



Post-production party to celebrate the success of RBCA's production, "Hard Knocks of Skirts and Socks."

FOUR YEARS, A FOUNDATION FOR LIFE: **Rohr Bais Chaya Academy** Coral Springs, FL

FRUMMA GOTTLIEB

I am an educational coach and a past principal of the second largest day school in America, so when I went to visit Rohr Bais Chaya Academy, a high school for girls, I figured I was in a good position to write a review of the school. But even I was overwhelmed by what I discovered. This place seems to have everything! It's chassidish. It's academically advanced. It's filled with beautiful, eidele girls from all over the world. And every girl I spoke to said she is incredibly happy and feels like she belongs. This place is a jewel and I want to share it with readers of *N'shei Chabad Newsletter*.

Rabbi Moshe Rabin, the Executive Director of Rohr Bais Chaya Academy (RBCA), met me at the door with a warm smile and a crisp British accent. I could feel his pride in all his hard work to create a transformative atmosphere for students; to implement a successful, structured Chassidus curriculum; and many other educational advances.

Rohr Bais Chaya Academy of Coral Springs, Florida, began with 30 girls, in response to a large graduating 8th grade class from Hebrew Academy of Margate. They met for two years in a rented space in the local Reform temple. The executive director of the school, Rabbi Moshe Rabin, began to work with a local lawyer on the demanding zoning requirements that would enable them to create their own campus.

When he walked in for one of those conferences, his lawyer was talking with another lawyer, a Mr. Kodsi. Realizing that he was Jewish, Rabbi Rabin had a friendly chat with Mr. Kodsi as well, telling him he would be at his office the next morning to put a mezuzah on his door. The next morning just happened to be Purim, and Rabbi Rabin showed up in a clown costume with mishloach manos and of course the mezuzah.

Mr. Kodsi was in the midst of an important business meeting with two non-Jewish gentlemen who had flown all the way from California for the occasion. Rabin put up the mezuzah, gave the two visitors mishloach manos, and was politely reminded that this was a very important meeting so thank you and good bye. When he got to his car he realized that he had forgotten to give Mr. Kodsi mishloach manos, and so he bravely marched back into the high-powered conference to complete his mission.

The gentle businessmen from California were fascinated by Rabbi Rabin's sheer chutzpah, and asked



- 1) Girls from Rohr Bais Chaya Academy study Chayenu in their lunch-break.
2. A banana boating trip for girls who participated in Achos Hatemimim.
- 3) Devorah Kranz of Richmond, VA, and Rochel Marlow of North Miami Beach, FL.
- 4) "Adopt-a-Bubby" - the 9th grade pays monthly visits to a nearby nursing home; each student is paired up with a "bubby" to visit. Girls: Mushky Posner, Plantation, FL; Chaya Schapiro, Miami Beach, FL; Rochi Panigel, Coral Springs, FL

Our Vision

A well-balanced education, centered on the values of Torah and Chassidic philosophy, will inspire our students and give them the knowledge, skills, and tools to commit to lifelong personal growth and communal responsibility.

ROHR BAIS CHAYA ACADEMY
AT THE KODSI CAMPUS

Vision Statement

Rabbi Rabin to stay longer and talk more about Purim.

Rabbi Rabin followed up with more visits to Mr. Kodsi's office, with matzah for Pesach and cheesecake for Shavuot. Soon Mr. Kodsi started to get edgy. Finally, he called the original lawyer and asked him, "When is this guy going to ask me for money already? Rabin came again for Rosh Hashanah with apple and honey in hand but still no request for money."

Finally, on Erev Yom Kippur, Rabbi Rabin asked for a large donation and an even larger commitment. Mr. Kodsi agreed.

In 2006, Rabbi Rabin wrote a letter to the philanthropist George Rohr with the following projection. In 2007 there would be a large group of girls, daughters of nearby shluchim, going into ninth grade with no dormitory school that was truly geared for their needs. By 2015 there would be 200 of them. Mr. Rohr generously supports their parents, who are campus shluchim all over the world, but what about their children? What is a shliach to do? Rohr got it. Although Mr. Rohr's pet project is supporting shluchim on campus, he realized that this was not about supporting an institution; it was about supporting the shluchim, and so he wrote a very generous check on the condition it would be matched by a local donor. This was in 2007, and just days before the economic crash occurred, Mr. Kodsi agreed to be the matching partner! Rabbi Rabin smiles as he concludes this story, "I never leave home without a mezuzah and tefillin!"

The fruits of Mr. Rohr's and Mr. Kodsi's combined generosity include a beautiful and secure campus in Tamarac, FL, with smartboards in every classroom, a well-equipped science lab, an impressive library, a computer lab where girls can take advanced placement classes and get credits in a variety of subjects, an attractive shul, and a

beautiful dormitory in nearby Coral Springs. There is a lovely lunchroom where abundant fresh fruits and vegetables are served daily, and a gym is being built. The girls want to be fit and slim, and the school acknowledges that as a worthwhile goal. Aside from serving wholesome foods, they offer the girls Pilates classes as one of their many electives.

