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Media Contact:

Joshua Nunn
Director of Marketing
San Diego Jewish Academy
Phone: (619) 302-4694
Email: jnunn@sdja.com



Fifth Graders Take Exception To *Time* Magazine’s Israeli Conflict Coverage

Fifth graders from San Diego Jewish Academy disagreed fervently with the message presented by Time Magazine’s September 14 cover story “Why Israel Doesn’t Care About Peace,” so they wrote letters to the editor of the national magazine.

San Diego, CA – November 4, 2010 – When fifth grade teacher Shani Abed of San Diego Jewish Academy (SDJA) shared with her two fifth grade classes the September 14 cover of *Time* Magazine displaying a daisy chain Star of David and the headline “Why Israel Doesn’t Care About Peace,” it caused some strong reactions among her students.

“Many students disagreed passionately with the cover headline and article, feeling it was anti-Israeli, biased and provocative with misleading graphics,” said Abed, who is head of the Judaic Department at Golda Meir Lower School. According to Abed, the *Time* article depicted Israelis as too busy drinking at bars, eating at restaurants and sunning themselves on the beach to care about peace talks.

The article being shared with the class was no coincidence according to Lower School Principal Daniel Sussman. “We seek opportunities like the *Time* Magazine article to integrate current events into our secular and Judaics curriculum,” stated Sussman. Lower school faculty often seek topics that encourage critical thinking and embrace Jewish values, such as *Klal Yisrael* (connectedness to one another and Israel), which is why the students felt it was important to respond to the article.

After reading the *Time* article, Abed’s 33 fifth grade students were determined to take action. “They decided to write letters to *Time* Magazine’s editor,” she stated. “The students thought that the article was based on the opinions of a very small sampling of people on a Tel Aviv beach and that their opinions did not reflect the opinions of the majority of Israelis.”

Excerpts from the student’s letters include the following:

--“...when I saw your magazine cover page, I felt mad because it was an opinion not a fact. I was sad because Israel has been trying to make peace with the Palestinians for more than 17 years.”

--“I am sure Israelis are exhausted from all the wars and terror attacks. They want to have a life with some leisure, pleasure and business as any other person in the world, but to propose that ‘Israel Doesn’t Care About Peace’—in the sense that it is indifferent or doesn’t care—it’s completely misleading information.”

The students believe that it is a journalist’s responsibility to present facts and not editorialize unless the written piece is expressly identified as an editorial. “My students were so passionate about this important subject and they reacted in such a positive way. For my young students to come up with such profound arguments makes me very proud. We are waiting to see if there will be a response from the magazine,” said Abed.

About SDJA:

San Diego Jewish Academy, one of the country’s premier K-12 Jewish day schools, challenges students to achieve their full academic potential and become individuals of strong moral and ethical 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: Max Deverett, a fifth grade student at San Diego Jewish Academy, works on his response to the editor of *Time* Magazine.