

DOWNTOWNDESK

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WHAT WE WANT FOR OUR CHILDREN

According to a rabbinic legend, at the end of our lives, we will be asked some challenging questions about the way we lived and about the choices we made. The rabbis warn us that the toughest question we will have to answer is: "Did we enjoy all of the permitted pleasures?"

Where some traditions value asceticism, Judaism places a fair amount of emphasis on happiness as an individual and communal objective. At Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, the happiness of our students is a high priority—because a significant portion of their childhood is spent at our school, and because happy children have a better chance of growing into happy, successful adults.

Happiness is about more than having fun, and it is more than a function of a good or bad day. It is about the content and flow of one's life. In the context of school, I believe that children

are happy when they are meaningfully and productively engaged, when they feel valued and cared for, and when they enjoy a sense of belonging.

At Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, our three foundational pillars—Inspiring Curiosity, Honouring Diversity, and Creating Community—in addition to producing capable, caring, and successful alumni, are also a recipe for living happily. Inspiring Curiosity is about engaging our students' hearts

and minds in learning that is productive and meaningful. Honouring Diversity begins here at school as we encourage our students to discover and value what is unique and special in themselves and in their classmates. In Creating Community, we invite our students to embrace their uniqueness and common humanity—as Jews, Canadians, citizens of the world, and inhabitants of the planet Earth—and to celebrate the multiple ways in which they belong. Learning how to participate, contribute, and thrive as a member of a community is one of the great keys to happiness.

As parents and as teachers, we have high hopes and expectations for our children. We want them to be decent, we want them to be successful, and we want them to contribute to the good of the community. But, bottom line, in our heart of hearts, more than anything, we want our children to be happy. At Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, we share that goal. We want our students to enjoy all of the "permitted pleasures" in life, and for ourselves, we want the joy and satisfaction of contributing to their lasting happiness.

Dr. Dan Goldberg, Principal



Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School

INSPIRING CURIOSITY HONOURING DIVERSITY CREATING COMMUNITY

CENTRAL PERKS

Our downtown location is a key element in the identity of Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School and an exciting and enriching part of our students' day-to-day experience. With immediate access to two subway lines and a streetcar, and the energy and culture of downtown Toronto just outside our front doors, the surrounding neighbourhoods have become an extension of our classrooms and an invaluable educational resource.

In Grade Three, urban, suburban, and rural life in Ontario is the focus of the integrated unit: "Where You Live Shapes How You Live." While our students use books and websites to study means of transportation, access to entertainment, sources of employment, types of housing and public buildings, and population density, their understanding of urban life takes on a new dimension when they step outside for an engaging downtown excursion.



Grade Six core teacher David Weiss leads students and parents on a downtown walking tour as they explore Canada's changing communities.

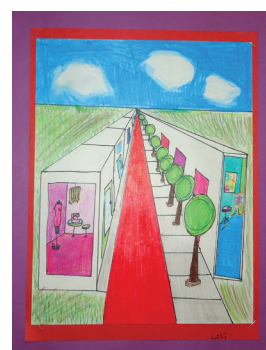
Our Grade Three students embark on an urban exploration which includes Chinatown, the compact residential housing near Dundas Street, the AGO, the hospitals that line University Avenue with its broad boulevards and memorials, and finally, the unique phenomenon of an urban shopping mall—the Eaton Centre. Grade Three returns to school, proud of what they have learned during a morning full of discovery in downtown Toronto.

In Grade Six, exploring Canada's changing communities becomes more than a textbook exercise when our students take to the streets in search of living evidence of what they have studied in class. A walking tour led by their teacher provides the group with a unique opportunity to discover vestiges of Canada's founding nations. In addition to the clear predominance of English influences, including the names of streets, stores, and restaurants, and the language spoken by most of their fellow pedestrians, our students find French outside the Alliance Francaise, and Aboriginal languages outside the Native Centre. The class learns that Bloor Street, once a concession road, fits the grid pattern of most of Toronto's streets, which reflects a British



Grade Three students experience shapes in a new light during a visit to the Art Gallery of Ontario.

approach to city planning. Moving north, the diagonal meandering of Davenport Road follows an ancient Indian trail that wisely cut a path between the hills of Toronto. To the south, bordering Chinatown, is Kensington Market with its old synagogues and its shop windows etched with Hebrew lettering. By getting to know Toronto with their feet, our Grade Six students deepen their connection with their city, and come to understand its significance as an international centre of history and culture.



Art by a Grade Five student using one point perspective. Students take on the role of architects as they design their own cities and towns.

