions at once. I am awed by our teachers, who are able to simultaneously teach live students (behind layers of polycarbonate and masks) in their classes and Zooming students on a Smartboard. What seems like an easy task is remarkably challenging; our teachers are "squinting" on a daily basis.

And our students are the lucky ones: I read this week about the challenges plaguing school districts where not all students have devices or access to Zoom. "The digital divide," said one educator, "remains a significant barrier for equitable remote instruction." And so the students and teachers have learned to squint. They operate in several directions at once. And so must we all.

As we look toward the lights of Chanukah in our homes next week, which always seem to bring joy, let's appreciate our ability to squint and nurture it in our children.

Shabbat Shalom.

## SPOTLIGHT ON: 5TH GRADE GENERAL STUDIES

**By: Ms. Perlman, Ms. Spilkevitz and Ms. Sutton**

We are proud of our fifth grade students who have all been working hard across academic areas.

In math, students have been busy learning how to multiply decimals and whole numbers. Students are building on the methods they learned last year involving multiplying numbers and understanding how decimal place values work. Students will also be learning how to multiply using expanded form, as well as word problems involving money.

In Social Studies, the fifth grade students are learning about the Age of Exploration and some of the motives European explorers had for leaving for the New World. Our current unit focuses on artifacts found on European sunken ships by divers, and what these artifacts reveal about European reasons for exploring the New World. Students are learning about the tools used to sail to the New World, items they discovered there, as well as the importance of religion during this time.

We are very excited that we will be working closely with our incredible science teacher, Mr. Imburgia, to teach a nonfiction reading unit about a science related topic. It is critical that our students learn how to navigate a nonfiction text as well as they can read a piece of fiction. During this nonfiction unit, we will be exploring text features and text structures, discussing their purpose, and using them to help us to better understand the information we will be reading about. The students will be reading *Bringing Back the Wolves - How a Predator Restored an Ecosystem* by Jude Isabella. This book describes the 1995 attempt to fix errors of the past and reintroduce gray wolves into Yellowstone National Park. Over time, animal populations stabilized, waterways were restored and a healthy ecosystem was recreated across the land. While students read this text during class, Mr. Imburgia will be launching his next unit about ecosystems in Science.

In Writers Workshop, we are writing informational texts. Students chose topics they already knew a lot about and are learning how to write informational books about these topics. Asking questions about a topic in order to elaborate, adding details like exact names, colors, sizes, and quotations, using a "teaching voice," and considering how to begin and end an informational writing piece, are some of the strategies our authors are learning to utilize in their writing. We are incredibly excited about how our reading and writing units are supporting our fifth graders in their understanding of nonfiction and informational texts.

## A GRATITUDE TREE GROWS AT NSHA



In honor of thanksgiving and the 20/21 PTA theme of Gratitude, we asked the students: what are you thankful for? We present to you: the NSHA PTA Gratitude Tree. We have so much to be thankful for this year: health, happiness, family, friends, school, and so much more. The PTA is especially grateful for our incredible teachers & staff and our wonderful parent body.

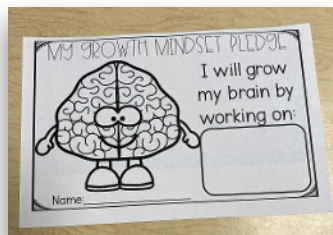


## GETTING INTO GROWTH MINDSET

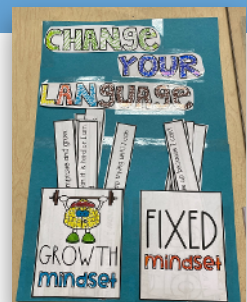
**By Ms. Sara Berlin, Cherry Lane Social Worker**

What is a growth mindset?

This week PreK-2nd grade students learned what it means to have a growth mindset and applied it to trying new things. They started off the lesson by watching a short clip about a character



named Mojo. Mojo, a friendly monster, really liked going to school and especially loved math. One day, math started to get really challenging and a thought popped into Mojo's head - "I am stupid," "I am giving up." As the story continues, all of Mojo's friends help him adopt a "growth mindset" and help him realize that he should never give up and to keep trying, even when something is challenging. The students ended off the lesson by pledging to grow their brains using a growth mindset.



## Why is having a growth mindset so important?

When people learn they have the power to grow their brain and develop their intelligence, they are motivated to try harder, persist when challenged, and embrace opportunities to learn. These actions lead to higher achievement.

## How can I begin to promote the development of a growth mindset at home?

The power of the word "Yet" tells our children that they are not simply good or bad at things. Learning something new takes time and if they do not know how to do something or understand something at first, that is not the end of the story. They just do not know how to do it or understand it **Yet!**

## What is Positive Self-Talk?

This week grade 3-5 students reflected on their own positive qualities and character strengths and practiced positive self-talk. Students also identified areas of growth and completed a personal improvement plan. Students worked together to complete a bubble map showing the qualities that make an "ideal" student. For example in art a great quality would be creativity, in gym a great quality would be fairness. Students ended off the lesson by writing a message to themselves in a mirror using positive self-talk.

