



The Emery/Weiner School

Connecting with the Past, Preparing for the Future

Highlights - Kotarot

A quarterly report on news and happenings

Volume 3, Number 3 • The Emery/Weiner School • Houston, Texas • Fall 2003

MAKING MONSTERS

STUART J. DOW, HEAD OF SCHOOL



*Stuart J. Dow,
Head of School*

“Making Monsters?” I know, many of you are thinking: “What kind of a title is that for an article from the Head of School?! This guy will do *anything* to get us to read his stuff.” To be sure, I confess that every quarter I do ponder what I should say and how I should say it in order to encourage at least some of you to read my *Kotarot* cover story. But please know, all that I ever write is true. Because as the hackneyed expression goes, “Truth is often stranger than fiction.” And such is the case here, with the subject of this article. Not once, but twice in the first week of school I was told by parents of Emery/Weiner students that – and I quote – we had “made monsters” of their kids. Thankfully, both mothers who used the expression meant it in a good way. Allow me to explain.

Perhaps nothing is a better indicator of how a school is doing than its retention rate. At a recent conference sponsored by the Bureau of Jewish Education of Houston’s Jewish Federation, I learned that the average attrition rate for Jewish day schools across the country is 10%. Meaning, approximately 10% of the students enrolled will leave before graduation because they are simply not happy or satisfied with the product. It is a great credit to Emery/Weiner that our number is much lower; in fact, it is less than half the national average. And even more telling is that of those families who do leave our school, dissatisfaction is rarely (if ever) cited as a factor. Instead, the causes have been items such as a lengthy commute, or personal issues connected with the particular needs of a student. Which is precisely what occurred in the first “monster story” I’d like to share with you.

Recently I received a call from the mother of one of the few non-Jewish students enrolled in our high school. She explained that with great consternation, her family had decided to leave Emery/Weiner and enroll their child in public school.

The reasons, she explained, had nothing to do with unhappiness or dissatisfaction. “Put simply,” she told me, “you’ve created a monster. I’ve never seen my daughter learn or grow more than she did this past year at Emery. She developed an independence in thought, a maturity and a self-confidence that I’ve never seen before, and it is on account of the teachers and the environment in your remarkable school. This is the hardest decision we’ve ever had to make.” For this particular student, however, the chance to perform certain choral music and study Japanese became priorities that our school could not satisfy. (Though it is not always easy to accept, we cannot be all things to all people and therefore must occasionally part company with good people.)

On the very same day as the conversation described above, I received a call from the mother of one of our returning eleventh graders. The parent wanted to arrange a meeting with our new college counselors in order to discuss her child’s strong desire to spend the second semester studying in Israel. “I don’t know how this might impact the application process, and whether a university admissions officer would frown upon this or not, but what I do know is that you’ve created a monster.” I didn’t understand. “What do you mean?” I asked nervously. “I mean,” the mother responded, “that my daughter has never been more committed to Israel or her Jewish identity. Whatever you’re doing in that school has made some kind of difference!” Notwithstanding (and not knowing) the potential impact on the student’s college application process, I couldn’t help but smile and feel proud.

Making monsters. That’s what we do. Monsters whose demonic qualities include independent, intellectual curiosity, and a passion for Judaism and Zionism. Our middle school has been doing it for twenty-five years and our high school has been doing it for the past two, but I hope you’ll forgive me and yet support me when I say, “Let the horror continue!”

GRAPPLING WITH STUDENT STRESS

JONATHAN L. SILVER, HEAD OF UPPER SCHOOL



Jonathan L. Silver,
Head of Upper School

It took a couple of weeks to shake off the summer slumber, not that many of us had time to loaf. With the beginning of a new school year, most of us experience greater levels of stress and the whiplash effect of our lives being jerked forward, from zero to sixty, in a few seconds flat. Emery students are busy and rushed in rediscovering their school-life routines, tackling new academic challenges, assuming leadership responsibilities in extracurricular activity, performing community service, enrolling in SAT preparatory classes, participating in team athletic practices and contests, attending youth organization meetings, and on and on.

Admittedly, my emotions are mixed. A part of me worries that *we*, the adults in our kids' lives, are expecting too much. A part of me worries that the kids, themselves, expect too much of each other and push themselves too hard. Another part of me marvels at our kids' resourcefulness and resiliency. And in those rare moments, when time seems to slow for a minute or two and I get a chance to raise my head just above the rim of our little fishbowl, a refreshing perspective actually has me humored, and I am encouraged to take life a little less seriously.

