

## THIS MONTH:

- 2nd Monthly Friday Night Dinner and Oneg
- Shira Smiles Live at Westmount draws a huge crowd of Women from all over Toronto
- Roberto Hausman wows his crowd on December 2nd.
- 2nd United Shabbat "Taste Of Greece"
- Sushi night with Elky Wohlgerlenter
- Young adults Chanukah party at the Wohlgerlenter's
- Teens go to Buffalo for a Bills /Patriots game with Rav Yakov
- Double Feature Movie Night
- Yarchei Kallah December 25
- 3rd monthly Family Kabbalat Shabbat
- Warm Up Your Winter with Torah
- Our beautiful Aron Kodesh is finished!

From the desk of the  
Executive Director

*Yehudis Adams*

## Westmount Shul's MONTHLY UPDATE

FOR DECEMBER 2009

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Monthly Friday Night Dinner and Oneg

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, 70 guests joined the Michalowicz and Adams families for a Friday night dinner at Disera Drive. In this smaller group setting, friends connected and met new Westmount families. **Rick Naor**, **Michael Koronek** and **Shelley Glowinsky** gave Divre Torah about the Parsha. **Josey Frieberg** told a moving story of reconnecting with her father before his death. **Larry Garber** followed this with a lighter story that had all in the room

roaring with laughter (ask Larry to tell you the story as only he can!).

Delicious food, zmiros and schmoozing rounded out the evening. After benching, the community was invited to a dessert Oneg Shabbos where **Rabbi Mordechai Torzcyner** was the guest speaker, focusing on the equality in Jewish leadership shared between those of unknown origins who achieve greatness and those hailing from great ancestry.

### Shira Smiles Draws a Huge Crowd to Westmount

Over 100 women flooded our Learning Centre on December 6<sup>th</sup> for the honour of listening to **Mrs. Shira Smiles** live speaking about "The Spiritual Connection of Chanukah". Mrs. Smiles is a well known teacher from Israel and many in the crowd were from the "416" area of Toronto, seeing Westmount Shul for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. Rebbetzin Lowy was among the visitors and complimented me on the beauty of our

facilities. The women listened with rapt attention as Shira explained why Chanukah is the most spiritual holiday that we have. She urged us to "step it up a notch" this year. If we don't normally daven, we should during Chanukah. If we daven, we should daven with more kavanah. Since the Greeks tried to stop us from celebrating Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh, these parts of Chanukah are even more

special! Each year, we have one Shabbos and a Rosh Chodesh during Chanukah. This year, we have two Shabbosim. To quote Shira: "WOW!" As one lady left she said: "I feel like I never celebrated Chanukah properly before. I can't wait to do it this year!" Thanks, Shira. **All women can watch Shira's Parsha class live from Israel every Sunday at 10 am at our Centre. \$5 per class.**

### Roberto Hausman wows his listeners

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, over 30 people came to hear our own Roberto Hausman give a presentation on "How To Feel Great All the Time". Upon entering, everyone received a beautiful mug. Roberto's talk was energetic, inspirational and entertaining, focusing on the 3 "H" principle of Health, Humour and Hips. His presentation was filled with impactful personal stories. He spoke about specific ideas for experiencing life in a positive way, and left the audience with a list of concepts to reflect upon at every moment. Thanks Roberto!

*"We all learned what Moussaka is!"*

Rebbetzin Elky shows us how!



Aviva Devere with the finished product!

*"Elky and I hope that this will be only the beginning of many social events for our younger crowd"*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> United Shabbat - "Taste of Greece"

Westmount Collegiate was jam packed on our 2<sup>nd</sup> "UNITED SHABBAT" - this time the theme was, of course, Chanukah. Rav Yakov had special programs for the Youth. Our sumptuous three-course meal (thanks to Andrew Lipworth and Lee-Anne Goodman) was Greek style as 300 registered guests (we had to turn people away) stayed for a complimentary lunch. We all learned what

Moussaka is! We thank our major sponsors **The Volfson Family** as well as the **Garbers, Rodneys, Skosowskis, Tobis and Ushers**.

Once again, Jewish names were given to 14 people and all those present wished them Mazel and Brachos.

Rabbi Michalowicz talked about bridging the gap between weekdays and Shabbos by im-

proving our erev Shabbos. He reminded us of the special opportunity to do that with our Yarchei Kallah on Dec. 25th and Jan 1st (see next page)

We thank all our volunteers: Raphael Adams, Rav Yakov, Shaun Goodman, Yoni Kramer, Grace David, Susan Lasarow, Esty Nuhamovici, and the families who hosted the food: Daniels, Romi-Babany, Wohl-gelernter and Harris.

## Sushi Night with Rebbetzin Elky

Little did we know that we had such a talented young Rebbetzin! Many of us have had the pleasure of eating **Elky Wohl-gelernter's** delicious food but we didn't know that she also is an expert Sushi maker and that, when she and Rav Yakov lived in Israel, she had a thriving Sushi business.

On Wednesday, December 16th, Rebbetzin Elky expertly

demonstrated and taught a group of Westmount Women how to make Sushi. All of the ingredients were beautifully set out at the home of **Tziviya Starr** and we hesitantly attempted to make the beautiful food we all enjoy eating.

The women were thrilled to find out that "it's not as hard as it looks" as we all put together beautiful and delicious

trays to bring home to our families. Amidst much laughing and camaraderie, the evening was a great success.

To cap it off, a surprise birthday cake was brought in for **Natalie Naor**.

Thanks also to **Yani Hausman** who helped Elky and demonstrated a Sushi Cone!

## Chanukah Party with the Wohl-gelernters

Rabbi Yakov and Rebbetzin Elky Wohl-gelernter hosted an intimate Chnukah Party on Tuesday, December 15th in their home for the younger singles and married couples in our community. This was an opportunity for this group to get to know each other better in a relaxed and fun environment.