## Why is positive self talk important?

Positive self-talk can have a big impact on how we think and feel. Over time, engaging in more positive self-talk can help reduce stress, improve self-esteem, increase motivation, inspire productivity, and improve overall mental and physical health.

## Ways to Practice Positive Self-Talk at home:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### POSITIVE THOUGHTS & AFFIRMATIONS

1. There is no one better to be than myself.	27. I am proud of myself.
2. I am enough.	28. I deserve to be happy.
3. I get better every single day.	29. I am free to make my own choices.
4. I am an amazing person.	30. I deserve to be loved.
5. All of my problems have solutions.	31. I can make a difference.
6. Today I am a leader.	32. Today I choose to be confident.
7. I forgive myself for my mistakes.	33. I am in charge of my life.
8. My challenges help me grow.	34. I have the power to make my dreams true.
9. I am perfect just the way I am.	35. I believe in myself and my abilities.
10. My mistakes help me learn and grow.	36. Good things are going to come to me.
11. Today is going to be a great day.	37. I matter.
12. I have courage and confidence.	38. My confidence grows when I step outside of my comfort zone.
13. I can control my own happiness.	39. My positive thoughts create positive feelings.
14. I have people who love and respect me.	40. Today I will walk through my fears.
15. I stand up for what I believe in.	41. I am open and ready to learn.
16. I believe in my goals and dreams.	42. Every day is a fresh start.
17. It's okay not to know everything.	43. If I fail, I will get back up again.
18. Today I choose to think positive.	44. I am whole.
19. I can get through anything.	45. I only compare myself to myself.
20. I can do anything I put my mind to.	46. I can do anything.
21. I give myself permission to make choices.	47. It is enough to do my best.
22. I can do better next time.	48. I can be anything I want to be.
23. I have everything I need right now.	49. I accept who I am.
24. I am capable of so much.	50. Today is going to be an awesome day.
25. Everything will be okay.	
26. I believe in myself.	

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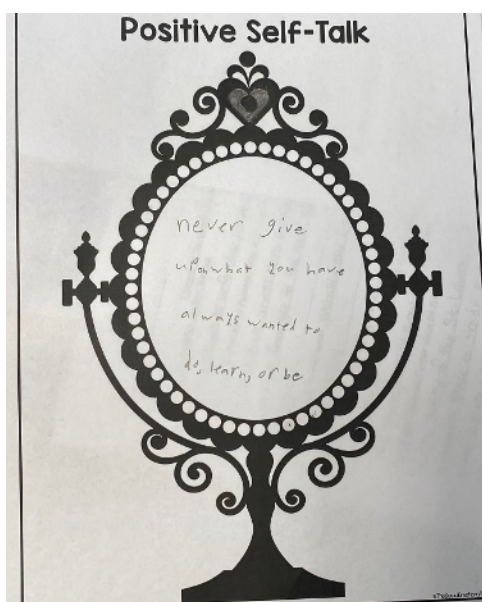
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### MY POSITIVE THOUGHTS & AFFIRMATIONS

Let some positive thoughts and affirmations you can say to yourself.

#1	
#2	
#3	
#4	
#5	
#6	
#7	
#8	
#9	
#10	

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## D'VAR TORAH: PARSHAT VAYISHLACH

### By Rabbi Sholom Jensen

“Vayihi bayom hashlishi.....Vayehargu kol zachar”

And it was on the third day, when they (the people of Shechem) were in pain (for agreeing to be circumcised) that two of Yaakov's sons, Shimon and Levi, (Dinah's brothers), each took his sword and they came upon the city confidently, and killed every male”.



There is someone, with whom I am very close, who lives in this community and whose children attend NSHA. Each year when Parshat Vayishlach is read we argue about the implications of Dina's story and focus on Shimon's and Levi's behavior.

I am not thrilled with the brothers' reaction to Dina's violation, and he is proud of their behavior. To quote my friend, “I am so proud of two brothers who are willing to kill and wipe out a whole nation for their sister's honor.” I always remind him that Yaakov Avinu cursed his sons on his deathbed for their actions. My friend believes that Yaakov only cursed the brothers' anger however he was happy with what they did.



The Radak explains that when Yaakov Avinu heard his sons suggest to Chamor (Shechem's father) that his people needed to be circumcised, Yaakov remained silent for he knew that he and his children would never break bread with Chamor and his men.