Recognizing that our teenaged kids are especially stressed in these times and in their lives is not a new revelation. Many of us are now familiar with David Elkind's *The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon*.¹ I received my copy from Dr. Elkind directly, in 1997, just after he finished delivering a talk to an assembled mass of independent schoolteachers, in Pittsburgh, PA. Throughout his presentation I scribbled many notes and observed an audience in a constant and seemingly synchronous nod of agreement, lamenting the loss of childhood. We collectively understood that the stresses of "growing up too fast too soon" had invaded our students' lives.

Just recently I found these scribbled notes tucked in the pages of my copy of *The Hurried Child*. In reviewing them, I was not surprised to discover that my frustration I expressed then in those notes is the frustration I feel now: we're getting better at identifying the symptoms of adolescent stress, but we feel individually powerless to change those parts of life that are the sources of this stress. Elkind's assessment reflects his professional bias: our teens are in psychological distress because they are taking on responsibilities and encountering various challenges that they are developmentally ill equipped to handle.

F. Washington Jarvis, the longtime headmaster of Boston's Roxbury Latin School, takes on the issue of adolescent stress and pressure differently. As an educator, he is less concerned with diagnosing the stress his students experience than he is with preparing them better – to equip them with the tools – to handle stress. Jarvis' prescription is a fourfold strategy.

First, since "...one of the biggest causes of stress is our unwillingness to accept the simple reality that there are things about our lives we cannot change," we need to learn how to accept this reality and expend more wisely our energies on things we can change. Second, we need to distinguish better between our hopes and unfettered optimism. "When you hope, you aspire to something worthwhile... If you're an optimist, you will be bitterly disappointed over and over in life when your hopes are not realized." Third, Jarvis suggests that we inventory our worries. "The very act of transferring to a piece of paper all these pressures spinning around in one's head is excellent therapy." Jarvis' final suggestion for dealing with stress "is prayer, real prayer, not the going-through-the-motions, listening-to-someone-else-pray sort of prayer you are perhaps familiar with from church or synagogue. I'm talking about prayer that is often beyond words... When we pray we offer up all the things we cannot change, and we ask for the strength to live gracefully with our own limitations and with the things about others that disappoint us. When we pray we offer up our whole list of anxieties – all the burdens and responsibilities and aspirations and hopes – that are ours, and we ask for the courage to bear those burdens and to cling to those aspirations... Happiness in life is not the absence of pressure and stress. Happiness in life is finding a way to deal with the inevitable pressure and stress of life."²

The wisdom that Elkind and Jarvis have regarding stress is not exclusively theirs. In fact, most of us were taught these life lessons years ago, when we were just little kids. This past February, we lost one of these early childhood teachers to stomach cancer. Fred Rogers was 74. Three generations of Americans spent a part of their childhood in "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," sipping the enriched waters from his deep well of knowledge, spirit, tenderness, and understanding. While Fred Rogers did not corner the market on words of wisdom regarding childhood either, he certainly held a remarkable share. Mr. Rogers was asked once: "What are the basic necessities for kids to be ready to learn?" He replied, "(1) a sense of self-worth, (2) a sense of trust, (3) curiosity, (4) the capacity to look and listen carefully, (5) the capacity to play, and (6) times of solitude."³

Look carefully at Emery High School and you will see that these six necessities are present in many and varying ways: in the nurturing environment; the strong bonds students have with our faculty; the roles students and faculty share on school committees; the role of the *Shabbatonim* in strengthening our community; the class trips to the Deep South, Los Angeles, the Hill Country, and Big Bend; the opportunities for enlightenment and self-reflection through our *Ma'amadim*; and so on. As Emery continues to grow, as our student pioneers of all three classes experience more rigorous curriculum, a greater array of extracurricular activity, more competitive athletics, higher expectations for artistic expression, the pressures and stresses of standardized testing, the college application process, drivers' licenses, jobs, dating and anything

(Continued on page 3) →

A SEASON OF CHANGE

KENNETH J. MCKENZIE, ACTING HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL & DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY



*Kenneth J. McKenzie,
Acting Head of
Middle School &
Director of Technology*

I am very excited about my new position as Acting Head of the Middle School (although I wish it were under different circumstances). With over 20 years of administrative experience on the college, high school, and middle school level, I feel well prepared for my new role. I have always been passionate about having quality permeate all aspects of both the academic and co-curricular programming efforts that exist in a school community, and it is this passion that attracted me to Texas from New England.

Before the school year began, our middle school administrative team held a staff retreat to identify the goals and objectives that we wanted to achieve in the 2003-2004 school year. There is no question that a quality agenda will drive all decisions that we make, and we believe this makes any goal achievable. In fact, we believe that almost any obstacle can be overcome with sufficient perseverance and critical thinking. The bar has been set very high and requires that our team relentlessly track our performance toward those goals. Please be assured that you have our promise that we will constantly stretch ourselves to deliver the finest educational and co-curricular program.

