

# The Hebrew Academy Puts Accent On Positive Programs



Dr. Tamar Lubin talks with students Jonathan Perry, J. L. Rubenstein and Roy Erhardt.

## TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth Constitutes A Majority"

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Lubin, director of education and administration. "We like to establish an exciting learning environment."

The Hebrew Academy has changed a great

deal since Lubin was hired in 1979. At that time, the academy had a \$94,000 deficit, lacked academic direction and was rapidly losing students. "In short, things were a mess," says Geri Rentschler, president of the board of trustees.

Rentschler credits Lubin with helping make the school what it is today. Working long hours seven days a week (she has yet to take a day off), Lubin overhauled the school curriculum. Computer studies, a practical science program, music and art were added. Hebrew already was being taught, and Lubin added Spanish as a

required course and Latin as an elective.

A new library includes a large reference section, audio visuals and Judaic literature.

The school now has 160 students, triple the enrollment of six years ago, and it no longer operates under a deficit.

Probably the most startling thing about the young students is their ability to work with computers. Two years ago Lubin ordered 30 Texas Instruments and Apple microcomputers. All academy students begin to learn to use computers in kindergarten on a one-on-one approach.

"By the time they graduate, the students have mastered the use of computers. They can program," says Lubin, who also has some experience in the field. She devised a computer program for her doctoral dissertation at the University of Rochester, New York.

Academy students learn three types of computer language: basic, pascals and fortran. "If they go into business or the world of high technology, the use of computers will be second nature to them."

She stresses computers are not used as a remedial tool to help the students with other studies. "We like to use our highly competent teachers for immediate interaction on a human level. We find that much more effective than a piece of hardware."

Lubin stresses it is the dedication of her staff that makes the academy a fine learning institution and one with high morale.

This school thrives on having a very effective staff. Our instructors are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and able to create an excellent learning environment. The school climate enjoys a high teacher morale, which filters down to the students and reflects on their high achievements."

The entire staff of the academy numbers only 20, and Lubin has nothing but praise for each and every member. "Our Spanish instructor, for instance, is Kathleen Small. She has taught Spanish in Madrid, and we feel very fortunate to have her here."

Spanish and Hebrew, the required languages for all students, are important for different reasons, Lubin says. Spanish is a popular second language, especially in the American West. The students' knowledge of Hebrew "unlocks" the Jewish heritage. "They must know the language to comprehend the profound writings. All the scriptures are written in Hebrew."

Latin is offered as an elective to students in grades six through nine. "Latin helps children understand the concepts of European languages. It also helps them on the verbal sections of their Scholastic Aptitude Tests," Lubin says. Another unique facet of the academy is the science program. Students do laboratory work, dissect small animals. They work with laboratory tools and do experiments.

"I do a lot of reading and I like to keep abreast of all new research into educational methods. As soon as I comprehend the profound importance of a program, I research and devise a plan and then I implement it to create a viable and meaningful experience for the students," she says.

Needless to say, academy students do well on standardized tests. Lubin says the mean test score at the academy falls within the 90th percentile compared with parochial and private school students nationwide.

When students graduate from the academy, they usually enter the 10th grade in a public school. "The schools love to get our students. They have excellent study skills. They are high achievers," Lubin says.

"Throughout the school programs, the staff emphasizes values and ethics which are woefully missing from our society."

Soon academy students will not have to leave the facility midway through high school if they wish to stay. Dr. Lubin is planning a fund-raising drive to build new school sections to house 10th-11th-and-12th graders, as well as pre-schoolers.

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