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M L A G I N I

## Well-Rounded Winners

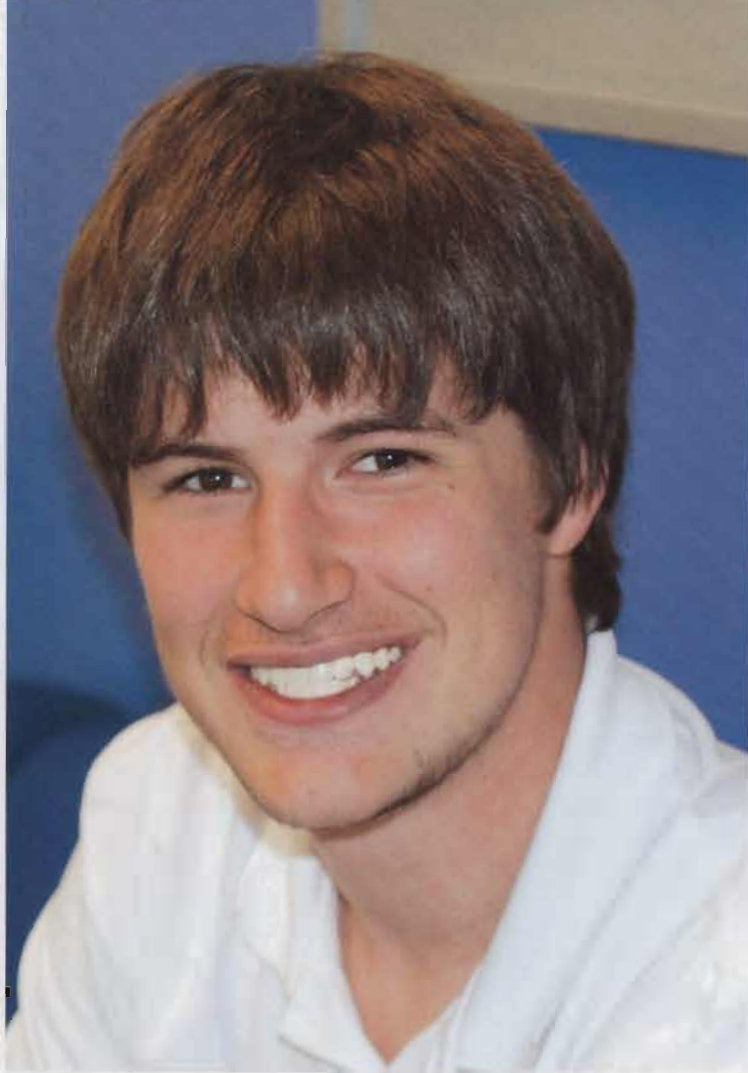
UNLV Fulbright Scholars Face the Future

The Fight Against  
Cyberbullying

Adelson Grads  
Celebrate Success

Sen of Japan's  
Sushi Masters





Alex Baskin has overcome problems at his previous school.

Amy Kim transferred from an Indonesian school.

# First Class all the Way

## Adelson Educational Campus Delivers its First Graduating Class

“I feel like one big family,” says Sara Kantor, a senior at the Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson Educational Campus. “We fight like a family, we get along like a family.”

Sara is one of the 14 students who will graduate from the school this month, the first group of seniors to reach this milestone. Even among the 14, she stands out as having attended the upper school (grades 9-12) since its inception three years ago. “It’s so much fun to look back on the last two and a half years from this end and be like, ‘Wow, maybe I did learn a lot.’ When you’re actually doing it, it’s like we have too much homework, we’re not actually learning. It doesn’t seem like it but when you look at it from this end, it’s like maybe I did learn something. Whaddya know?!”

The campus sits in the heart of Summerlin, an oasis amidst the same-as-it-ever-was rows of suburban homes. It sparkles with the sheen of newness and excitement. But only some of that is visible from the street. In order to see the campus up close, you have to pass through a manned security gate where, if they are not expecting you, you will be thoroughly vetted before entering. These precautions are not only in

place for the safety of the students and faculty, they are also there to provide a distraction-free school day. Sure, students who are old enough and have their parent’s permission can drive to school, but this is not an open campus. “The students are paying for a full day,” says school director Paul Schiffman, “and that’s what they get.”

In fact, they get more than a full day. Currently, the school day at the only pre-K through 12th grade Jewish school in Nevada runs from 8 a.m. (7:55 is when the students should be there for the Pledge of Allegiance and Israel’s national anthem) through 3:10 p.m.—one of the longest school days in the Valley. Then, in the upper divisions, there are clubs and groups which meet both before and after class. This is in addition to team sports, at least one of which every junior and senior must participate in every school year.

But academics are still the primary focus. Senior Alex Baskin, who had a little academic trouble at Green Valley High as a sophomore, says: “This school has not only allowed me, but encouraged me, to look at things that I’m not as good at in academics and improve myself with them ... The biggest difference I’ve noticed here is that everybody gets the attention they need.”