There were several goals established for 2003-2004, and I would like to share some of the highlights with you below:

- Continued implementation of the Southern Association of Schools & Colleges (SACS) accreditation report
- Continued integration of technology into the curriculum
- Continued refinement of academic curriculum
- Continued expansion of clubs and co-curricular

activities

- Continued integration of career education in our academic and co-curricular program
- Continued energy and focus on the best possible programming for *Kallah*
- Continued and increased electronic communication with parents and students
- Continued implementation of our Substance Abuse Policy and Community of Concern program

You will be learning more about the progress that we are making with each of these items as well as other goals that have been identified as the year progresses. I challenged the administrative team and middle school faculty to list at least twenty personal assets that they have at their disposal to overcome potential obstacles that might appear in achieving our ambitious agenda. It is my belief that each of us needs to reflect on those assets as we attempt to reach our goals and objectives throughout the year. There is no doubt that we left our retreat and in-service programming with a clear direction and a sense of optimism and renewed energy that will serve us well as we strive to achieve academic excellence and success.

In closing, the definition of success as described by Ralph Waldo Emerson beautifully summarizes what we hope to accomplish - "To leave the world a little better; whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success." There is no question that this will be the most successful year ever at The Emery/Weiner School when we achieve the very essence that lies at the heart of this definition. We look forward to the journey with great enthusiasm as we create a masterpiece together. Our students and families deserve nothing less. My best wishes for a wonderful year.

GRAPPLING WITH STUDENT STRESS

(Continued from page 2)

else that adds color and spice to the life of an American teen, the challenge before us is not to undermine or trade away those necessities that make such living possible and, more importantly, fulfilling. Rather, we need to model for our teens strategies for organizing our busy lives, for setting priorities, for accepting our own limitations and the consequences of the choices we make, for making peace with those things we cannot change and taking on those things that we can change, and finding moments of solitude when we can pray or meditate or find the means to take a breath, change our perspective, and then re-engage.

It is true that our kids are hurried, and perhaps we would wish for them to grow up more slowly, so that we would have more time to parent and teach them. As adults, we need to accept responsibility for the values we inculcate and the

lifestyles we model for our kids. If we are ourselves hurried, if we manage our own responsibilities and stresses poorly, if we expect more of our kids than they are developmentally prepared to handle, then we should not be surprised that our kids will follow our lead.

(Footnotes)

¹ David Elkind, *The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon* (NY: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1988).

² F. Washington Jarvis, *With Love and Prayers: A Headmaster Speaks to the Next Generation* (Boston: David R. Godine, Publisher, 2000), 111-119.

³ Fred Rogers, *You Are Special: Words of Wisdom from America's most Beloved Neighbor* (NY: Viking, 1994), 85.

HONORING ILONA THOMSON



*Ilona Thomson,
Former Head of
Middle School*

As many of you know, Emery/Weiner's longtime Head of Middle School Ilona Thomson was unable to return this year due to health concerns. Needless to say, this was a real loss for the school as Ilona was a fabulous leader, educator, and mentor. In light of Ilona's battle with multiple sclerosis, a disease affecting approximately 400,000 people in the U.S. and nearly 2.5 million worldwide, The Emery/Weiner School will be working with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society-Lone Star Chapter on several projects:

2003 Kelsey Seybold Clinic Walk, October 26, 2003

Emery/Weiner students, faculty, staff, and families will be walking in honor of Ilona at this downtown Houston 5K/10K event. Details will be sent out shortly, but you may also contact Kerri Peters at kpeters@emeryweiner.org for more information.

Schoolwide Community Service Projects, ongoing

Throughout the year, both middle school and high school community service clubs will be working with the NMSS-Lone Star Chapter to organize volunteer projects. Possible ideas include visiting with MS patients or helping out with the BP MS 150 Bike Tour. For more information, please contact Elaine Lupovitch at elupovitch@emeryweiner.org or Moshe Sokol at msokol@emeryweiner.org.

BP MS 150 Bike Tour, April 17-18, 2004

Emery/Weiner will be putting together a team of students, faculty, staff, and families who are interested in participating in the bike ride from Houston to Austin. If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact Ray Marcus at rmarcus@emeryweiner.org.

Finally, in tribute to Ilona's service and dedication to the school, we are delighted to announce:

Ilona Thomson as 2003-2004 PTO Gala Honoree

We hope that you will join us on the evening of March 24, 2004, for the preview performance of the middle school play, when we will have the opportunity to honor Ilona and to express our gratitude for all that she has given us over the years.

