



STUDENT LIFE

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A student’s experience at Ulpanat Orot 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. The list below represents some of the programs and activities that have run in recent years at Ulpanat Orot.

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 maintain a close relationship with Bnei Akiva and the Mizrachi 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 HaAtzma’ut 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, BAS students have regularly placed in the top five in the National Chidon competition, and have often competed in the final round of the International Chidon HaTanach competition held in Israel on Yom HaAtzma’ut, placing within the top 20 internationally. Recently,

BNEI AKIVA SCHOOLS HAS PARTNERED WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

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



an Ulpana student placed second nationally and competed in Israel!

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, runs the marathon and spends time getting involved in beautiful chessed opportunities.

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 (JCYMUN) held in Montreal.

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Participating in JCYMUN as an Ulpanat Orot student gave me the opportunity to use my debating and public speaking skills in committee sessions with high schoolers from around the world, covering challenging and relevant topics. Because of Model UN, I definitely improved my ability to communicate effectively, learned a lot about what's happening in the world, made new friends, and had a lot of fun.

HANNAH (SILVERMAN '19) KAPLAN

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.

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The Grade 10 Israel Experience program allowed me the ability to connect more with the land of Israel and the culture. It was truly an incredible trip that I am so grateful to have been a part of.

YAKIRA GASNER ('20)

RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR (RGC) PROGRAM

Now in its seventh year, the RGC program involves a once-a-week designated class with each student's RGC, where students have the opportunity for informal, reflective character education, community-building, and personal growth. In addition to the weekly classes, RGCs also host Sukkot and Chanukah parties with their student groups, and plan grade-wide programs. Each student is assigned an RGC who meets with them throughout the year, both individually and one-on-one. This program ensures that each student is receiving the social, emotional and academic support they need, in an environment that encourages religious growth and learning.

Once a week, all students benefit from the *Lifnai v'Lifnim* program, a structured curriculum focused on developing a connection with each other, ourselves and HaShem through text and discussion. This is facilitated by RGCs (religious guidance counsellors) who are trained in the methodology and techniques. The lesson, named *Lev Hashavua*, The Heart of the Week, is a time for self reflection, growth and connection.

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, Dramatic Arts, Movie-Making, Communications Technology, Photography, Maker Lab and Dance. 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, Ulpanat Orot is proud to host our alumni for two meaningful events: Alumni Career Day and our Post-Secondary Alumni Panel. Initiated and organized by Mrs. Nadia Glick, 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 women.

YOM HASHOAH

Every year, Grade 11 Holocaust class 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. 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 an impactful 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 HAATZMAUT

Celebrating Israel's Independence Day is a highlight of the school year at UO. Students join together during *Shacharit for a meaningful Tefilla Chagigit*, 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.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS WEEK

Coinciding with Bell Let's Talk Day, both schools spend time reflecting on challenges and opportunities related to mental 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 a group of four students from Grades 10–12. The girls on Student Council are elected by their peers and spend a year focused on initiating and leading school-wide programs including trips, Shabbaton and Colour War.

LUNCH PROGRAM

The Grade 12 fundraising committee sells lunches every year as a way to raise funds for their grad trip. All students and faculty have the opportunity to order lunches from various Toronto vendors.



STUDENT-FACULTY-ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE (SFAC)

Now in its sixth year, the Student Faculty Administration Committee at Ulpanat Orot is a group selected to represent the ideas and concerns of each of the three critical constituencies in our school. Student members of SFAC are voted in by their peers, and all SFAC members attend monthly meetings where relevant agenda items are discussed in a respectful, collaborative manner. Students on SFAC are brought into the decision-making process on issues that effect them on a daily basis at school, and all three constituencies learn much from the discussions together.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

Continuing from its establishment six years ago, every other week our Grade 12 students have a designated class in which they have the unique opportunity of hearing from a wide variety of local speakers on the topic of leadership. Past speakers have included community rabbis, Jewish activists, educators, inspirational speakers, and student leaders. Our students engage in a question and answer period with each speaker, and write reflections on the leadership skills they gain from listening to these motivational speakers.

BBQ/"FAMILY" PROGRAM

Every year the Student Council organizes sister pairs between Grade 9 and Grade 12 students, and Grade 10 and Grade 11 students. Those pairs are then grouped into "families". Throughout the year there are a series of programs geared toward facilitating relationships within sister pairs and families. At the beginning of each year, the Grade 9 students and Grade 12 students have a barbecue together where they enjoy good food, good company, *divrei Torah* and fun ice breaker activities.

