



ÉCOLE SECONDAIRE

**BIALIK**

HIGH SCHOOL

## JPPS-BIALIK PARENTS ARE TALKING...

Bialik's new principal, Ken Scott, has already earned the students' respect. In the classroom, teachers set expectations, including mutual respect between teachers and students. My son has been blessed with some wonderful teachers who make the subjects come alive and challenge him. If this is what has been accomplished in one month, we look forward to what the future will hold.

JPPS-Bialik parent Mona Segal Strasser JPPS '79

Now with both my son and daughter at Bialik from Solomon Schechter this year, I can see that tremendous emphasis is being put on effective communication with parents by Bialik's administration. And, the atmosphere at the school is so positive. My kids are feeling it too. There is such a good buzz about Bialik in the community!

Bialik parent Ruth Reuben

My husband Seth (Bialik Class of '83) and I are so excited. Our eldest is graduating from JPPS this year and will be going onto Bialik. No other school can offer what we are looking for: strong secular studies and meaningful Judaic programming. It is a wonderfully positive environment.

JPPS parent Sandy Surkis Dalfen

Students are excited by the new leadership at Bialik and are happy that work is being left for them when teachers are absent. As long as Bialik continues to grow from strength to strength, my children will continue on from JPPS to Bialik. My husband Richard (a Bialik Class of '87 graduate) and I believe that sending our kids to a Jewish day school like JPPS-Bialik strengthens our children's Jewish identity and our community's future.

JPPS-Bialik parent Marnie Stern

I am glad we chose for our son to continue from JPPS – where he had a fabulous experience – to Bialik, as he is really happy there. It was a seamless and exciting transition for him. While he hasn't needed Bialik's Transition Team, that does impress me, as do his teachers. Also, I was happy to see Principal Scott outside with the students at pick-up at Bialik, just the way JPPS' principal, Adina Matas, does it. I have only good things to say about the school. Bialik is definitely an option for my daughter, who is at JPPS in Grade 6.

JPPS-Bialik parent Joanne Eisman

**OPEN HOUSE TONIGHT  
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**Join the crowd and come to  
Bialik's Open House TONIGHT  
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6500 Kildare, CSL**

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[www.jppsbialik.ca](http://www.jppsbialik.ca)

## EDUCATION

# The Yiddish language is still alive and well

By Linda Zlatkin  
The Suburban

As far back as 1798, David Friedlander, a member of the Haskalah Jewish enlightenment movement, described Yiddish in the following way: "Yiddish, a language without rules, mutilated and unintelligible without our circle, must be completely abandoned."

However, it didn't die then, nor did it become extinct by any means — even when dealt a mortal blow during the Holocaust when six million Jews were killed.

The thriving lingua franca of approximately 11 million Jews before the Second World War, this ancient language that is over 1,000 years old "has not yet said its last word." These were the words that Isaac Bashevis Singer expressed in 1978 when he received the Nobel Prize for Literature for his Yiddish writings. Now jump ahead to 2011, and you will not hear the words, "Why bother to study a 'dying' language?" In fact, you will hear the exact opposite.

"My entire class loves Yiddish," says Samantha Leibgott, a Grade 10 student at Bialik High School in Côte St. Luc. "We do many interesting projects. For example, we did a project on shtells, which was a small town village with a large Jewish population. I did one on my

grandfather's shtetl in Poland, where he grew up. I got to learn about the town he lived in and how different his life was from mine."

The young Hampstead resident's four grandparents all speak Yiddish. And although she doesn't speak the language fluently, she does manage to hold short conversations.

"When I spoke to my grandfather in Yiddish about the weather, he was smiling," says Leibgott. "Yiddish is such a beautiful, fun language to learn and it isn't hard either. I can read short stories and am working on improving so that I'll be able to read a full book in Yiddish eventually. I'm interested in learning more when I get older."

Leibgott hopes Yiddish will be preserved. "Yiddish is an important language to keep alive. Especially because of all the things people went through in the Holocaust. When I speak it to my grandparents in Yiddish, it makes them so happy. And when they're happy, it makes me so happy, too."

Yiddish, a fusion of German dialects mixed with Hebrew, Aramaic, Slavic languages and traces of Romance languages is a language that has been primarily used by Ashkenazi Jews since the 10th century when they settled in Germany's Rhineland. As they migrated towards Eastern Europe, they collected words and syntax from the places they settled. It is not a language that was spo-



Bialik students Samantha Leibgott and Olivia Harboun.



