



# STUDENT LIFE

2025-2026 • 5786



**A student's experience at Yeshivat Or Chaim extends well beyond the classroom.** The wide array of co-curricular activities, teams and programs encourage students to get involved in school life. Students are part of an environment that stresses contributing to the Jewish People while at the same time channeling their passions and honing their leadership skills. Bnei Akiva Schools emphasize a commitment to Medinat Yisrael. We expect our students to demonstrate Ahavat Yisrael, Derech Eretz and social responsibility towards the Jewish community, Canada, and the world at large.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

As part of their graduation requirement outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Education, students at Bnei Akiva Schools must complete 40 hours of documented community service. The vast majority of our students, however, complete well over the Ministry's requirements with a variety of organizations within the Jewish community and beyond.

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Bnei Akiva Schools maintains a close relationship with Bnei Akiva and the Mizrahi movement. Many of our students lead weekly Bnei Akiva youth groups, participate in Bnei Akiva shabbatonim and attend or staff Camp Moshava Ennismore, Moshava Ba'ir Toronto and other Bnei Akiva camps. Our students are also directly involved in community Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut programs. As a movement, "Bnei Akiva inspires and empowers young Jews with a sense of commitment to the Jewish People, the Land of Israel and the Torah."

The school maintains relationships with several chessed organizations. Students are involved in chessed projects, such as visiting nursing homes and packaging food or clothing for those in need.

The school also has close relationships with organizations advocating inclusion of individuals with all abilities.

## CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### CHIDON HATANACH

A longstanding tradition, Yeshivat Or Chaim students have often competed in the final round of the International Chidon HaTanach competition held in Israel on Yom Ha'Atzmaut. In 2014, the international winner was an Or Chaim student, and another YOC student placed in the top 16. In 2017, after placing first overall in the national competition, a YOC student placed within the top eight internationally. In spring 2023, two YOC students placed within the top five nationally (including one student placing first), who then competed in the International Competition in May 2024.

### BNEI AKIVA SCHOOLS HAS PARTNERED WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

Baycrest	CJPAC	Kayla's Children Centre	Sharsheret
Beit Midrash Zichron Dov	DANI	Kensington Place	StandWithUs
Bernard Betel Centre	Emunah	MADD	Tomchei Shabbos
Bikur Cholim	Ezer Mizion	Moshava Ba'ir Toronto	Toronto Holocaust Museum
Bnei Akiva of Toronto	Friendship Circle	Mizrahi Canada	UJA Federation
Camp Moshava Ennismore	Habitat for Humanity	National Council of	United Chesed
Canadian Blood Services	Hasbara Fellowships Canada	Jewish Women	Ve'ahavta
Chai Lifeline	Hatzoloh Toronto	NCSY	Walk with Israel
Chasdei Kaduri	JACS	Od Yosef Chai	Yachad
CIIA	OU-JLIC	One Family Fund	Yeshiva University



## JERUSALEM MARATHON

In recent years, Bnei Akiva Schools has sent a delegation of dedicated students to Israel for the chance to participate in the Jerusalem Marathon in order to raise funds for charity. The team from each school is coached separately and each student has to fundraise in order to participate. Once in Israel, the group tours the country guided by our teachers and rebbeim, runs the marathon and spends time getting involved in beautiful chessed opportunities.

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*Participating in the Jerusalem Marathon was an amazing experience. I enjoyed the experience of running for a cause, alongside so many fellow Jews. Traveling in Israel for the week was inspiring and an incredible opportunity.*

AARON TAYLOR ('19)

## MOCK TRIAL

Students from Grades 9 through 12 have the opportunity to join the mock trial team, which competes in the Ontario

Justice Education Network's (OJEN) Toronto Mock Trial. Following months of preparation, students play the role of witness or lawyer, competing against other schools from across the GTA. Competing in a real courthouse, dressed as lawyers, gives the proceeding a true sense of gravitas. In addition to a greater understanding of Ontario's legal system, students gain valuable communication skills.

