

# The B.A.S.H.E.R.T. Bulletin

November, 2002

Volume 2, Issue 3

## Baltimore Area Support for Home Education with Regard to Torah

### Lifestyle Choice or Desperate Option?

Do you enjoy writing? Please help us make our newsletter interesting and useful by submitting articles for the newsletter. The newsletter is published on the 1st of each month. All submissions for the newsletter should be submitted by e-mail or mail by the 20th of the month before. Classified ads of interest to our group as well as announcements of accomplishments, birthdays, or simchas are also welcome. E-mail submissions to:

penina@kosherhomeschool.org

When I first sat down to pen my article for this month's newsletter, two different themes popped into my mind. I first felt like discussing the issue of homeschooling as a lifestyle choice and philosophy verses a desperate last educational option. This is, of course, a subject discussed by me in these very pages as well as by others in

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other homeschooling communities and venues across the United States. Then I thought about a discussion of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Dewey the forefathers of the modern American Public School movement and

compulsory education laws. The more I thought about it the more I realized that the two subjects are actually related. This is seen even more poignantly in the Orthodox community than anywhere else.

Here, in the Baltimore Orthodox community, we have an interesting phenomenon. Among the 30-50 families who homeschool here (it is nearly impossible to get an accurate count) there are really only a handful of families who homeschool because they *believe* in homeschooling. That is to say that they have purposefully and thoughtfully chosen a method of educating their children that is centered in the family and the home and emphasizes the value of choice in the educational process and independent learning as a beneficial character quality. The rest of the community, for the most part, is comprised of families who have learning differences and do not fit in to any of the Jewish schools in our

community or families whose children are having difficulties for other reasons. For some, it is the workload or the quality of the teachers. For others it has been conflicts between the parents and school administration or exorbitant tuition costs. Whatever the reason, these people generally believe that the American Public School model is the best way to educate children, but that it is not working for their children. Not all of these parents run their homeschool as if it were a formal school, some even opt for unschooling. But rather, these parents see homeschooling as a desperate last option for their children to attain some level of education. And yes, the current Hebrew Day schools are for the most part modeled completely after the public schools with the exception being that they have a dual curriculum. This is not necessarily a positive difference. What it really means is that these children have a prison sentence that is at least thirty percent longer (each day) and more tightly

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packed. These kids get up early, are in school all day, have 3 hours of homework each night and many go to school on Sunday as well. When is there time for them to pursue their own interests? Or just relax and be normal kids? Sleep deprived and about to burst from the pressure, some kids begin to fold. Some parents, truly concerned for their children choose homeschooling out of desperation. Other parents, so committed to the philosophy of educating children in a formal school, leave their children to battle it out for themselves. Some miraculously survive and thrive while others dutifully serve their prison term and go out into the world in need of direction, guidance and therapy. Now, this is not to say that parents who choose to homeschool for these reasons are wrong. On the contrary, parents who homeschool for these reasons are rising up and meeting the challenges of parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These are parents who care about their children and are choosing the best options they can. B.A.S.H.E.R.T. was created for the purpose of serving both types of homeschoolers. But perhaps it would be helpful to explore where the model of modern

public schools came from.

For a more in-depth look at this subject I recommend reading the book by Mary K. Novello entitled, "For all the Wrong Reasons: The Story Behind Government Schools". It is not my goal, in the small scope of this article to give you a complete history of how we got to where we are now, I will however give you a summary. Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Dewey, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophers, respectively, were by far the most influential minds to mold the American public school model. In short, it was their belief that children needed to be brought together so that the State could educate them according to its values and insure the end result of a populace of citizens who have been indoctrinated in atheism and humanism and instructed in the ways of its society. In addition to Rousseau, Dewey was also influenced by the huge influx of German educators who were leaving Nazi Germany in the 1930's. These men not only brought to America the model of education rooted in German society, but the values of Marxism as well.... values they themselves held dear. In short, the purpose of the form of education we

have in our country today is to be a factory. This factory's mission is to produce cookie-cutter citizens who hold tolerance, atheism and State loyalty as its highest value. And while this model of education is very good at achieving its goal, it is counterproductive when it comes to cultivating healthy individuals and healthy families which is the only way to ensure a healthy citizenry and a healthy nation.

### Next Meeting:

The next meeting of B.A.S.H.E.R.T. will be held on Monday, December 9th, 2002 at 7:30pm at the home of Penina Taylor. Chana Lazaroff will be our guest speaker and will present a talk on alternate methods of education. Please be on time, the meeting will begin promptly at 7:30. This is a good topic for everyone, but especially those who have children with special needs, bring a friend.

## Upcoming Events

### **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra**

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra offers programs during the week for children from preschool through 8th grade. All programs are performed at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall and cost \$5.50 per person. There are group discounts and a free chaperone ticket for each 15 student tickets that are purchased. The programs available this year are:

#### Tiny Tots (Pre-K - Kindergarten)

Thursday, November 21, 2002 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Its Raining and Dogs!"

Tuesday, February 25, 2003 at

10:00 and 11:30am AND Wednesday, February 26 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Peter and His Instrument Friends"

Wednesday, April 2, 2003 at 10:00 and 11:30am "All about Opposites"

#### Prime Time (Grades 1-3)

Tuesday, December 3, 2002 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Its Raining Cats and Dogs!"

Tuesday, March 4, 2003 at 10:00 and 11:30am AND Wednesday, March 5, 2003 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Peter and His Instrument Friends"

Thursday April 3 at 10:00 and 11:30am AND Friday April 11 at 10:00 and 11:30am "All About Opposites"

#### Music For Youth (Grades 4-8)

Wednesday, October 23, 2002 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Beethoven: A Musical Hero"

Tuesday, January 7, 2003 at 10:00 and 11:30am "A Musical Portrait of Picasso"

Wednesday, March 26, 2003 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Brilliant Brass"

Please consult program guide for information about each concert.