LINDA ZLATKIN PHOTOS

Lorna Smith has taught Yiddish at Bialik for the past 29 years.

ken by the Sephardic Jews of Spanish/Middle Eastern origin who spoke Ladino.

So when Côte St. Luc resident Olivia Harboun — whose family is Sephardic — entered Bialik she was thrilled with the opportunity to learn Yiddish. “I teach my family the new things we learn in school. For example, I did the prayers for the Passover seders. My teacher gave us extra marks for this,” says the Grade

11 student.

“Yiddish is a very special language. But more than just a language, it’s a culture, because it is filled with a set of values,” says Lorna Smith, who has taught Yiddish at Bialik for the past 29 years and recently received the Elaine Wisenthal Milech Award for Professional Excellence and Leadership in Education.

Smith adds to the joy of Yiddish by using games as a teaching aid. She also

accompanies her choir on the piano as her students sing Yiddish songs. Her students are exposed to a rich treasure of poetry and stories by authors like Sholem Aleichem and Yud Lamed Peretz that deliver messages like having respect for the elderly and empathy for the sick, and about the Jewish ideals like *tzedakah* (charity).

“Some of these old stories are even related to themes like pollution, bully-

ing as well as divorce,” adds Hanna Eliashiv, head of Judaic Studies at Bialik. “So we can still tie them in with topics that are relevant to today’s world. The children loved these stories so much that they put on a skit. Not only are the children embracing the language because it’s part of their Jewish heritage, they’re having a good time, too.”

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ADVERTISING FEATURE

# What’s new this fall at the Cummings Centre

By Linda Zlatkin  
The Suburban

There is so much going on at the Cummings Centre for Seniors this year, it cannot possibly all be mentioned. Whether its learning about global affairs or taking courses like computers, film and art, one thing is certain; no matter what you choose your life will be enriched.

An interesting program being offered is the Talkumentary Film Series (documentaries that will have you talking). Some of the themes to look forward to include *Extraordinary Women* like Ruth Gruber and Beah Richards, who defied tradition in so many ways.

*Ahead of Time* is about Gruber, an American journalist born in 1911 was the youngest PhD in history and had a career that lasted more than 70 years. *Beah: A Black Woman Speaks* is about Richards, an African American actress, poet and political activist known for her Oscar-nominated role in *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*, overcame racial stereotypes.

“For people who want to learn how a documentary actually becomes a documentary,” says Elaine Shapiro, Director of Program Services, “there is a series of courses called *Discovering Docs: What Happens When the Real Meets the Reel*, given by Barry Lazar who teaches docu-



PHOTO COURTESY CUMMINGS CENTRE FOR SENIORS

mentary production at Concordia University.”

There are also special event lectures. In *The Media: Are We Informed or Misinformed?* a panel of journalists, including Alan Allnut, Ellin Bessner, Bernard St. Laurent and *Suburban* editor Beryl Wajsman, will discuss what drives the media. “All our classes give people the chance to explore their creativity and to stay in touch with what’s happening in the world around them,” says Shapiro. “Lifelong learning is a gift we can give ourselves when we finally have the time, something many people have been waiting a lifetime to receive.”

**The Cummings Centre is located at 5700 Westbury in Snowdon. There are also programs off campus in Westmount, the West Island, St. Laurent and Chomedey. For more information call 514-342-1234, email [elaine@cummingscentre.org](mailto:elaine@cummingscentre.org) and visit [www.cummingscentre.org](http://www.cummingscentre.org)**

## COHEN

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sionals showcased their support for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) as they came together to participate in the eighth annual Ride for Diabetes Research recently at Place Ville Marie. The event attracted over 2,800 participants from 75 of Montreal’s top companies. The objective was to raise \$1.2 million for research on Type 1 diabetes. Last Friday, another edition took place at Centropolis Laval with a

fundraising objective of \$200,000. The Ride for Diabetes Research is a stationary bike-athon that requires teams of five members to pedal for 40 minutes (seven minutes per rider) as they have fun and raise the most money. The 2011 Ride, to be held in 18 cities across Canada between September and November, is expected to draw an anticipated 23,000 participants with a fundraising goal of \$7.5 million.

Have you got something for the Public Eye? Email [mcohen@thesuburban.com](mailto:mcohen@thesuburban.com) or call 514-484-9203, ext. 307. ■

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