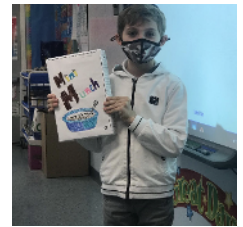
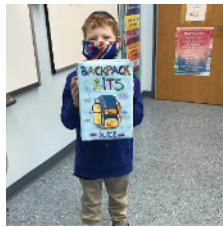
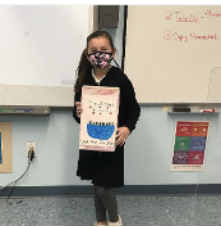
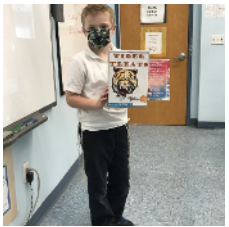
This seems to coincide with my buddy's thinking.

Ramban expands a bit on the Radak and suggests that in their wildest dreams Shimon and Levi could not have imagined that Chamor, Shechem and their men would agree to circumcision. Yaakov remained silent during the planning as he was not aware of the brothers' intended massacre. This seems to coincide with my way of thinking.

The Torah never shies away from sharing episodes, even when they are controversial. I believe we must learn from these episodes as well. Whichever opinion you agree with, this powerful episode is worth debating. Shabbat Shalom.

## READING AND WRITING AROUND NSHA

A great book always has a great ingredient list! Take a perfect setting, a bunch of fascinating characters, a twisty plot and any other creative story element you can find. Combine them in the perfect proportions and you've got a great piece of fiction. That's the concept **Ms. Fizitsky's** class ran with when they created their fabulous fiction cereal boxes. After reading a favorite piece of fiction, they highlighted the important literary ingredients that made that book so sweet, savory and successful - further proof that a good breakfast (or book?) is a great way to start the day!



## PTA VIRTUAL CHANUKAH BOUTIQUE



The PTA held a wonderful virtual Chanukah boutique this week to help us with our Chanukah shopping. Thank you to **Sharleen Bassalali** and **Jasmine Nassimi** for their help with this terrific event.

## HAMILTON - THE BEST (AND MOST AFFORDABLE) TICKET AT NSHA THIS WEEK

Few Founding Fathers have had quite as much spotlight in the last few years as Alexander Hamilton; this week, NSHA delved into a mysterious aspect of this great American and patriot. According to historian Andrew Porwancher, who led a Zoom lecture on Wednesday evening for our NSHA students, faculty, parents and grandparents, there is a strong argument that Alexander Hamilton was, in fact, Jewish. Professor Porwancher is Associate Professor of Constitutional History and Judaic Studies at Oklahoma University and is currently serving as a fellow in History and Policy at Harvard University.



Dr. Porwancher shared some of his research into Hamilton's plausible Jewish identity. The compelling evidence includes Hamilton's attendance at a Jewish school on the Caribbean Island of Nevis, which was home to a noted Jewish community. Dr. Porwancher also discussed the technicalities of the possible conversion of Hamilton's mother, Rachel Levine, to Judaism during her relationship with Johann Levine and prior to her relationship with James Hamilton.

Dr. Porwancher noted the absence of a baptismal record for Hamilton in the Caribbean. His baptism, had it occurred, likely would have been recorded, as was the norm for Christians. Dr. Porwancher noted that while some may argue that if Hamilton was born out of wedlock, he would have been disqualified from receiving a baptism and entry to a Christian school. But Dr. Porwancher found records of children born out of wedlock both

receiving baptism and gaining entry to Christian schools -- therefore, if Hamilton did not receive a baptism and chose to go to a Jewish school, there is an argument to be made that both were purposeful decisions.

Finally, Dr. Porwancher discussed how Judaism is folded into Hamilton's legacy later in life and especially during his time as an American leader. Hamilton studied European Jewish banking, and the U.S. financial system is, as we know, one of the indelible marks he made on American History. As a lawyer, he also stood up against anti-Semitic labelling of Jewish witness testimony as untrustworthy. Dr. Porwancher believes that Hamilton's long lasting impact on freedom of religion and equality in America was influenced by his Jewish schooling.

This is just some of the evidence that Dr. Porwancher presented and which is included in his upcoming book, "The Jewish World of Alexander Hamilton."

This fascinating event was sponsored by the NSHA PTA in honor of the Virtual Book Fair which begins this Sunday, December 6th. We were thrilled to welcome grandparents, parents, students, faculty and friends to expand their minds and knowledge -- a true embodiment of what the Book Fair is all about.

Thank you to PTA Book Fair Chairs Anita Kashimallak, Susannah Malen and Nadine Shatzkes and PTA Presidents Sadie Hakimian and Marla Lemonik for their coordination and support of this event.

## ACCLAIMED AUTHOR "VISITS" NSHA MIDDLE SCHOOL IN HONOR OF BOOK FAIR 2020!

### By Ms. Carrie Silberman, NSHA Librarian

What better reward is there for reading a novel than meeting the author? Last week, students in 7th and 8th grade attended an informative and entertaining program with award-winning author Jordan Sonnenblick.

