

Purim Packages are Conduit for First Ever Collaborative Day Schools Initiative by Hodie Kahn

Golda Meir once remarked that she never did anything alone; whatever she accomplished in Israel was accomplished collectively.

Taking their cue from Golda, Greater Vancouver's day schools have joined together to accomplish something collectively, the first-ever Greater Vancouver Jewish Day Schools Purim 2011 Mishloach Manot Campaign.

Campaign co-chair, Aimee Promislow, of Vancouver Hebrew Academy credits Vancouver Talmud Torah Parents' Association co-presidents, Leana Gaerber and Marnie Greenwald, for the newest collaboration.

"Last year, we began a wonderful partnership with King David High School, so it was very exciting when Leana and Marnie approached us and asked if VTT could join the party," said Ms. Promislow. "It just snowballed from there to include every day school in Greater Vancouver."

"I really can't say enough great things about the incredible working relationship and support we've had from all the other day schools. I think this effort is a great example of community-building at it's best," she added.

The campaign is being coordinated by Vancouver Hebrew Academy, in partnership with King David High School, Pacific Torah Institute, Richmond Jewish Day School, Shalhevet Girls High School, and Vancouver Talmud Torah.

"VTT's in-house *mishloach manot* program was aimed at building spirit within the VTT community. But it was clear when we started using the same webserver two years ago to process orders online that there was overlap between our customers, KDHS's and VHA's, which was a bit problematic," explained Leana Gaerber.

"We approached VHA this year to consolidate our programs as a way of helping reduce confusion and assist them with, what is for them, a critical fundraiser. We are very happy that we can continue to meet our needs and play a part in supporting another Jewish school in the process."

KDHS will serve as host for a mass "pack-a-thon" for the fundraiser, which will bring together Grade 6 students from RJDS, VTT and VHA to help pack up the 1600 themed packages. Senior KDHS students and parents will also help lend a hand. Volunteers from every school will participate by delivering the packages throughout Greater Vancouver on Purim day, March 20th.

This year's theme is being kept tightly under wraps, but Ms. Promislow is confident that it will be as well-received as those of previous years, including last year's "Olympic Recovery Kit," a ceramic mug with a Purim-inspired Inukshuk logo, filled with a selection of energy-boosting and stress-relieving goodies to soothe Olympic fever.

Now in it's 17th year, the mishloach manot campaign has become not only a signature fundraiser for VHA but also its major one.

"We are very grateful to everyone who supports us by participating in this fundraiser, and especially thankful this year to all the day schools for working with us to maintain the integrity of this program for VHA," said Rabbi Don Pacht, principal of VHA. "We look forward to reciprocating."

Prices are \$5/package for day school recipients, \$7/package for non-day school recipients and cards for out-of-towners, \$180/each whole school.

For more information or to participate in the program, please go to: jewishdayschoolspurim@gmail.com, or Ruth Huberman at 604-263-1274.