ATHLETICS

BASKETBALL

The basketball team is open to all qualifying Ulpanat Orot students. The Ulpana Knights basketball team is a member of the SSAF (Small Schools Athletic Federation) where they play games against other private schools with similar enrollment sizes. The season typically lasts from October to December. Each year, the team has travelled to either Miami or Cleveland to participate in various basketball tournaments.

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Being on the Ulpana Knights was an incredible opportunity that helped enhance my high school experience. Through every game, win or lose, my confidence level rose. I had the privilege of learning leadership skills, the importance of teamwork and was even able to travel to Miami, Cleveland and New York for basketball tournaments!

EMME (ROSENBLUM '17) WASSERMAN

VOLLEYBALL

Ulpanat Orot's volleyball team consists of a group of athletic young women dedicated to the sport. The team tryouts are held in the winter and they play a number of games against SSAF teams. For the past several years, the team qualified for the playoffs.

SOCCER

We are excitedly anticipating our fifth year with a soccer team! Tryouts will be in the spring and the team will compete in the SSAF. This team is an exciting addition to our ever-expanding athletic program.

CROSS COUNTRY

The Cross Country team gets underway in the fall and is open to all students, regardless of experience. The team

trains after school with a coach, as well as on their own in preparation for the various meets. Ulpana students recently placed in the top ten in both the U16 and U20 divisions.

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Being on the Ulpana volleyball team gives me the opportunity to develop leadership and team-building skills, as well as being a great energy outlet. I always look forward to our games in which I am proud to represent the school.

HANNAH (AARON '20) ZOBIN

CHESSSED AND VOLUNTEERING

CHESSSED COMMITTEE

The Chesssed Committee is organized by Grade 12 students and creates opportunities for students to get involved in various activities with partnered community organizations. Additionally, the committee organizes various chesssed-inspired trips throughout the year as well as an annual Mother-Daughter Evening for students and their mothers, grandmothers and sisters, the proceeds of which are donated to tzedakah.



YACHAD

Our students are very connected to the Yachad organization, starting from Grade 9, where they participate in a Sensitivity Training Workshop run by Yachad staff, which helps our students become aware of and sensitive to differently abled people in our community and beyond. Many students at Ulpanat Orot participate in Yachad-run events throughout the year, and many attend and help out with various local and international Yachad Shabbatonim during the year, too.

ANNUAL CHESSSED DAY

Each year, Ulpanat Orot students engage in a day of chesssed, where they are divided up into smaller groups and bused to different local chesssed organizations to do some volunteer work. In past years, students have volunteered with the National Council of Jewish Women's annual Pesach food drive, helped package items at the Bikur Cholim kitchen, spent time with children in Kayla's Children Centre, and visited various local nursing homes.

MOTHER-DAUGHTER NIGHT

Each year, the Grade 12 Chesssed committee chooses an organization to focus on and fundraise for in a fun-filled evening for women in the community. Although it is called a "Mother-Daughter" evening, grandmothers, aunts, cousins, and sisters join as well. The program combines learning with a chesssed activity and a dessert reception. Activities have included making sandwiches for the homeless, baking challah for a children's Shabbat party, and preparing care packages for children in the hospital. This event is a highlight of the school year for both students and family members alike.

LOCAL CHESSSED PARTNERSHIPS

In recent years, Ulpana students have been involved with several chesssed initiatives with local organizations. Each week on Thursday evenings, a dedicated group of girls travelled to the Bikur Cholim kitchen and spent their time baking and packaging their baked goods, to be delivered as

part of Bikur Cholim's hospital meal deliveries. Our students have also organized and run the annual Chai Lifeline Carnival. Our partnership with Chai Lifeline extended to a special three day trip with a number of Ulpana students paired up with their "younger sisters" of Chai Lifeline, who travelled together for a fun-filled, memorable experience at West Edmonton Mall.

ARTS

ULPANA THEATRICAL PRODUCTION

Over the last few years, the talented students in the Drama club have put on a variety of productions, including Aladdin, Twelve Angry Jurors and The Lion King. The Ulpana theatrical production is a fabulous opportunity for all interested actresses, singers, dancers, stagehands, artists, and musicians to meet after school to hone in on their theatrical talents and produce a noteworthy production.