A MESSAGE FROM PTO CO-PRESIDENTS JUDY MUCASEY & SHARI RIESENFELD



*Shari Riesenfeld and
Judy Mucasey,
PTO Co-Presidents*

On the first day of school, while our students emptied their backpacks and filled their lockers, the PTO gathered the parents to share the moment and to marvel at the young adults our children are becoming. At the 8 AM bell, we entered the music room as the students entered, en masse, into the Becker Theater. We gathered around a big screen television to witness, through the wonder of modern technology (and the know-how of our talented staff),

the closed-circuit broadcast of "The 2003 Emery/Weiner School Opening Assembly."

The "Opening Assembly" has become part of the culture of The Emery/Weiner School. It is the gathering of the entire faculty and student body of both the upper and lower schools to officially mark the end of summer and the beginning of a new academic year. The theater's front rows of seats fill with the excited and somewhat apprehensive sixth graders, and rows continue to fill until the eleventh graders, who already foresee themselves as seniors, reach the highest seats.

Next, Mr. Dow took the stage, and the magic began. Through pictures and music, he illustrated that, despite grade level, age or even stature, despite our differences, we believe that our kids have the power to do great things. Whether

helping a friend or helping a cause, our students can change their world, and the staff is committed to providing the tools and the environment to make that possible.

Studies indicate that students perform better, schools improve, and teacher morale increases if parents are involved with their child's education. As our children grow and become more independent, our involvement changes. We continue to work with them at home, but they often communicate with the school themselves. Parents sometimes feel a gap in their relationship with the school. PTO is one way to maintain that communication and know what is going on. All parents are members automatically.

This year, the PTO began the year literally being a part of the school day thanks to **Sharon Ellerin and Cathy Scherer**, chairpersons of our Opening Day gathering. During the summer, **Mari Temmer** with the help of **Neidra Davis and Marsha McAlpin**, has been working to prepare your communication link to the school. The PTO's School Directory. PTO provided a smooth transition back to school with our successful Welcome Back Sunday thanks to **Sandi Wolf and Renee Helfman**, and PTO gave a Welcome Back Luncheon for our entire staff due to the efforts of **Doe Florsheim and Lexi Hoffman**.

Help the PTO join forces with the school. Help us offer the needed tools and support so our kids can reach their potential.

KICKING OFF EMERY/WEINER'S COLLEGE COUNSELING PROGRAM

MELISSA ROSENSTOCK, COLLEGE COUNSELOR



*Melissa Rosenstock,
College Counselor*

The 2003-2004 school year marks Emery's first year with a junior class, and accordingly is also the launch of our college counseling program. We are so excited to start preparing our students to apply to college! It is a process that can feel daunting, involving numerous steps, lists, meetings, and piles of paper, but our ultimate goal is actually simple: to help students find and apply to the post-secondary schools that best match their needs.

To accomplish this goal, we have set up a college counseling office full of materials relating to matters collegiate, including college brochures, reference books, and a large map denoting the locations of colleges all over the country. We encourage students to drop by, look through the materials, ask questions, and start becoming familiar with the resources available on our campus. Later in the fall, we will be meeting with juniors and their families to initiate the college search process for each student. Afterwards, we expect our office will be buzzing with student activity.

At the same time, we are busy forging relationships with admissions counselors at universities across the country. In the coming months, admissions counselors will be visiting Emery/Weiner to get an idea of what makes our school unique. During these visits, counselors will tour the campus, meet with members of the faculty and the college counseling staff, and observe students

in various informal group settings, such as in class or *Ma'amad*. As the counselors get to know us, we will also get to know them. These visits are our opportunity to discover what kinds of students the counselors expect to thrive in their colleges, and thus what kinds of applicants they most desire. Further networking with admissions counselors will take place when Judy Muir (Advisor to College Counseling and Special Projects), Stuart Dow (Head of School), and I attend the conference of the National Association for College Admission Counseling in October in Long Beach, California.

As we begin this exhilarating chapter in the growth of our school and in our students' lives, we hold fast to, and promote, two tenets. First, college counseling is fundamentally about finding the right fit between student and school. With over 3,000 colleges and universities in the U.S., a wonderful school exists for each one of our students. Second, students maximize their options for college through consistent academic diligence. Learning, exploring, and reading habitually - for school and for pleasure - turns ordinary teenagers into attractive applicants!

If you have any questions about the college application process, please do not hesitate to contact us:



Melissa Rosenstock and Judy Muir pose in the beautiful, new college counseling office, where students and parents can visit with the counselors and look through various college brochures and materials.

Judy Muir, 832-204-5900, ext. 124
jmuir@emeryweiner.org

Melissa Rosenstock, 832-204-5900, ext. 125
mrosenstock@emeryweiner.org

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Sophomores & Juniors:

- * PSAT - Tuesday, October 21 at Emery/Weiner.