Sara Kantor will be attending Harvard.

Amy Kim, who is spending her senior year at Adelson after spending her junior year at the Jakarta International School in Indonesia, agrees enthusiastically. “The teachers are very supportive. And they make sure you know what you’re doing; they make sure that you’re prepared.

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– Alex Baskin, Adelson Senior

that? We want our students to leave here with the academic rigor, but also to understand, to take a look at what they enjoy doing. That’s fine, continue to do that, but take on the new challenges that you have and find out if you can be good and enjoy something else.”

In fact, Kantor, who will be heading to Harvard University in the fall, is majoring in something she never thought she’d even like: chemistry.

“I had no idea I would like chemistry in the world, and I took

Everything they do is just to push you towards the direction you want to go to. They don’t work against you; they work with you.”

Schiffman clarifies the school’s message, placing the bulk of the responsibility on the students. “One of our major goals is to take students out of their comfort zone, place them where they weren’t comfortable, and then demonstrate to them that you can actually be comfortable there. Then it’s a question, do you like it or don’t you like it? Do you want to pursue

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– Amy Kim, Adelson Senior

chemistry with Dr. Green, and currently, my major at Harvard is listed as chemistry. My guess is it will change ... but who knows? I never thought I would like science that much.”

For Schiffman, this is the kind of result that confirms his overall philosophy. He also makes sure his teachers believe this, as well, actively seeking out instructors who not only have advanced degrees and are knowledgeable in their subject area, but more importantly, can demonstrate they have a passion and love for working with young people. For Schiffman, that collaboration is what makes the school special. His teachers actually want to work with young people in a coordinated measure and understand that “it’s more important to teach a student than it is to teach a curriculum.”

Evidently, it’s working. As of April 13, the 14 members of the graduating class of 2010 had already been accepted into over 50 schools, including Harvard, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Johns Hopkins University, Brandeis University and Sarah Lawrence College. Yet, there’s virtually no competition amongst the students.

Schiffman hopes to continue this trend. This year’s 17 juniors will have a tough act to follow, but they’re being well prepared. Sara Kantor has a younger sister who will be a senior next year. “They’re changing a couple things for the senior class, and she’s so excited, and I’m like, ‘Oh no, why do you get to do this? I never got to do it’ sort of thing.”

This campus is brand new, even though the lower school, the Milton I. Schwartz Hebrew Academy, has been around since 1988. The Adelsons (Sheldon is chairman and CEO of the Las Vegas Sands Corp., which operates The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino and Sands Expo and Convention Center, as well as The Venetian Macao-Resort Hotel) spared no expense to give the students every advantage they need to succeed. There are computerized dry-erase boards that travel to different rooms as needed, the computers are all iMacs, there’s a 300-seat theater for school productions (which also hosts community events), and a regulation-size, six-lane swimming pool. Even the basketball court was recently repainted to reflect the new collegiate 3-point line. Schiffman points out that the students will need to get used to that if they’re going to be playing at that level.

This speaks to how seriously every aspect of the school experience has been considered. But, it all comes back to the students. The kosher cafeteria has seating both inside and out and is immaculate. The students police it themselves, never leaving a tray for anyone else to pick up. Schiffman insists the community his students are a part of is one with respect for every person within it, regardless of station or position.

“When I came to this school,” explains Kim, a Buddhist, “everyone was so nice. They weren’t snobbish. I didn’t expect that. In fact, I didn’t know what to expect. I was afraid. All of a sudden, I found myself talking to people and they were all so kind.”

Even the lockers, the sacrosanct space of high school privacy, are treated just a bit differently—none of them actually have locks. “This is the kid’s culture,” says Schiffman proudly. “They all receive locks and none of [the lockers] have them. This is actually student code, that you do not touch anybody else’s things.”

Schiffman’s biggest wish for the coming year is to get the word out. For a start-up school, it is doing quite well, but he would love to get the enrollment up closer to its maximum of 60 students per grade. “Once people find our doorstep, to be one of those 60 will be a unique place to be.”

Alex Baskin has found the school to be a completely | continued p.48



# What if ...

From p.25 | of the role of another human being whom you have complete control over in every legal sense but not in the moral sense," he says.

Regarding women, Fromowitz explains that the Talmud takes much the same approach as the Torah.

"The Talmud is replete with lines coming from our tradition that women used to be very much treated like chattel," he admits, "and the laws are very clear that a person has an extreme responsibility for his wife. A man has to give more respect to his wife than he gives to himself, and more honor, and she's the foundation of the home, and she has more wisdom in a certain sense than a man. These kinds of ideas about equal rights, equality of human beings, etc., a lot of them come from the Torah itself."