## MODEL UN

Each year, our students participate in two different Model UN programs. Under the guidance of faculty members, students research the politics of the country they have been selected to represent, in order to play the roles of real United Nations delegates at the conference. Participating in the Model UN programs adds to participants' knowledge of world affairs and their debate and public speaking skills. Qualifying students participate in Yeshiva University's National Model UN Conference with hundreds of other yeshiva high school students across North America. All students are invited to participate in the Jewish Canadian Youth Model UN held in Montreal.



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*Participating in Model UN was one of the best decisions of my high school career. The emphasis on developing research skills, public speaking and becoming more informed has boosted my comfort and confidence levels when it come to speaking in front of an audience. Participating in a mock United Nations committee is an experience like no other.*

EITAN MARKUS ('19)

## CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS

At the culmination of the school year, Bnei Akiva Schools celebrates its robust arts programs in an evening of exhibition/performance. Courses represented include Visual Arts, Media Arts, Communications Technology, Movie-Making, Maker Lab and Dance (UO). Women are invited to view a live dance performance. Families enjoy viewing paintings, drawings, sculptures, graphics, videos, robotics and more!

## PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST

Bnei Akiva Schools runs an annual Public Speaking Contest available to all students. Judges vary from year to year, usually made up of a panel of teachers, alumni and

community members. In recent years, a people’s choice component was instituted to the competition, whereby the audience members themselves act as judges and text the number of their favourite finalist. The public speaking competition is a wonderful opportunity for students to learn to successfully communicate orally, to hone their public speaking skills and to give students an opportunity to share their beliefs in an encouraging atmosphere.

## ALUMNI CAREER DAY/POST-SECONDARY ALUMNI PANEL

In alternating years, Yeshivat Or Chaim is proud to host our alumni for two meaningful events: Alumni Career Day and our Post-Secondary Alumni Panel. Both events are tailored to help our Grades 10–12 students gain an appreciation for the many university and career options that exist for them once they graduate high school. Current students have the opportunity to ask questions and connect with alumni who offer valuable advice on their own academic and career journeys as young Modern Orthodox Jewish men.

## YOM HASHOAH

Every year, Grade 11 is tasked with the oversight of the school-wide Yom HaShoah program. As a group they determine a theme and then create a program around that theme. The students usually present on current Holocaust research, recite Kel Maleh and hear from a survivor speaker. Aside from the education and commemoration aspects of this program, this is also a way for the grade to work together toward a very worthy goal.

## YOM HAZIKARON

Grade 10 students work together with a member of faculty to create a meaningful program to commemorate Yom HaZikaron. They focus on Israel, the IDF as a whole, and individual heroes who have become victims to the ongoing struggle for statehood in Israel. The program includes a

performance by the choir, a video presentation, speakers, and various other commemorative elements. This program is always a meaningful way to pause and reflect on the sacrifice of those who live in Israel as well as a reminder to the students of the centrality of the State of Israel in our lives.

## YOM HA'ATZMAUT

Celebrating Israel's Independence Day is a highlight of the school year at YOC. Students join together during Shacharit for a meaningful Tefillah Chagigat, which is followed by a festive Israeli breakfast and Israel-related programming. Students are also encouraged to volunteer at the annual Mizrahi Canada ceremony and celebrations.

## FIELD TRIPS

Teachers are always on the lookout for trips that will help enhance the learning that is done in the classroom. Trips have included a Physics Day at Wonderland, various exhibits at the ROM or the Science Centre, theatre trips to see Shakespearean plays in Stratford, and trips to various local universities as well.



## SHALHEVETH FREIER PHYSICS TOURNAMENT

Students in Grades 11 and 12 have the option of competing in the Weizmann Institute's Annual Shalheveth Freier Physics Tournament. Competing groups build a safe using physics principles that should be impenetrable by other teams, while trying to crack their competitors' safes. The national winners compete in a two-day international competition in the Davidson Institute of Science Education, at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel.

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS WEEK

Coinciding with Bell Let's Talk Day, Bnei Akiva schools spend time reflecting on challenges and opportunities related to mental health and wellbeing. Speakers educate students on recognizing signs in themselves and their peers, and what to do to help. Activities encourage students to take time to strengthen their mental health, whether through relaxing activities like meditation and yoga, or through fun activities like sports. Healthy eating is highlighted and encouraged specifically during this week as well.