RABBANIT PURIM

Rabbanit Purim is one of the longstanding Ulpanat Orot traditions. In the spirit of Purim, Grade 11 students write,



direct and choreograph a play. They are responsible for ticket sales and for organizing a silent auction which takes place during the intermission. At the end of the play, the Rabbanit Purim is announced. She is the student elected by her peers to lead the school throughout the week preceding Purim. Proceeds from the auction as well as other fundraising initiatives that take place during the month of Adar are donated to *tzedakah*.

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My experience being part of the Rabbanit Purim production last year was an excellent one. From writing to sets to costumes, my Grade 11 class took full creative control, which helped us bond and gave us leadership experience.

RENA (SCHWEITZER '19) BESSNER

COLOUR WAR

Each year, the school is divided into two teams over two days of athletics, arts, learning, and ruach. Each team is given a Jewish theme and competes in a multitude of events that challenge their various talents. Events include *chidon*, basketball, mural creation, an apache race, cupcake wars, volleyball, panoply, and so much more. This event is a great way to spend time outside of one's own grade while building school spirit and learning all at the same time.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING

MATMIDOT

The Ulpanat Orot Matmidot program is an opportunity for students to spend time outside of class learning Torah "*lishma*". In the past, the program has met Wednesdays after school. This year, students will have several exciting *Matmidot* options, or tracks, to participate in, based on student interests.



PARENT/GRANDPARENT-STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS

Father-Daughter, Mother-Daughter and Grandparent-Grand-daughter 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 staff members. These programs are great ways for our students to showcase their learning skills for their family and take on a different social quality before and after the learning.

Y'MEI IYUN

Throughout the year, speakers from the Ulpanat Orot faculty and from the Jewish community at large come to Ulpana to focus on various *halachic* and *hashkafic* topics. *Y'mei Iyun* allow students the opportunity of Torah learning "*lishma*"

and provides them with the chance to explore Torah subjects not covered in class.

JUDAIC ENRICHMENT PROGRAM (JEP)

Since the 2019–20 school year, students have the opportunity to be part of a Judaic Enrichment Program (JEP). As part of JEP, students have additional opportunities for religious growth, religious leadership and Torah learning that will further enrich their experiences both inside and outside the classroom. The program includes *Divrei Torah* workshoping and combined *Chessed* and learning events.

PREP FOR PESACH PROGRAM

As Pesach approaches, Ulpana students experience a Pesach *Divrei Torah* Round Robin Program, where various staff members circulate among each grade and give a series of meaningful *Divrei Torah* for use at students' *sedarim*. These *Divrei Torah* help to enhance students' *sedarim* each year.

TU BISHVAT

The shlichot work every year on a program focused on the environment and our role in it. In past years, students have decorated pots and planted flowers, have beautified the school through murals, have initiated a recycling program, and even had a Tu BiShvat "Amen Seder"!

DIVREI TORAH

Each day at the end of Tefilla a student or staff member gives a Dvar Torah or Dvar Halacha. Subjects include Shmirat Halashon, Hilchot Yom Tov, Parasha, current events and more.

LUNCH AND LEARN SESSIONS

At Ulpanat Orot, there are regular optional opportunities to add extra learning into students' daily lives through lunch and learn programs. Lunch and learn programs could involve the delivering of a Dvar Torah or mini-shiur by a visiting guest speaker, faculty member, current student or alumna. These opportunities are both interactive and thought-provoking.

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At Ulpana, the tightly-knit student body, the thoughtful teachers, and the engaged administrators combine forces to produce curious and confident learners. I owe my success as a Torah-observant Jewish woman to this intellectually rigorous and spiritually rich school community.

SARAH WAPNER ('14)



CLUBS AND COMMITTEES

At Ulpanat Orot, students have the opportunity to participate in clubs and/or committees that have included chess, photography, book, environmental, and even cholent clubs.

Clubs vary year-to-year based on interest and student leadership. Students are encouraged to speak to club heads if they are interested in initiating a new club or committee at the Bnei Akiva Schools. Clubs must have a staff liaison supervising the activities in order to be an official school club.

Clubs that have run in the past at Ulpanat Orot include:

DECA

DECA is a chance for Ontario's top high school students to compete regionally, provincially, and internationally in a business case study competition. Students will 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.



TEHILLIM GROUP

A group of students meet regularly at the conclusion of Tefillah to recite a perek of Tehillim together, inspiring reflective thought on the words and ideas behind the passages of this ancient book.