All High School Students:

- * Get involved in extracurricular activities and keep detailed records of your participation.
- * Stay on top of your academic work! Meet with your teachers for additional help when necessary.
- * Take advantage of any opportunity to visit colleges, especially when travelling.

BONDING THROUGH BALANCE: THE 2003 NINTH GRADE SHABBATON

MATT NEAL, HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH INSTRUCTOR



Matt Neal,
HS English
Instructor

On the morning of Friday, August 15th, a bus full of expectant, anxious students and teachers headed eastward from Houston to New Braunfels, Texas. The twenty-four members of Emery High School's Class of 2007, along with their new faculty advisors and administrators, were a three-hour ride away from the John Newcombe Tennis Ranch and the commencement of four fantastic years.

After settling into our cabins, we gathered for introductions and a discussion of the Ten Commitments that are the foundation of our community. Students had the opportunity to ask questions about these guidelines and to act out their implementation before subscribing to the agreement. (It should be noted that Emery parents and teachers have their own sets of Ten Commitments by which they abide.)

Saturday brought new challenges and, consequently, further opportunities for bonding. We began the day with a Torah service during which we discussed interpretations of various Biblical carrots and sticks meant to promote moral behavior. Students contributed impressively to the discourse, getting their first taste of Emery's rigorous and pluralistic approach to the study of Judaics.

Next came the apex—literally—of the retreat: the high ropes course. Students and faculty members faced their fears and tackled tasks many stories above solid ground. Safely harnessed but still shaky, some of us leaped from a forty-foot pole to grab a dangling brass ring. Others chose to try the Screamer, a giant rope swing. A partner, some patience, and perhaps a prayer were required to cross the Commitment Bridge. History teacher Ray Marcus, encouraged by the group to try the scariest of the feats, "found the result both invigorating and motivational." We all benefited from the support of our new colleagues.



Emery High School's Class of 2007 is pictured alongside faculty chaperones at the ninth grade retreat.

To facilitate the building of class spirit and cooperation, we proceeded to a low ropes course that challenged students to work together to confront physical obstacles. Logic, leadership, communication, and collaboration were all required to complete the difficult tasks. "In the low ropes course, we learned a lot of vital skills," observed ninth grader Hannah Litvin.

Afternoon free time allowed students to relax by (and in) the swimming pool. Faculty members challenged their charges to a pick-up basketball game, and contrary to all predictions, the old folks pulled out a victory in the end. As sunset approached, we gathered in a forest clearing for a *Kabbalat Shabbat* service led by Head of School Stuart Dow. The peaceful setting proved perfect for a festive yet reflective evening of worship. After Shabbat dinner and a rousing round of Pictionary, we helped ourselves to a twelve-foot banana split that, according to ninth grader Jason Serota, "was heaven."

The remainder of Saturday was filled with more provocative discussions, group socializing, and opportunities for relaxation. After *Havdallah*, we split into advisory teams and navigated through the Hill Country woods with just a few compasses and flashlights to guide us. Though some of us are not as in tune with the wilderness as others, we made it to the goal by relying on our peers. A campfire greeted us at the end of the trek, and after enjoying a little marshmallowy goodness, we headed back to our cabins for some much-needed rest.

A brief advisory session on Sunday morning brought the retreat to a close, and we piled back onto the bus still weary from a demanding yet rewarding weekend. Rope burns and bug bites notwithstanding, a terrific time was had by all, and the school year was off to a superb start. According to ninth grader Emily Evans, "That was the most amazing class trip I've ever been on. It was great!"

HOME SWEET HOME

SASHA McLEAN, MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELOR

This year, The Emery/Weiner School welcomed nearly twenty new faculty and staff members. Below is an account from our new middle school counselor Sasha McLean as she shares her impressions after the first couple weeks of school. Please join us in welcoming Sasha and all the other fabulous new members of the Emery/Weiner teaching family!



*Sasha McLean,
Middle School
Counselor*

The night before school started, I was a mess. I stood in my closet, butterflies fluttering, and closed my eyes. What should I wear? I was new to the school, and I wanted to make a good first impression. Pants or a skirt? This necklace or that one? Do I have any clean socks? How should I do my hair? Will the students like me? Will the teachers like me? Should I bring my lunch? All night I tossed and turned. Will I make friends easily? Will I wake up on time? Is this a pimple? Will I eat by myself? Do I have everything I need? Who will I talk to? What will they think of me? Do I need a mint? All of a sudden, I was overwhelmed with compassion for the new students and visualized an entire community of students and teachers standing in their closets (worried and anxious). I realized that first-day-of-school-jitters were not just limited to students.

It is truly amazing how our bodies and minds handle change, and it is remarkable how we can experience a continuum of emotions simultaneously. I'm excited about meeting new people; I'm anxious about how I will be received.