## LEADERSHIP

### STUDENT COUNCIL

Student Council consists of students from Grades 11 and 12. Working closely with the administration, they oversee and facilitate programming in the school. Annual activities coordinated by Student Council include sukkah building, school lunch programs, school-wide Shabbaton, Sports Day, Winter Activity Day and basketball intramurals. A portion of funds raised by Student Council is donated to various local and Jewish charities.

### WINTER ACTIVITY DAY

An annual highlight, students have the opportunity to choose between skiing or snowboarding at Mt. St. Louis



## MEET THE STAFF

**RABBI AVISHAI KHARILKAR**  
**DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE**  
akharilkar@bastoronto.org

Rabbi Kharilkar is the advisor for student council. Working with student leadership directly, he oversees Student Council programs, initiatives and fundraisers. Additionally, many other teachers are involved directly with specific programs, clubs and events.

Moonstone. Beginners and experts alike enjoy the opportunity to interact with peers from across all four grades outside of the classroom and on the slopes. Students also appreciate the opportunity to connect with faculty members in an informal setting.

### **“BIG BROTHER” PROGRAM**

At the beginning of Grade 9s, each student is assigned a “big brother” in Grade 12. At the 9/12 barbecue, they have the opportunity to meet, for the Grade 9 to ask questions and the Grade 12s to share advice and guidance. Grade 9 students then have an older student available to them throughout the year, to answer questions and provide guidance. When

possible, Grade 9/12 students will meet formally to check in as part of a larger program or learning initiative.

### **GRADE 11 LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMING**

In preparation for acting as the school’s student leaders, our Grade 11s participate in several leadership and teambuilding activities. Following an opening program, they participate in several sessions, focusing on practical leadership. Themes include: What Does Leadership Look Like and How to Enact Leadership, Planning School-wide Programming 101, and The Essentials of Working in a Team.

### **GRADE REPRESENTATIVES**

Grade Representatives consists of students in Grades 9–11. Their role is to work with Student Council on supporting and running programming. Grade Reps gain valuable leadership experience in student governance and affairs. They make decisions involving school-wide programming and enjoy taking the lead on shaping special activity days.

### **INTRAMURALS**

Intramurals take place several days a week during lunch. They are an opportunity for students in different grades to play together on the same team. On occasion, a staff member may be on a team as well. A Grade 12 student is elected into the “convener” position, organizing the teams, games and playoffs for the intramurals teams. Intramurals provide a fun way to unwind during the day and students look forward to seeing who will compete in and ultimately win the playoffs.

### **LUNCH PROGRAM**

Our Student Council and Lunch Committee offer daily lunch options for students to order. Students sample the best Toronto kosher restaurants have to offer with different establishments patronized each day. Choices include BBQ, salads, pizza, sushi, laffas, among other delicious choices.



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 YOC Sukkah Building furthered my organizational and leadership skills in a healthy and professional environment, forcing me to communicate effectively and work productively. These skills are vital for a Ben-Torah and a growing young adult, as although the Sukkahs may be temporary, these skills are most certainly not.

NOAM EIZICOVICS ('24)

Grade 12 students spearhead the initiative to raise money for their Grade 12 trip and, in the process, gain valuable planning and organization skills. Each year the rising grade looks forward to the time where they will choose what to offer to their peers and take charge of the BBQ.

### ACTIVITY DAY

Student Council has had the opportunity to surprise their classmates with a different activity day in recent years. Colour War has been one favourite surprise – a day for students in different grades to join together into a team, competing in events. A spin on the Colour War for 2023's surprise was Versus Day: keeping grades together for inter-grade team building, while competing against others. Events have included a variety of sports, as well as woodworking, Dungeons & Dragons, mathletics, Torah trivia, video creation and more!

### SUKKAH BUILDING

Every year, Grade 12 students advertise their sukkah building skills to the community. In advance of building, students review halachot of building sukkot with one of the school's

rebbeim, learn about customer service, and receive a safety tutorial. The students book appointments, create a schedule and go around the community in groups to build upwards of 50 sukkahs. The experience is one of bonding while learning both physical and entrepreneurial skills.