Sonnenblick, a former middle school English teacher, launched his literary career when one of his students was searching for a young adult novel about living with a younger sibling with cancer. When Sonnenblick was unable to find this type of book, he realized, "I always wanted to write...Why don't I write that book for her?" In a matter of months, Sonnenblick wrote his debut title, *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie*, which became an award-winning bestseller, as well as required reading for all incoming 7th grade students at NSHA.



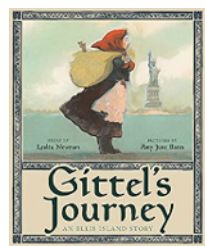
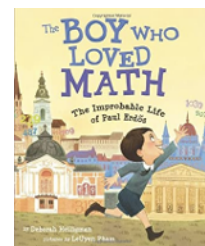
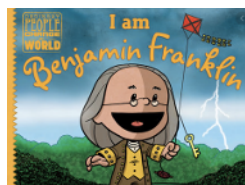
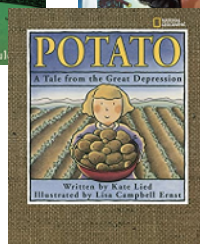
## BOOK FAIR NEWS!

**NSHA PTA  
BOOK FAIR 2020**  
December 6th-10th

**WE'RE SO EXCITED FOR THE 2020  
VIRTUAL BOOK FAIR THAT WE'RE  
BRINGING YOU SPECIALIZED BOOK  
RECOMMENDATIONS EACH WEEK!**

**THIS WEEK'S THEME:  
BIOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND HISTORICAL FICTION**

## Preschool





# Elementary



# Middle School



CHANUKAH STARTS NEXT WEEK! HERE'S A SNEAK PEAK AT WHAT WE HAVE PLANNED



DREIDEL MADNESS



CHANUKAH CHAGIGA!



CHANUKAH SWEATER DAY





## NSHA'S 1ST ANNUAL CHANUKAH ESSAY WRITING CONTEST

Heroes have walked among us throughout history. Martin Luther King Jr. advocated for equality among all races, Susan B. Anthony dedicated her life's work to fighting for fair wages and the right of women to vote, and of course, Judah Maccabee of the Chanukah story led a revolt over the Greek Army and restored the Beit Hamikdash in Jerusalem. All of these people are considered heroes. Although heroes are understood differently among individuals, they are often ordinary people whose actions touch another person's life.

To celebrate Chanukah this year, we are asking you to **write an essay** answering the questions, **"Who is your modern day Judah Maccabee? Who is your 2020 hero or heroine? Why?"**

Essay requirements:

- Essays must be emailed to [lweinstein@nsha.org](mailto:lweinstein@nsha.org) by Wednesday, December 16, at 3pm. Please include the student's full name, grade and class.
- Essays from students in grades 3 and up must be typed and should be at least 3 paragraphs.
- Students in grades 1-2 may handwrite their essays and send a picture of the essay to [lweinstein@nsha.org](mailto:lweinstein@nsha.org). An illustration may be included as well.

Winners will be announced on the last day of Chanukah and will win sufganiyot for their class or homeroom! Winning essays will also be published in the NSHA newsletter.

We can't wait to read your essays and learn which hero inspired YOU!

## NSHA PTA BOOK FAIR 2020 DECEMBER 6-10



This year, in lieu of our big in-house book fair, we will be giving parents, students, grandparents, and staff the opportunity to shop for books through our virtual sale.

**\*BETWEEN 12/6-12/10 THE VIRTUAL SALE  
WILL BE LIVE AT [WWW.NSHA.ORG/BOOKFAIR](http://WWW.NSHA.ORG/BOOKFAIR)**

- USE CODE "NSHA" WITH EVERY ORDER TO ENSURE YOUR BOOKS ARE GOING TO THE RIGHT PLACE.
- **FREE SHIPPING FOR ALL BOOK ORDERS WHEN SHIPPING TO SCHOOL. \$10 SHIPPING STRAIGHT TO YOUR HOME.**
- **WE WELCOME YOU TO FILL YOUR CHILDREN'S CLASSROOM LIBRARIES WITH MORE BOOKS BY PARTICIPATING IN THE CLASSROOM LIBRARY FUND BY WEBSITE OR VENMO.**
- **BOOK FAIR GIFT CARDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE. GIVE THE GIFT OF READING TO YOUR CHILDREN/GRANDCHILDREN THIS CHANUKAH.**
- **WE ARE OFFERING THE ABILITY TO SCHEDULE A PRIVATE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE WITH ONE OF OUR BOOK EXPERTS.**

Questions? Contact: Anita Kashimallak (516) 244-7325,  
Nadine Shatzkes (718) 612-6529, or Susannah Malen (917) 498-9408