



Gratz Insider, January 2014 - Story Continuation

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## **Benjamin Greenberg and the Moral of the Mural**

For the last three years, Ben and his twin sister, Hannah, have been participating in a JCHS program called *Kulanu Chaverim*. Through this program, which draws from the JCHS Bucks County branches, Gratz students plan activities and projects to share on a monthly basis with students at Woods.

“I know it sounds cliché, but I don’t know who gets more out of it - the kids at Woods or the kids from Gratz,” says Ben and Hannah’s mother, Linda. She adds that regardless of their homework load, her children never skip a monthly session at Woods. In fact, Hannah’s decision to explore a career in special education is in part attributable to her experience in this JCHS program.

For Ben, Woods’ impact has also extended beyond the monthly meetings and into another important aspect of his life: Scouting. In his quest to qualify for Eagle Scout, Ben needed to complete a community service project that would demonstrate his leadership skills. Inspired by his experience at Woods, he wanted to do a project that would benefit the students there - but what? The mural idea was born when Ben decided that more color was needed in the room where the Gratz and Woods students met. Woods administrators supported the mural idea, but disagreed with the venue, requesting instead that Ben replace an existing mural on an immense wall in the Woodlands Education Center. With virtually no background in art, Ben decided to take on the challenge anyway and coordinate the project.

A competition was held among the Woods students to create the design for the mural. Under the guidance of the Woods art director, Ben and his team primed the wall and used an overhead projector to trace the winning design. From start to finish, the mural project spanned several months and consumed a total of 190 man hours, contributed by Ben, the members of Boy Scout Troop 30, other friends and family and, most importantly, Woods students as well.

“I liked seeing the Woods students and the guys from my troop working together on this beautiful mural,” Ben says. “What I learned from this experience was leadership skills and how to be responsible for a project.”

With the mural now complete, Ben and Hannah continue their monthly visits to Woods through their Gratz *Kulanu Chaverim* class. Proud of her children’s involvement in this program, Linda explains, “The bottom line from a parent’s perspective is that this class offers an incredible opportunity because it’s taking what we Jews believe in in terms of bettering the world and teaching it directly to our kids.”

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*For more information about Kulanu Chaverim or other JCHS service learning classes, click [here](#) to visit our website, or contact Dodi Klimoff at 215-635-7300 x133 or [dklimoff@gratz.edu](mailto:dklimoff@gratz.edu).*