### THEME DAYS

Student Council theme days encourage students to dress up and have some fun during the school day. Theme days have included sports jersey day (and sports-specific jersey days), Hawaiian shirt day, grey outfit (groudfit) day, blazer/suit day, hoodie day and more!

### YOC MADNESS

Our very own March Madness: a Motazei Shabbat tournament in March featuring basketball in the gym, chess and video games! It's a fun evening, bringing together students from all grades. The program concludes with late-night wings.



## MEET THE STAFF

### MR. GORD SKAROTT ATHLETICS DIRECTOR

gskarott@bastoronto.org

Mr. Gord Skarott has been Athletic Director at Yeshivat Or Chaim since 2002. He emphasizes fitness and exercise in his classes and his personal life, having worked as a personal trainer and regularly competing in long-distance endurance events such as marathons and triathlons. Mr. Skarott takes his enthusiasm and love of physical activity into each class and attempts to find new ways for his students to have fun while being active.

## ATHLETICS

### BASKETBALL

The school has two basketball teams: Junior Varsity for Grade 9 and 10 students and Varsity for Grade 11 and 12 students. The teams compete in the TDCAA. The varsity team has the opportunity to play in various tournaments, including Yeshiva University's Sarachek Tournament in New York. Tryouts for the basketball teams are held at the beginning of the school year and the season typically lasts from September to March.

### CROSS COUNTRY

The Cross Country Running team, open to all students, also competes in the TDCAA. Tryouts and practices start at the beginning of the year and the season typically lasts until the winter.

### FITNESS CENTRE

The fitness centre is open at lunch for those interested in using treadmills or weight training. The room is staffed with a trainer who can answer questions and ensure students are safely and responsibly using the equipment.

### HOCKEY

Students in various grades created the Hockey Club as an opportunity to play with other schoolmates who love the game. They rented ice and held games at mutually convenient times.

### JUNIOR VOLLEYBALL

In the spring athletic season, the school offers a Junior Boys Volleyball team for students in Grades 9 and 10. This team competes against other schools in the TDCAA, and practices twice each week. The tryouts are open to everyone in the lower grades – no prior experience needed!

### SOCCER

The Soccer team is open to all students who qualify. While the soccer season is typically in the spring and summer, tryouts and practices usually begin in January. The soccer team also competes in the TDCAA.

## CHESS AND



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*Being part of the soccer, cross-country and basketball teams was an indispensable part of my experience at Yeshivat Or Chaim. We focused on working as a team and improving our work ethic, both on and off the court. Representing Yeshivat Or Chaim also allowed my teammates and me to make a Kiddush Hashem on the court, field or track.*

JOSH MAYER (15)



## VOLUNTEERING

### CHESSED COMMITTEE

The Chessed Committee has become one of the most popular committees in the school. Around five or six students are selected to plan chessed events and fundraisers and encourage activism and volunteerism amongst the student population. It spearheads projects throughout the year, a selection of which are detailed below. In addition, many of the students on the Chessed Committee choose to volunteer their time to these organizations beyond the school setting.

### CHARITY CHOLENT CONTEST

A yearly highlight, our own homemade “Chopped,” the Charity Cholent Contest raises funds for Od Yosef Chai. Students learn how Od Yosef Chai helps needy families in Israel. They create teams, generally two per grade, and compete to make the tastiest cholent. A panel of esteemed judges, led by Mrs. Ripsman, tastes the cholents and rank them based on taste, texture and visual appeal. The winning team takes home the Cholent Trophy and has bragging rights for the year.

### WINTER CLOTHING DRIVE

In partnership with Ve’ahavta, the Chessed Committee collects warm winter clothing for those in need. To encourage students to donate, there are donated prizes offered to students who donate the most. It is a meaningful project for the Chessed Committee to take on that could have a tangible impact.

### PESACH FOOD DRIVE

Our Grade 10 students assist with Passover packaging at the National Council for Jewish Women. They learn about those in our community in need and hear about more opportunities to help. It is important as a team-building experience as well, as they work together to package the food.