These and other similar concepts, says Fromowitz, come about because Jews believe mankind was created in God's image and has a soul. But these ideas, and the continual evolution and struggle of understanding God's intentions, are very much still rooted in oral tradition.

"We have a tradition beyond what is written in the book. ...The Talmud and the unspoken part of it that gets passed on, that part — God forbid the Jewish nation should cease to exist — all those lines of thought and tradition would be broken to a large extent."

Not wanting to contemplate the idea of Jews vanishing, the rabbi is more comfortable with the happier thought of all the Jews in the United States moving to Israel, a process called *aliyah*. But even with that, he has problems envisioning what it would look like.

"The reason why it's hard to relate to is because there is like a 90 percent nonaffiliation rate in the city, and in the United States, it's better but not much better. The kind of Jews who are not thinking about their Judaism at all, it's harder to relate to what effect they have on their surroundings. Again, I think it's all about the ideas of the Torah, and if they're not staying in the game, not going to synagogue and not participating in Jewish life in different ways, they're not getting it from there as much."

## Adelson

From p.33 | life-changing experience, and Schiffman wants to give that to as many people as he can. "We encourage everyone to apply to us, regardless of if they can afford us or not. We have a very generous financial aid package, and I've also been instructed that we will not turn a family away due to their finances and

Despite the small number who regularly attend synagogues, Fromowitz still believes the effect of Jews just vacating America would be "immense" because of the idea of setting an example.

"People love to speak of the (Bernie) Madoffs of the world. The reason why it makes so much press is because it's sensational, because it's atypical. 'Hey, we found a Jew who ... !' OK, very good, you did. That's not the example we're trying to set, exactly. I think people still see the Jewish person as the conscience of the world.

"These are all concepts, even though they're being stamped on every day by Western society," he says, "but they're fighting against something. There's a tug of war going on here, and I'm not sure if we're winning but at least we're contributing in the sense that we're trying to fight the battle of dignity, of being upstanding, of being moral, of having goals and spiritual goals and not just position, power, money, etc."

## Community

Much like Rabbi Fromowitz, Elliot Karp doesn't believe it's possible for Jews to become extinct like the Bo tribe. As president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Las Vegas, Karp oversees the local arm of a national group that raises and distributes funds to a variety of Jewish organizations.

"I don't accept the premise that Jews will perish. I'm an optimist; I'm positive," Karp says. "That's not to say I'm Pollyannaish and naive that we don't have our challenges. But I think that we've always existed in challenging times relative to the period of history ... I think that Jews and Jewish life are Jews and Jewish life. We are always going to continue, we're going to thrive, we're going to adapt."

One of the issues that occupies Karp's mind is how to have nonobservant Jewish people realize that many things they might be searching for in life can be found in the faith.

"When one of my own kids, when they were in their teens, proudly announced that they

they're not being able to afford to pay. If the child belongs here, then the child will be here."

While public schools are hitting financial crises and cutting programs, Adelson is expanding. When public school students are being jammed into overflowing classrooms with teachers worried about their next

were going to become a humanist, I said, 'Great, what do you mean?,' Karp recalls. "She said to me, 'I care about the environment, I care about civil rights and I care about justice.' And I said, 'Oh, OK, you're Jewish!' And she said, 'No, I'm a humanist.' Well, all those values emanate from the most basic, fundamental beliefs that make up Judaism."

In that sense, then, echoes of Judaism would still remain, even if the people themselves become completely assimilated into the mainstream culture.

"America has been the best thing for the Jewish people. It's also been the biggest bust," he says. "We as Jews have taken advantage of everything America has offered us, and we've excelled at it. ... And somehow or other, at least as a communal exercise, my concern is that second best as far as Jewish community is OK. And I don't buy that."

"The Jewish community will only be as strong as the larger community in which we exist, and if that community is not strong, then our community can never be strong. We have a responsibility to *tikkun olam*... repair or perfection of the world. Both the Jewish community and the community at large."

The secret to maintaining and increasing that strength, says Karp, lies with expanding the definition of what it is to be Jewish past the religious boundaries.

"You don't have to be a Talmud scholar. You don't have to be a great rabbi. Just have a curiosity of who we are as a Jewish people, while at the same time enjoying all of the other elements," he explains.

"People say to me, 'What kind of Jew are you?' And what they mean is, are you reform, conservative or orthodox. And I like to say, 'You know what, those aren't the only kinds of Jews. There are gastronomic Jews, there are cultural Jews, there are nationalistic Jews, there are musical Jews, there are artistic Jews.' ... The most important thing to me is that I'm a proud Jew. ... That's why if more people, I hope, would begin to see the Jewish world the way I do, we will never vanish."

paycheck, Adelson is giving students one-on-one attention and preparing them for a life outside its new and shiny halls. The class of 2010 is just the start for a school dedicated to teaching kids to be the best they can be. It's going to be interesting to see where the class of 2020 goes.