## More Upcoming Events

### **Wednesday, Nov. 6, 1:00pm**

Field trip to National Colonial Farm in Accokeek, Maryland. We will experience either the Life of the Colonial Child program which centers on the daily life of an 18th century farm child or one of the other programs, depending on ages and amount of children. Cost is \$3.50 per student and adults, 45 year olds are \$.50 and three and under are free.

### **Wednesday, Nov. 20th 10:00am**

Educational program at the Folger's Theater in Washington, D.C. The program begins at 10:00am with an interactive program that helps kids understand the play and develop acting skills. Then there is a break for lunch (bring brown bag). Then there is the actual production of Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost. This is one of Shakespeare's comedies and will be performed in the Folger's Elizabethan Theater by the Shenandoah Shakespeare Express. Seats are very limited, so tickets need to be bought ASAP. This is suitable for ages 9

and up. Ticket cost is \$16.50 which is a major discount from regular ticket price. To purchase tickets, call Folger group sales: Hillary at 202-675-0367.

### **Tuesday, Nov. 26, 10:00am**

Field trip to the Clara Barton National Historic site to learn about the woman who began the American Red Cross. This field trip is free. Call Sara Ani to sign up 410-764-0074.

### **Wednesday, Jan. 8 10:00-12:30**

Field trip to Winterthur for a special homeschool tour of the exhibition The Grandeur of Viceroyal Mexico: Treasures from the Meseo Franz Mayer.

Discover the rich artistic heritage of Mexico from 1521 to 1821, when it was a colony of Spain. This exhibition features exquisite and often flamboyant decorative arts that reflect a unique blend of cultures.

After the tour we will be able to make a Mexican craft. Recommended for ages 7 and up.

Cost for fieldtrip:

\$5.00 per child

1 free adult for each paid child (cost is usually \$8 per adult). Please sign up at the November meeting or call Sara Ani to make arrangements 410-764-0074. Payment must be made at time of sign up.

### **Tuesday, December 10, 10:30am**

Field trip to the American Red Cross Headquarters. Learn about the American Red Cross and what they do....a great follow-up field trip to the Clara Barton House. This field trip is also free. Call Sara Ani to sign up 410-764-0074.

### **Thursday, Dec. 26 1:00pm**

Kennedy Center production of "Tom Sawyer". Mark Twain's classic American tale comes to the Kennedy Center in a fun-filled musical adaptation that chronicles the zany escapades of Tom, Huck, Becky and all of their friends. Kennedy center literature says ages 9 and up. Call Penina Taylor to sign up. Payment must

### **Oversight Program**

If you would prefer to be under the oversight of a Jewish Organization, to be reviewed by a homeschoolin mom just like yourself, perhaps you should consider joining the Lubovitch Home School Program. Run by Celia Greenberg, under the supervision of Rabbi Baron of Columbia, LHSP provides accountability required by Maryland Law without having to report directly to County officials. For more information, contact Celia Greenberg at 410-997-3950.

### **Guitar class**

Chaya Drabkin is offering a guitar course for children ages 6 and up. Two lessons a week, for 2 weeks. There will be four lessons and a recital after that. Chaya has at least 5 guitars to lend for FREE for the children to use and practice on at home.

The cost is \$20 for all four lessons plus the recital. Guaranteed that the child can play one full song by the end of his/her first lesson!

Also, Chaya has some spaces left to teach home-schooling kids either violin, piano, or guitar. She

uses the Suzuki method, which teaches music by listening, rather than by reading. (The way we learn our languages!) She is extremely successful and loves teaching. These spaces are available only during school hours. Please contact Chaya for more information or to register. (410) 358-4929

### **Learn over the internet!**

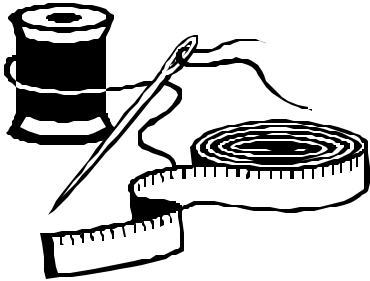
Rabbi Y. Pollack of Toronto, Canada has created an online Yeshivah. Contact Rabbi Pollack for more information.

ypollack@sympatico.ca

## Of Interest.....

### Sew Perfect

Sew Perfect, a home economics course run by Yakira Cluster is now offering classes in sewing (including clothing, gifts, mending, etc) as well as decorative needlework. Additionally, she is offering a full home economic curriculum including household and time management skills. Flexible



schedule, reasonable rates. Hurry, space is limited and classes are filling quickly. Call Yakira for more details 410-764-8425.

### Mother/Daughter Rosh Chodesh Group

Plans are now being put together for a monthly get together for moms and girls. The idea is to get together to celebrate Rosh Chodesh and spend time together working on crafts such as quilting, knitting, etc. Tentative plans for Rosh Chodesh Teves are for making candles. This activity will be held at the home of Yehudis Eagle. Date and time to be announced. Please call Sara Ani 410-764-0074 or Yehudis Eagle 410-764-3772 for more information.

### We Need You!

Please contribute to the B.A.S.H.E.R.T. bulletin....help make the bulletin more interesting and more informative.

### Important Notice

If you want to “stay in the loop” and be kept up to date on what is going on in the group, if you would like to receive this newsletter even when you can’t or don’t make it to meetings, you must become a member of B.A.S.H.E.R.T. If you do not pay your \$25 membership and fill out a form, this will be the last newsletter you receive in the mail. Please don’t get left behind AND your support helps the entire homeschooling community!

### B.A.S.H.E.R.T.

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