Integrating the arts into their unit on Canada, Grade Four students analyze the work of renowned Canadian artist Norval Morrisseau, noting what elements of art are used to create his recognizable style. They then create their own compositions utilizing his stylistic language of bold shapes held together by a connecting line.



EQUALITY VS. EQUITY: BALANCING NEEDS IN A COMMUNITY

Central to Jewish tradition, and central to the values of Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, is the importance of community. Therefore, every grade begins the school year with an integrated unit on community. Each age group focuses on an aspect of community that is especially relevant to their experience. For example, our Grade Two students focus on the “big idea” that for a community to be successful, everyone has to respect themselves and those around them.

In exploring this big idea, students learn about the concepts of equality and equity. While both objectives are concerned with fairness, their approach to fairness is different. With equality, the emphasis is on treating everyone the same; equity is more concerned with ensuring that everyone gets what they need. In discovering how this distinction



Students share ideas and learn to problem-solve cooperatively and constructively within the Grade Two classroom community.

applied to their own lives, this year's Grade Two class worked together to identify rules that exemplify these two elements of fairness. For example, they observed that all students are expected to hand in their homework (equality), but some students may need extra time

or additional assistance in order to complete an assignment (equity). The result of this combination of equality and equity is a classroom community in which all students have a fair chance to learn. Recognizing that everyone has different strengths and weaknesses

and, therefore, different needs, encourages our students to respect, appreciate, and support their classmates and themselves.

One of the challenges in any community is to balance the needs of individuals and groups—especially when certain needs come into conflict. Grade Two is a time when students can and want to begin resolving conflicts independently. As part of their unit on community, students learn to use “I Messages” as a way of taking responsibility for their needs and expressing them in respectful and constructive ways. Through offering and receiving “I Messages,” students are able to share their concerns and frustrations without accusing their classmates or hurting their feelings. Through these basic conflict resolution skills, our students join in creating a caring community where everyone's needs count and where everyone's participation matters.



Grade One students are assisted by a friend in Grade Five as they eagerly select books at the annual Paul Penna DJDS Book Swap. This school-wide event is in honour of Tu B'Shevat, the new year for trees.





Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School
INSPIRING CURIOSITY HONOURING DIVERSITY CREATING COMMUNITY

750 Spadina Avenue, 2nd Floor
Toronto / Ontario / M5S 2J2
416.928.3537 / info@djds.ca

CANADA IN SCOPE

As part of their integrated unit “Oh Canada”, Grade Six students studied Canadian communities, past and present. The children formed intricate plasticine sculptures of various immigrant groups as well as animals connected with our country. Collaboratively, they created a flat pictorial representation of the Canadian landscape for their sculptures to inhabit. This project included many discussions on the nature of stereotypes and their sources, which led to examining how to represent diverse groups in contemporary, culturally-sensitive terms.



There are many ways to contribute to our future. Every dollar received is allocated with considerable thought according to need and priority. To support our school, please contact Pauline Pankowski, Director of Development, at 416-928-3537 ext 670 or at pep@djds.ca

GROWING JUDAISM DOWNTOWN

A Message from the Paul Penna DJDS Fundraising Committee

As in every day school, fundraising is a top priority at Paul Penna DJDS. To the volunteers and staff who tirelessly and enthusiastically work their magic, and to our incredibly generous donors, we say “thank you”. We are continually inspired by you and the belief that our special school really is “Growing Judaism. Downtown.”

\$100,000 Raised in Two Weeks!

This past December, we challenged our community to make a Channukah miracle happen. One of our families offered to match our donations up to \$50,000, and we are thrilled to announce that before the end of December we reached our goal — a total of \$100,000. Add to that the generous contributions we received before and after, and we are now two thirds of the way to our annual campaign goal of \$300,000.

Keeping the Momentum Going

\$300,000 is our annual goal, but we have so much momentum and excitement happening now that we are going to reach for the stars! At Paul Penna DJDS, we believe our children are engaged in exciting learning that is second to none, led by some of the finest educators in the country. With your help, we can do more. With enhanced Student Services and Resource offerings, access to new technology and technology programming, continued state of the art professional development opportunities for our teachers, as well as growing our subsidy program to give more families the opportunity to give their children a Jewish education, Paul Penna DJDS will become a leader in the Toronto day school community.

“We know that PPDJDS is a vibrant school, filled with passionate, committed teachers and students, and we know that fundraising is a top priority. By offering a match, we hoped to motivate and inspire our school community to give generously. We are now in awe of our community. To have met our challenge in only two weeks is beyond anything we had hoped, and we thank each and every one of them for stepping up the way they did.” *Paul Penna DJDS Parent and Donor*