### NURSING HOME VISITS

Under the guiding principle of developing active chessed among our students, Yeshivat Or Chaim facilitates at least one nursing home visit a year. In preparation, students in leadership positions plan a program to present at the home and gain important pointers as to how to communicate with the residents they meet. Often, different groups will meet residents at different cognitive stages and hear wisdom and



## MEET THE STAFF

**RABBI AVIAD PITUCHEI-CHOTAM**  
**DIRECTOR OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES**  
apituchey-chotam@bastoronto.org

Rabbi Pituchey Chotam oversees school programming. Working behind-the-scenes, Rabbi Pituchey Chotam ensures that programs around Chagim, mishmars, Israel-related programming and more are educational, well-organized, fun and engaging.

life stories gained by the residents. Once there, students sing, play musical instruments, schmooze with the residents and assist in the regular programming of the home.

### **YACHAD**

Many of our students participate in Yachad programming, an organization dedicated to integrating individuals with special needs into the community. Our students attend shabbatonim and programs. Some of them have also been asked to sit on the Yachad board. Yachad members have attended Mishmars regularly for a chabura learning and basketball program with a different class each time.

### **NOVEMBER**

The Chessed committee encourages students and male teachers to grow a moustache and raise funds in support of male health. Students are encouraged to become knowledgeable about men's health. Throughout the month of November, the committee tracks facial and fundraising growth.

## **RELIGIOUS LIFE AND TORAH LEARNING**

### **YOC REBBEIM PROGRAM**

YOC is proud to field a talented and inspiring roster of rebbeim from year to year, made up of local mechanchim and shlichim. The primary role of the Rebbe is to be a mashpia and positive influence on Talmidim's experience at YOC and beyond. The Rebbe is a source of inspiration through Torah teaching, positive role-modeling and religious guidance. Each student has a rebbe who serves as his Gemara shiur lead teacher, Tefillah supervisor, Thursday Mishmar facilitator and who hosts their shiur on two rebbe Shabbatonim during the school year. Each rebbe is a primary point person to cultivate religious growth in his talmidim through ongoing religious guidance.

### **MISHMAR**

Most Thursdays at 5:30 pm, students participate in a school-wide Mishmar program. Most weeks are planned by the rebbeim and include a variety of informal activities. Programs have included: visits to shuls to learn with shul rebbeim; visits to nursing homes; volunteering for chessed organizations; learning with a guest speaker; chessed workshops; programming with Yachad or Chai Lifeline; and schmoozes in rebbes' homes. Students appreciate the variety of activities and opportunities. Dinner is served as part of Mishmar.



## LUNCHSHMAR

Can't wait until mishmar at 5:30? Well, we have the answer for you! Thursdays at lunch, students are invited to the Beit Midrash to learn in a chabura. Community Rebbeim and speakers are invited as guests to lead one of the chaburot, and then give a dvar torah for the full group.

## MATMIDIM

The Matmidim program aims at giving our students a greater breadth, understanding and love of Torah learning. Our Matmidim program meets for two additional times of learning each week. The learning consists of guided chavruta learning focused on independent learning, chabura or small groups led by one of our rebbeim. Students have a choice of topics, ranging from Mishna to parsha to Shemirat HaLashon. In addition to the fulfillment of learning *lishma*, students enjoy strengthening their relationships with our rebbeim.

## YOC SAYERET MATMIDIM

The Sayeret Matmidim Program is an ongoing program provided by the yeshiva that provides an opportunity to enrich and deepen the Torah learning of a select group of YOC talmidim. Commitments and opportunities include

completion of Masechet Makkot Bekiut, contributions of articles in a bi-annual YOC Torah Journal, participation in special shiurim given by guest Rabbis, *melaveh malkas* and a special Shabbaton.

## BREAKFAST AND LUNCHTIME LEARNING

Every day during breakfast and lunch there are different Torah learning opportunities available for the students, which include Friday Parsha Club, Daily Halacha Morning Seder, Shnayim Mikra, Mishna-a-Day, Bnei Akiva, Chassidut and more. Students also have the opportunities to learn b'chavruta or in chaburot with YOC rebbeim.