I'm hopeful that I made a good choice; I'm sad about leaving old friends and coworkers. I'm blessed to be in a school that values morality; I'm worried that I will disappoint myself or others. I'm grateful to have the support of my family; I'm afraid of failing. And even though all of this chaos was building inside of me, I put on my best smile and reminded myself to be genuine and open.

I have been at Emery/Weiner for about a week (although it feels like a month), and I'm feeling very different than I did on the first day. I'm feeling... peaceful... proud... valuable... at home. Emery/Weiner is my new home - a place full of endless possibilities. And although many of you don't know me yet, we share something. We share a home. A home that allows us all to be connected, to grow, to give to one another, and to receive. A home that is allowing me to grow: as a counselor, as a woman, as a wife, as a friend, as a daughter, as a spiritual being, as a teacher, as a student, as a leader, as a follower, as a sister, as a listener, as a teammate, as a moral soul. The greatest gift that Emery/Weiner can give me is a mirror. A mirror to reflect all that I am and all that I want to become. Thank you for welcoming me, and I look forward to this school year.

THE EMERY/WEINER SCHOOL'S NEWEST MEMBERS

This year, nearly seventy-five students entered Emery/Weiner's sixth grade. As the youngest members of our school community, sixth grade students attended a special "lock-in" before the first day of school. In addition to getting their course schedules and locker assignments, the students had an opportunity to meet their new classmates and teachers.



New sixth grade students Lindsay Warden, Brooke Elberger, Emily Weissenstein, Kirby Boyle, and Rachel Evans pose with Bill Harrell, Acting Dean of Middle School Students and Director of Athletics at the sixth grade lock-in.



CHALK TALK WITH COACH HARRELL

BILL HARRELL, DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS & ACTING DEAN OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS



*Bill Harrell,
Director of Athletics;
Acting Dean of MS
Students*

August has been amazing, and our school has been buzzing with excitement about athletics since the beginning of the month. The Emery/Weiner School was a proud host site for the Houston JCC Maccabi Games, held August 10 - 15. Our campus served as a hub for more than 1700 athletes from several JCC teams from across the country as well as teams from Israel, Venezuela, Mexico, and Great Britain. We had a wonderful opportunity to showcase our school to

the athletes, parents, and many community volunteers. As a member of the Emery/Weiner staff, I was proud to accept hundreds of compliments on our facility. The young athletes who competed here in basketball, soccer, and baseball were amazed with our campus. Many commented that it has the look and feel of a small college.

In addition to showing off our school, our students were the ones to take center stage. Team Houston was comprised of nearly 350 students, ages 13 - 16. Current and former Emery/Weiner School student athletes made up more than half the total number of team members. They excelled in every sport with pride and dignity.

Only days after the Maccabi Games' closing ceremony, our students were back at school preparing for the fall athletic seasons. The girls' volleyball teams and boys' soccer teams are gearing up for competition. The fall season will run through late October. The high school soccer team is being coached by Oscar Larranaga, who is returning for his second year and is very excited about the number of athletes committing to represent Emery on the field. Espen Bommen will be working with the middle school boys throughout this season. Kris Lartigue will once again be heading up the volleyball program at Emery High School as the team enters its first season of varsity competition in TAPPS (Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools). There are nineteen girls participating on the team. Look for the girls to be bumping, setting, and spiking their way through opponents. In middle school volleyball, Kerri Peters, Mike DeLeon, and Ken Hartley will be coaching our three girls' teams as they compete in the Greater Houston Athletic Conference. Check out the school website for team schedules and game information. For those die-hard fans who want to travel to all of the "away" games, directions for opponent schools will be posted on the athletic page.

Best wishes to all Jaguar athletes for a great year!

EMERY/WEINER SERVES AS HOST SITE FOR JCC MACCABI GAMES 2003



This year, as the Houston Jewish Community Center (JCC) hosted the annual Maccabi Games, Emery/Weiner was proud to serve as a host site for several of the athletic competitions. For more information on the games that took place August 10-15, please visit: www.jcchouston.org/maccabi.



Pictured (L-R): Bill Harrell (Emery/Weiner Director of Athletics and Acting Dean of Middle School Students), Cindy Fox (Maccabi Games Co-Chair), Lenny Dubin (Maccabi Games Co-Chair), Roger Stern (Emery/Weiner Board Member and Maccabi Games Security Co-Chair), and Jordan Shenker (JCC Assistant Executive Director and Maccabi Games Supervisor).

