

The end of the school year is a time when families gather up all of the pictures, special projects and reports from their children and put them into memory boxes and albums. Akiva has its own archives, the school's newsletter: *The Akivagram*. Take the time to be transformed and energized when you see the pictures and read about Akiva's contests, updates and stories. Anyone who wants to see their children's and grandchildren's smiling faces in pictures in their daily activities or to recount the many birthday books the Akiva library received during the Rosh Chodesh celebrations, should reminisce through them.

The beginning of school exploded with holidays and the Akiva community welcomed all with Grandparents' Day at Thanksgiving, Cooperative Learning Day, Cross Country meets, Ivrit Enrichment, blessings of the Lulav and Etrog in family's Sukkahs and the unforgettable jam-packed Akiva Sukkah dinner. Akiva also welcomed several newcomers: the school's first Jr. Kindergarten class and the births of Cole Yehudah Strosberg, Edith Chapman, Jack Barocas, Micah Rosenblum and Talyn Ervin. And just when the routines were setting in, the Torah Dinner stole the show as the Nashville community celebrated the accomplishments of our community's day school at the Vanderbilt Student Life Center.

Just like the cream filling in an Oreo, the middle of our school year was the best part. Akiva School hummed along with Tichon Akiva the Alumni program, the Knesset News by student council, Akiva News Network (ANN) with the middle schoolers, hot lunches with Chef Joe Perlen, Akiva Shabbats at the community synagogues, the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment Tea with the parents, the 1<sup>st</sup> grade Siddur Ceremony, the Cultural Fair, the Akiva Rocks Concert with Sababa, a Math Night that turned into the Math Contest, Purim, Spirit Week, Passover and Field Day with a Lag B'Omer Bonfire complete with an upsherin (a toddlers first hair cut).

As the students were mastering their subjects, they were also absorbing the special values of Chesed that only Akiva can provide; bringing in a dollar to support charities on Denim Day, the Federation Coin Challenge, volunteering in the Sky Chai program, PTFA events, buying gift cards for the victims of the tornado in Murfreesboro and the list goes on. Akiva families are true role models for the entire community. Our elite club, Akiva Cares, is the string of pearls that continues to link our students with community service from year to year. Through the hard work of this club, they have helped hundreds with canned food drives, clothing drives, book drives, talent shows and Jewish Family Service visits with elders and refugees to name a few.

The students and faculty were not the only busy ones this year. Numerous committees and board members worked endlessly to assure the schools commitment to its mission and stability. We recognized early in the year that the changing economy would impact our revenues. Dedicated participants kept a balanced budget with intuitive development while instilling an efficient spending plan. We developed a realistic budget for the upcoming school year to continue the guiding principle, to assure the excellence of the Akiva Education and maintain our school culture.

Spring brought in the excitement of the hire of Akiva's new Head of School, Mrs. Patricia Schwartz, who, with her husband Rick, will be joining our community in mid-July. Her leadership experience in a Head of School role, Sulam tutorials and Jewish Day School knowledge will be embraced by all and will help Akiva continue its pursuit of providing an outstanding education to its students. Through her philosophies of leadership, open and transparent communication, continuous professional development, curriculum mapping, child development and striving for best practices of pedagogy, Akiva will be in nurturing hands. She is excited to bring with her innovative ideas that will benefit the classrooms as well as the Art, Music, PE and extracurricular programs. It promises to be a year filled with of growth, development, learning, friendships and Tikkum Olam for the 108 Akiva and Chaverim students for the 2009-2010 school year.

The prospects of a new school year remind us of those who will move on to new journeys. We say good luck to a few faculty members and our 6<sup>th</sup> grade graduates and wish them success in their new endeavors. Ryan Busch, Shani Flantzman, Samantha Haynes, Aaron Kaplan, BJ Newell, Bassie Tiechtel, Ms. Calhoun, Mrs. Hosey, Mrs. Lewis, Morah Liora and Mrs. Mezer; we thank you for your time and commitment to Akiva, we will miss you all.

As we gear up for our summer vacations, we must not forget to say thank you. Thank you to all of the Akiva students and families for their continued support. Thank you to all the volunteers for their outstanding efforts. Thank you to the faculty and staff for providing unconditional love and knowledge in guiding and educating the students. And thank you to Jere Carman and Daniella Pressner who embarked on a tremendous journey on behalf of Akiva School. They continue to persevere with true sincerity and devotion to us all.

The Akiva Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, July 12<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm at Akiva School. We will be joined by our new Head of School, Mrs. Patricia Schwartz, as we install our new Board of Directors. We plan to share our vision for the future of the school with you. We hope you will join us at the meeting. However as always, if we can ever answer any questions or concerns prior to that, please feel free to contact either of us.

One last thought to include in your memory box: Go to the Akiva website and click on the link for the 2008 Torah Dinner video. Be reminded of why you chose Akiva School for your family, be inspired because this is truly a place "where amazing happens".

Sincerely,

Roberta Goodman  
Board President

Stacey Hanai  
President Elect