## PARENT/GRANDPARENT-STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS

Father-Son, Mother-Son and Grandparent-Grandson programs are among our popular programs yearly. Programs usually include learning b'chavruta, with a summary at the end by a presenter. Presenters have included members of our staff, as well as community members. Students whose parent/grandparent cannot attend, learn with one of our rebbeim. These programs are great ways for our students



## MEET THE STAFF

### **RABBI EDDIE SHOSTAK MENAHEL**

eshostak@bastoronto.org  
416-630-6772 ext 237

Rabbi Eddie Shostak oversees the school's religious life and Judaics academic program. This includes minyanim, Matmidm Sayeret Matmidim and Mishmar programs and special holiday events. Rabbi Shostak also oversees the Rebbe program and Judaics curricular.

to showcase their learning skills for their family and take on a different social quality before and after the learning.

## CLUBS

*At Yeshivat Or Chaim, students have the opportunity to participate in clubs and/or committees. Clubs vary year-to-year based on interest and student leadership. Students are encouraged to speak to members of Student Council or student activity coordinators if they are interested in initiating a new club or*

*committee. Clubs must have a staff liaison supervising the activities in order to be an official school club.*

### **CHESS**

The name says it all: play chess with your peers, talk techniques and enjoy stimulating and competitive games.

### **DECA**

DECA is a chance for Ontario's top high school students to compete regionally, provincially, and internationally in a business case study competition. You'll create business presentations about marketing, finance, and entrepreneurship. Through conferences and competitions, DECA instills professionalism and prepares youth to respond to authentic business cases and market demands.

### **FINANCE CLUB**

A student-created initiative, this group arranges for speakers working in the business field to share their experiences with our students. Topics of discussion have included work-life balance, university experiences, career path choices, the specifics of a day-to-day business career and suggestions for remaining religiously connected while working in the field. This club has allowed students to gain valuable real-life ideas and advice. This club also competes in a simulated stock market exchange program.

### **FRIDAY FARBRENGEN**

Lunchtime on Fridays in the Small Beit Midrash – grab a guitar, bring a small drum, or just join ready to sing. The best way to prepare for Shabbat: a little kugel and a lot of singing.

### **GENTLEMEN OF THE TZITZIT ASSOCIATION (GTA)**

Are you stringing? YOC's most popular club focuses on the mitzvah of tzitzit. Regular meetings include chizzuk related to why we wear tzitzit. Students anticipate the

announcement of “Gentlemen of the Tzitzit Association to the MPR” and the delicious snacks that follow. You never know when the announcement is coming, so be sure to be prepared at all times with your tzitzit on!

### **ISRAEL ADVOCACY CLUB**

A student-run club with faculty support, students gather to learn the latest Israeli news. They learn tips from experts and online sources about how to best advocate for Israel, particularly on campus. They engage in lively debate and discussion about how to best advocate for the best interests of the Jewish State as Canadian citizens.

### **FILM CLUB**

A classic film, popcorn, and an analytical discussion. What could be a better way to spend an evening after school?

### **PARSHA CLUB**

A student-led initiative, supported by different rebbeim, this club meets weekly on Fridays to prepare for Shabbat with some Divrei Torah related to that week’s parsha.

### **PEER TUTORING**

A student-created initiative, students are paired appropriately with a mentor to guide and support their academic learning needs. This program is both a wonderful leadership opportunity for our senior students, as well as a valuable support for our younger students.

### **POETRY CLUB**

Since 2019, this weekly club has met to read, analyze and discuss poetry from a wide range of genres, regions of the world, and time periods. Poems are selected by a different student or faculty member each meeting, and the discussions are open to all. Members of the Poetry Club have also run poetry-writing workshops for one another, and even hosted GTA poets to share their expertise and insights.

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*Being part of the Robotics team was one of the greatest experiences I have had at Or Chaim. We learned how to use industry tools to build a 100 pound robot which we then competed with in a competition with schools from across Ontario. It was an incredible hands-on learning experience!*

EVAN SIMON ('23)



## SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

Students who enjoy writing and are looking to develop their analytical skills are encouraged to join the school newspaper. Our young journalists ask the tough questions and search for the truth, keeping our school community informed. Newspaper sections include outside news, opinions, Divrei Torah, athletics and more.