END-OF-YEAR AWARDS RECOGNIZE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

An important part of building a new school is establishing traditions. One such tradition that has begun at the high school is the creation of end-of-year awards to recognize outstanding students. Last June, the high school faculty and staff presented the following six awards:



Jamie V. Davis

The Churchill Award

is presented to the student who best exemplifies the quality of perseverance. Named in honor of Sir Winston Churchill, who declared, "Never give up. Never, never, never," this award recognizes the student who exhibits an unwavering commitment to improve academically, and through determination and diligence has succeeded in doing so.



Joel A. Croft

The Pioneer Award

is presented to the student who best exemplifies the qualities of community and spirit. The award recognizes the student who demonstrates a commitment to the Emery community and works selflessly and repeatedly in order to foster inclusiveness and strengthen school spirit.



Jennifer A. Rosenthal

The Socrates Award

is presented to the student who best exemplifies a genuine passion for education. The award recognizes a student for academic achievement, true intellectual curiosity, and a demonstrated commitment to increasing his or her knowledge in various disciplines.



Gregory R. Cohen

The Koufax Award

is presented to the student who best exemplifies excellence in sports. The award recognizes the student who not only demonstrates athletic prowess on the field or court, but also demonstrates character consistent with Jewish ideals and values.



Michael R. Abrams

The Maimonides Award

is presented to the student who best exemplifies the paramount Jewish values of scholarship and character. The award recognizes the student who not only demonstrates intellectual achievement in Judaic and general studies, but also upholds a commitment to live according to the highest ethical standards.



Hannah R. Morris

The Tarfon Award

is presented to the student who best exemplifies a commitment to *tikkun olam*—repairing the world. Named in honor of Rabbi Tarfon, who said in the *Mishna*, "Though we are not obligated to finish the task, neither are we free to desist from it," this award recognizes the student who not only participates actively in the school's organized community service projects but also goes beyond in order to help the less fortunate and to build bridges between our community and those around us.

Congratulations to the winners!

In addition to the framed certificates given to the student award winners, permanent plaques for each of these awards now hang proudly in the high school entrance hallway. We would like to thank the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) for generously underwriting these plaques.

EMERY/WEINER WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



*Amy Domingue,
Director of
Development*

The Emery/Weiner School is proud to welcome Amy Domingue as Director of Development. Amy joins Emery/Weiner with an extensive development, special events, and public relations background.

Since receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and Communications from the University of St. Thomas here in Houston, Amy has pursued work in both the corporate and non-profit sectors. While at the public relations firm Stevens Group, she worked directly with non-profit clients to maximize their fundraising efforts. Additionally, Amy previously served as Campaign Manager for Friends of Hermann Park, developing and executing strategic fundraising campaigns for environmental education programming.

At Emery/Weiner, Amy is in charge of all fundraising efforts including: organizing the upcoming *Joy of Education* dinner, coordinating the annual giving drive, researching and submitting grant applications to both foundations and corporations, and working with individual donors.

"I am thrilled to be at Emery/Weiner because education, especially education with a religious focus, has always been important to me," commented Amy. "Since joining the school in June, I have been impressed with the tremendous support shown by the board and the community - not just financially but also in time and resources."

In order to compete with the best schools in the country, it is crucial that Emery/Weiner have the financial support and resources to be on the same playing field. As Amy explained, "Tuition covers a lot, but the balance has to come from somewhere. With the help of the development committee, chaired by Wendy Starr, we are looking to identify individual donors to cultivate and to ultimately make a part of the Emery/Weiner family. In this way, we hope to expand our network and put ourselves in a stronger financial position."

We hope you will join us in welcoming Amy to our school. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about giving and volunteer opportunities available, please contact Amy at adomingue@emeryweiner.org or at 832-204-5900, ext. 123.

NICOLE KATHARINE SUCHOWIECKY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP GRANT

This year, the Suchowiecky Family and The Emery/Weiner School Board of Directors were pleased to announce the establishment of the Nicole Katharine Suchowiecky Memorial Scholarship Grant. The grant, consisting of a \$4000 scholarship awarded at \$1000 per year for all four years of high school, was given to four freshmen students entering Emery's graduating Class of 2007 who demonstrated attributes reflecting the spirit and character of Nicole K. Suchowiecky.

Freshmen students applying for the grant were required to write a one page essay detailing why they wanted to attend Emery High School and why they should receive the scholarship. A committee judged the essays and considered the applicant's academic standing, extracurricular activities, and community involvement.

This year's recipients of the Nicole K. Suchowicky Memorial Scholarship Grant were:

Matthew Garden
Shara Morris
Beth Watashe
Kate Weinberger

The Suchowiecky Family and The Emery/Weiner School congratulate these recipients for their excellent essays. We wish them the best of luck for their next four years in high school.

DON'T FORGET!

**Emery/Weiner tribute forms are available online.
This is a perfect way to honor friends and family on special occasions!**

Visit the Development Department home page at www.emeryweiner.org for more information.