Rabbi Yakov has launched this initiative in order to offer more social opportunities to

get together and hopefully to grow in numbers. Watch for more opportunities for this crowd.

## Teen Trip to Buffalo with Rav Yakov

Three cars travelled to Buffalo on Sunday, December 20, from Westmount Community. 15 people joined Rabbi Yakov as they travelled across the border to see a Bills/Patriots game.

Many of those who came had earned this trip by raising over \$1,000 each for the Youth Sefer Torah that was dedicated at the Westmount Shul and Learning Centre last May.

# Double Feature Movie Night on Disera Drive

On December 24th there appeared to be many members of Westmount who had the next day off! Quite a coincidence - go figure!

Westmount Shul held a "Movie Night" Our first feature was "FAITH & FATE Part 7: A new be-

ginning 1948-1957". In this film, Rabbi Beryl Wein continues his Jewish History series focusing on the first 8 years of the State of Israel"

The next feature shown was the moving documentary: "WITH ALL

YOUR SOUL: The Story of Roi Klein". This movie studies the life of modern day hero who threw himself on a grenade to protect his platoon. In his last moments of life, Roi mustered the strength to shout "Shema Yisrael...". Many of the viewers were moved to tears.

*"In his last moments of life, Roi mustered the strength to shout 'Shema Yisrael' "*

# Yarchei Kallah December 25

It's true - we are not in Eretz Yisrael, but we live in a wonderful country. Why just last week the government sponsored a day of learning Torah by giving the whole community a day off work! After all, what does a thriving Jewish kehilla do with their day off on December 25? Well, if you love learning Torah the way we do at Westmount Shul and Learning Centre, you spend the day learning. Our day began at 7:15 am with **Rabbi Yossi Michalowicz** continuing his class on "The Gates of Repentance". After Shacharis and a

delicious breakfast, **Rav Azarya Berzon**, Scholar in Residence at the new Yeshiva University Beit Medrash of Toronto gave 2 lectures. In the 1st one, "Is Our Culture Truly Jewish?", Rav Berzon delved into how we should understand the Torah admonition "You shall not follow the Gentile ways". Adherence to this law, he explained, will ensure the uniqueness of the Jewish people.

In his 2nd lecture, Rav Berzon gave us a deeper understanding of the fast of Asara B'Teives (which took

place on Sunday, Dec 27) and explained what category of fast it is.

Our next Yarchei Kallah will take place on Friday January 1st. After Rabbi Michalowicz' class, davening and breakfast, **Meir Lipschitz**, a dynamic avreich in the Toronto Beit Medrash will give Parsha insights on the topic: "How Much Has the Book of Creation Created for you?" Then, **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner** returns speaking about "Snowball Fights in Jewish Law and Thought". We invite all to join us on that day.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Monthly Family Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday night, December 25th, the rain was pouring down and the temperature was dropping. However, in our beautiful new shul, we were dry and the atmosphere was one of warmth. The Westmount Shul and Learning Centre's new facilities on Disera Drive was rocking!

Men, women and children came to welcome the Shabbat "Westmount-

style" - with the joy expressed through singing and dancing.. As is clear through this newsletter, Westmount Shul has been under the influence of a new initiative started by Rabbi Michalowicz - that of "upgrading the Shabbos". As the Rabbi told us, Friday is the great connector between the mundane days and the Holy Shabbos.

The wonderful opportunity that we

had this week to spend our Friday morning learning served to bring our Kabbalat Shabbat to an even higher level. Mordechai Michalowicz led the lively davening and singing. After the dancing was over, Rabbi Yakov took the children into another room to tell them special Shabbos stories.

Join us on January 22 for the next Family Kabbalat Shabbat.



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For over 13 years, the Westmount Shul & Learning Centre has been about Jews learning how to connect - to their Jewish heritage, to their families, to their community, to Israel and, most of all, to themselves.

This has happened without having a building of our own, and is what made us so unique. Without a building, we have focused on growing and connecting to each other.

Now that we are in our own beautiful weekday location, we already have the foundation of a strong, friendly and exciting community.

We want to share it with you! Come connect with us!



## Warm Up Your Winter with Torah Learning

Beginning the first week in January, Westmount Shul offers the warmest environment in town for Torah Learning. There is something for everyone, every age, every gender, every level. Whether you are learning the stories in the Torah for the very first time with **Rabbi Yakov's "Breakneck Through The Bible"** or learning advanced Gemorrah as well as anything in between, Westmount Learning Centre is the place for you. On Tuesdays, **Rabbi Michalowicz** continues his popular

Parsha Class. For those who can only come in the evening, **Rabbi Azarya Berzon** of the Beit Medrash of Toronto will give a Parsha Class at 8 pm. **Rabbi Tzvi Heber** continues his insights after Kollel Thursday nights using the explanation of the Sfas Emes.

**Rebbetzin Gella Leah (Gail) Michalowicz** has become a star attraction and gives a class to women on Sunday nights, a "Mom 'n Tots" on Wednesdays and an alternative class

every Saturday morning.

There are too many opportunities to list in this article. For a complete schedule please check our website: [www.WestmountShul.com](http://www.WestmountShul.com)



Our "dynamic duo" Rabbi Yossi Michalowicz and Rabbi Yakov lead the teaching

### NEXT MONTH:

- Bat Mitzvah Program begins
- Taste of Latin America United Shabbat
- January 1st Yarchei Kallah with Meir Lipschitz and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner
- Shidduch Night for girls and/or mothers
- Westmount Shul is having a "Gold Party".
- Plans underway for Father/Son Boro Park trip



David Vodiano supervises final touches...  
 ....and the Aron Kodesh is complete!