## YEARBOOK

Yeshivat Or Chaim has a yearbook committee which consists of a group of Grade 12 editors and contributors, a photographer, and a group of yearbook committee members from Grades 9–11. The group meets with the faculty advisor to create the yearbook that is given to the Seniors upon the occasion of their graduation and the committee works together to ensure that this publication is a reflection of the past four years of high school. Artistic, creative, writing, planning and organization skills are all utilized in the process.

## PR/BRANDING COMMITTEE

This committee is tasked with publicizing Student Council events and fundraisers. Students gain design, marketing and business skills as part of this committee.

## SHABBATONIM

### SCHOOL-WIDE SHABBATON

The Yeshivat Or Chaim Shabbaton is a yearly opportunity for the school to spend a Shabbat together. The Grade 12s generally go up early, organizing programming for the rest of the school, including Friday night learning groups. Shabbat includes davening, Divrei Torah, singing and shmoozing. Programming in the afternoon has included a shiur with a member of Beit Midrash Zichron Dov, a nature walk, and a “shmooze” with members of the Guidance Department. The

Shabbat is a spiritual, community-building experience, allowing our students to interact with each other and some of their teachers in an out-of-classroom, Shabbat atmosphere. Following Havdallah, the boys participate in dancing led by the YOC Band and conclude the evening with a bonfire and kumzitz. An annual highlight for students and staff alike – an experience not to be missed!

### GRADE 9 ORIENTATION AND SHABBATON

Before the school year begins, the Grade 9 orientation introduces the students to who they need to know, how their schedules work and what the essential tools required for high school are. Following the academic orientation, the Grade 12s welcome the Grade 9s with a BBQ. The students meet and get to know one another and are arranged into “big brother-little brother” pairings. Grade 12s share their advice and ideas with the Grade 9s and the family feel of Yeshivat Or Chaim is palpable for Grade 9s – even before their first class! At the beginning of the school year, our Grade 9s travel to Camp Moshava Ennismore for a shabbaton to start



the year. They have shiurim in small groups with several rabbis, as well as a shmooze session with the student leaders who attend the shabbaton. They enjoy meals together, singing and davening together and getting a feel for what the school-wide shabbaton will look like in a few months. It provides an opportunity for all students – no matter what elementary school they came from – to get to know one another and become a united group of Or Chaim students.

### REBBE SHABBATONIM

Throughout the year, various Judaic Studies staff open their homes and host shabbatonim for groups of students. Generally, each student will be invited to two “home shabbatonim” with their Gemara rebbe during the year. These shabbatonim have become an important part of the experience of the Yeshiva. The students enjoy singing together and informally schmoozing about Torah and Judaism.

## MINYANIM

All students are expected to arrive on time for morning minyan. Mincha is davened daily as well. Maariv is included at the end of the day when the zman permits.

### GRADE 9 MINYAN

Our Grade 9 students daven in a separate morning minyan to foster leadership within their grade, and ensure they have the opportunities to lead davening and leining in a small-group atmosphere with only their classmates.

### SEPHARDIC MINYAN

Based on student interest, we began a Sephardic minyan, which ultimately led to the creation of a Sephardic shul and the donation of Sephardic Sifrei Torah. This minyan allows Sephardic students to daven in their own nusach, using their traditional customs.



*The opportunities presented to the students have far surpassed my expectations going into Yeshivat Or Chaim. The curricular and extra-curricular activities provided makes Or Chaim an amazing place to learn, and the environment created by the students makes it a extremely fun place to learn.*

MORDECHAI WOLFSON ('21)



## **Yeshivat Or Chaim**

Israel and Golda Koschitzky Torah Centre

159 Almore Avenue  
Toronto, ON M3H 2H9

T 416 630-6772  
F 416 398-5711

[www.bastoronto.org](http://www.bastoronto.org)

 @bastoronto



UJA FEDERATION  
of Greater Toronto  
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