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.

STUDENT NEWSPAPER

Five years ago, we were thrilled to launch a Bnei Akiva Schools newspaper called "BASH" (Bnei Akiva Schools Headlines), which provided a unique opportunity for our students to really sink their teeth into the goings-on of the school community and let their voices be heard. Students who enjoy writing and are looking to develop their analytical skills are encouraged to join the BASH. Newspaper sections include outside news, opinions, Divrei Torah, athletics and more.



ISRAEL ADVOCACY CLUB

Launched several years ago, the Israel Advocacy Club worked tirelessly to bring the importance of Israel advocacy to Ulpanat Orot in the form of engaging guest speakers, an Israeli-themed fair, and activities to promote Israel. Partnering with the StandWithUs organization, Ulpanat Orot students learned the many ways they can help Israel even while not actually being there.

INTRAMURALS

Throughout the year there are pickup games in the school gym during lunch. Each week the intramural coaches change the sport. It is a great way to foster healthy competition amongst peers while also promoting physical wellbeing during the school day.

CHINUCH COMMITTEE

Bnei Akiva Schools takes a student-driven approach to co-curriculars. To encourage positive religious growth during Tefillah, as well as an understanding and appreciation for the centrality of tzniut, student-led committees have been formed. Motivated students use a relatable approach to inspire and motivate their classmates. Other successful Ulpanat Orot student initiatives have included "Acts of Kindness Daily," as well as "Stop Lashon Hara!" The Chinuch Committee also teaches the Parasha weekly with their bulletin board tidbits, their Dvar Torah after Tefillah, and their take home Divrei Torah for sharing at the Shabbat table.

MATH CLUB

Launched by a group of interested students in recent years, the Math Club met weekly to work on challenging and engaging Math problems together in a fun, laid-back atmosphere.

HOSA

In recent years, Ulpanat Orot is pleased to host a chapter of HOSA, the largest health science student organization in North America. As a HOSA member, interested students are provided with opportunities to learn about specific healthcare careers of interest to them as well as the healthcare industry as a whole by preparing for and competing in one of HOSA's 30 unique competitive events. Some events focus on training students in core technical procedures unique to a particular profession while others are more generalized and develop teamwork, communication and leadership skills.

THEME DAYS

Student Council theme days encourage students to dress up and have some fun during the school day. Theme days have included camp shirt day, twins day, and sports jersey day.

YEARBOOK

Ulpanat Orot 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.

SHABBATONIM AND RETREATS

SCHOOL-WIDE SHABBATON

The Ulpanat Orot Shabbaton is an annual opportunity for all students to spend a Shabbat together. The Grade 12s

go up early to decorate and prepare for the rest of the school's arrival, setting the stage for a wonderful weekend of achdut, community building and learning. Shabbat includes davening, Divrei Torah, singing, games and shmoozing. It is a spiritual experience, allowing our students to interact with students of all grades, as well as members of faculty and administration in an out-of-classroom Shabbat atmosphere. Following havdallah, the girls participate in several activities and finish with a thematic party with dancing and pizza. It is an annual highlight for students and staff alike – an experience not to be missed!

GRADE SHABBATONIM

Once a year, each grade has a Shabbaton in a local community hosted by their various teachers. Students spend Shabbat together and enjoy home-cooked meals by faculty members. It is a great opportunity for the grade to bond and learn together outside of the classroom. Shabbatonim feature a theme linked to the learning and activities experienced over the course of Shabbat.

GRADE 11 WINTER RETREAT

Grade 11 students go on a winter retreat at the very beginning of their second semester. Grade 11 girls always produce an amazing Purim-themed production in March and this retreat gives them an opportunity to get away from school and focus on this program, while developing the team and leadership skills necessary for success. In addition, this retreat, which includes snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and more, is about more than just the upcoming Rabbanit Purim. It is also an opportunity for students to self-reflect and introspect as a group about their individual and collective talents and responsibilities as they are soon to enter Grade 12 and will become the school leaders. The weather may be cold, but this getaway is warmly anticipated every year.

GRADE 12 GRADUATION TRIP

The Senior class fundraises and plans their end of high school trip, under the guidance and supervision of our administration. Students choose their location and plan the activities that they are most interested in. The grad trip takes place in June and is a wonderful culmination for each graduating class to finish their high school experience.





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