The Emery/Weiner School
invites you to join in a "world tour evening" honoring:



*Saranne &
Livingston
Kosberg*

3rd Annual Joy of Education (JOE) Dinner

Thursday, September 25, 2003

6:30 PM

Program, Dinner, and Silent Auction

The Emery/Weiner School • 9825 Stella Link

TABLES: \$10,000, \$5,000, \$2,500

TICKETS: \$1,000, \$500, \$250

Call 832-204-5900, x123

to purchase tables/tickets or for more information

CHAIRS: RANDY & JONI LEVY

HONORARY CHAIRS: JOYCE & ARTHUR SCHECHTER

Steering Committee Chair: Lanny Sachnowitz

Auction Co-Chairs: Dana Lepow

Michael Feinstein

The Joy of Education (JOE) Dinner raises funds to enhance our academic program, to attract dynamic teachers, and to provide our faculty with resources that will ensure excellence in teaching and fulfillment of the school's mission.

DON'T MISS THE EXCITING SILENT AUCTION!

BID INDIVIDUALLY...

- Throw the *first pitch* at an Astros game!
- Do it up with an *Aspen package*, including accommodations, massages, fishing for two, and cooking school classes!
- Hang your very own *Roger Clemens* autographed oil painting, which the baseball great will personalize for the high bidder!
- Take a bite out of *The Big Apple* in high style - stay at the Trump International Hotel & Towers!

...OR AS A GROUP

- *Bowl your brains out* at the mother/son or father/daughter night out!
- Get *cooking* with Rabbi Amy Weiss - she'll teach the basics of Jewish holiday cooking.
- *Let's play ball!* The adult sports party will be a grand slam!

Other fabulous auction items include: Michael Jordan game-worn shoes and jersey, Rolling Stones guitar, Rat Pack montage, and Muhammad Ali gloves.

Special thanks to our auction sponsors, including The Cooking School of Aspen, Ebb & Flow, Hotel Derek, Houston Astros, Miss Daisy's Towncar Services, Redstone Companies, Rice Epicurian Cooking School, Mindy and Lanny Sachnowitz, Taylor Creek Fly Shops, TriStar Productions, Rabbi Amy Weiss, Westwood Country Club, Steven Wolf and all of our anonymous donors. (Donors as of print deadline)



The Emery/Weiner School

Connecting with the Past, Preparing for the Future

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
HOUSTON TX
PERMIT NO 13043

9825 Stella Link
Houston, Texas 77025
(832) 204-5900
(832) 204-5910 (Fax)
www.emeryweiner.org

Emery/Weiner 2003-2004 Board of Trustees

Judy Abrams
Julie Alexander
David Bell
Eric Blumrosen
Carol Emery
Sherrie Gordon Eisenman
Martha Freedman
Carol Goldberg
Roslyn Haikin
Bennett A. Kalmans
Joe Kaplan
Michael Klaiman
Joe Kornfeld
Mitch Levy
Barry Lewis
Joel Mandel
Muriel Meicler
Barry Moss
Leon Mucasey
Karol Musher
David Neuberger
Carolyn Plessner
Bradley E. Rauch
Jay Resh
Shari Riesenfeld, PTO Rep.
Alan Robin
Polly Robinson
Michael Rubenstein
Terry Rubin
Mindy Sachnowitz
Rhoda Saka
Susan Schneider
Wendy Starr
Gary Stein
Roger Stern
Marvin Woskow, President

Stuart J. Dow
Head of School

Jonathan L. Silver
Head of Upper School

Kenneth J. McKenzie
Acting Head of Middle School

A Community Partner of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston

Important Dates to Remember

Middle School

September

- 14 6th Grade Potluck Dinner; 5:30 PM
- 18 All-School Open House; 7 PM
- 22 8th Grade Parent/Student Meeting; 7 PM
- 25 JOE Dinner; 6:30 PM
- 26 Erev Rosh Hashanah; 12:30 Dismissal

October

- 6 No school; Yom Kippur
- 14-16 Annual retreat at CYJ
- 17 No school

November

- 6 No school; Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 11 Recruitment Night; 6 PM/7 PM
- 19-25 Book Fair
- 24 Special Person's Day
- 26-28 No school; Thanksgiving

High School

September

- 18 All-School Open House; 7 PM
- 25 JOE Dinner; 6:30 PM
- 26 Erev Rosh Hashanah; 12:30 Dismissal

October

- 6 No school; Yom Kippur
- 24-26 10th & 11th Grade Shabbatonim
- 27 No school

November

- 12 Recruitment Night; 7 PM
- 19-25 Book Fair
- 26-28 No school; Thanksgiving

Visit us on the Web at www.emeryweiner.org