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San Diego Jewish Academy Students Celebrate The Release of Gilad Shalit

SDJA students celebrated the release of Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier who was imprisoned by Hamas for five years, through a commemorative ceremony.

San Diego, CA – October 26, 2011 – San Diego Jewish Academy (SDJA) upper and lower school students assembled on campus on Tuesday, October 18 to celebrate the recent release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who was captured on June 25, 2006 by Hamas and held captive in the Gaza Strip for over five years. The only contact between Shalit and the outside world after his capture over five years ago were three letters, an audio tape and a DVD that Israel received in return for releasing 20 female Palestinian prisoners.

“The brief ceremony at SDJA, led by some of our fifth grade students, commemorated Shalit’s reunion with his family after 1,941 days in captivity,” said Shani Abed, SDJA’s lower school Judaic director. “His long-awaited homecoming is testament to the value that we as Jewish people place on the sanctity of life and to Israel’s staunch dedication to its citizens.”

Shalit’s release was commemorated at SDJA by a large assembly where the students read information about Shalit’s release, sang peace songs and prayed for peace in Israel and around the world.

Shalit received his freedom after more than five years in isolation and captivity in exchange for more than 1,000 Palestinian convicted prisoners serving sentences in Israel. “We recognize the pain that this prisoner exchange is causing many people,” stated Abed. “These people were also in the thoughts and prayers of our students when we released one dove symbolizing Shalit’s freedom and safe journey home and a group of doves to represent the people of Israel and our universal hope for peace.”

About SDJA:

San Diego Jewish Academy provides infants to high school seniors a unique environment that challenges students to achieve their full academic potential and become individuals of strong character, while inspiring them to make Judaism a vital and relevant aspect of their lives.

For more information about San Diego Jewish Academy, visit www.sdja.com.

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Photo Caption: Students released doves during the ceremony at SDJA to commemorate the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit after five years in captivity.