The walls are adorned with student artwork, attesting to the Rohr Bais Chaya Academy (RBCA) objective of individuality and inclusion. "We want to find every girl's island of excellence and celebrate it!" says Rabbi Rabin.

RBCA also recently purchased a Coach bus to take the girls on a variety of field trips and excursions, including to Crown Heights. "We want to save our parents money. They have enough to worry about without having to come up with extra cash for plane tickets," says Rabbi Rabin. In the next breath he adds that he has never turned away any child because of finances.

This loving attitude is reflected in the responses I received when I interviewed a few students. Cherry Pinson of Nice explained in her French accent, "The teachers and administration really care for each person. We are one."

Chaya Kosofsky from Massachusetts echoed the sense of belonging. "We are like one big family; everyone feels welcomed, and everyone belongs."

Another young lady from Rhode Island tried to convey how deeply involved the teachers are: "Our teachers are like parents."

Devorah Kranz from Virginia explained that "Rohr Bais Chaya emphasizes what is good rather than what is negative and the dorm life is ... AMAZING!"

While Rabbi Rabin and I were chatting, a student called from Australia to say that she couldn't wait to come back. "It's kind of boring at home! At Rohr Bais Chaya we always have something to look forward to. They understand that girls want to have fun."

When he got to his car he realized that he had forgotten to give Mr. Kodsishloach manos, and so he bravely marched back into the high-powered conference to complete his mission.



Rabbi M.M. Gluckowsky farbrenging with the students of Rohr Bais Chaya Academy.

But RBCA is more than just having fun. It's school, after all, not camp. And this was what impressed me most as an educator. The curriculum is brilliantly based on clear, practical goals and objectives. "We begin with the end in mind," says Judaic principal Mrs. Malkie Janowski. "What does a Rohr Bais Chaya graduate look like? What skills and insights will she need to succeed as a Chassidische woman in the 21st century? And then we build on that. We design our subjects and activities to make sure they support those goals."

This involves both the academic curriculum and extracurricular programs. The Rohr Bais Chaya faculty was enthusiastic about their comprehensive Bnos Chabad Program that makes chassidishkeit come alive through well-planned farbrengens, melaveh malkas, yemei iyun, Shabbatons, and activities for chassidische Yomim Tovim, Rosh Chodesh, and other occasions. Bnos Chabad also includes a wonderful Achos HaTemimim program that caters to the chassidische growth of each individual student.

"The Kodesh curriculum is high-level, challenging and text-based while advancing the skills of the student to new levels and horizons," says Mrs. Janowski. Rabbi Yossi Denburg's Chassidus curriculum is equally impressive, beginning with a thorough understanding of the basic building blocks of Chassidus and chassidic terminology, and finally, maamorim and sichos that are chosen for the relevance of their concepts to the developing learner.

One unique aspect of the education that girls receive at RBCA is cross-curricular learning on each grade level. An example is the class themes which are studied and highlighted in both limudei kodesh and general studies. The 9th grade theme is "Personal Responsibility"; in the 10th it is "Absolute Values – Right vs. Wrong"; 11th grade concentrates on "Influencing Others – Your Impact on the

World Around You"; and the graduating class, in preparation for the big world, examines "Establishing Identity." These relevant ideas are emphasized across the curriculum to support the students in internalizing life-enhancing Torah values.

And the secular learning is strong and inviting. I won't tell you what they were dissecting in the science lab when I walked in; you wouldn't want to know. The teachers are top notch and students are even able to earn college credits through independent computer classes in economics, Spanish and math. Under the able guidance of the general studies principal, Mrs. Tanya Rubin, the staff is encouraged to give every girl a chance to shine while upholding high standards and expectations. They honor a wide variety of learning styles, and in addition to offering advanced placement programs for the accelerated student, they facilitate tutoring for anyone who needs it.

Extracurricular activities conform to the goal of creating a graduate who will be confident on shlichus or devoted to community action. The girls participate in an Adopt-a-Bubby program, the Circle of Friends, Sunday Cheder, and running drama and outreach programs in other schools. The dorm is located in the Coral Springs community which comprises 40-50 Anash families. Girls have Shabbos meals with host families, are involved in the shul and babysit in the community. "We love the dorm! There is always something to do!" And that includes shabbatonim and farbrengens with such notable speakers as Rabbi Immanuel Schochet, Rabbi M.M. Gluckowsky, Rabbi Laibel Groner and Rabbi Shmuel Lew.

Sounds great, you say, but it's so far away. Rohr Bais Chaya is lauded for excellent communication with parents. Their lines of contact are open. Proactively, they use Edline, a computer service employed by top-of-the-line educational institutions, which allows parents to see exactly where their



Mrs. Malkie Janowski, principal, talking with students.



The Gansburgs of Coconut Creek, FL, at RBCA's mother-daughter Shabbaton.

daughter is holding on a day-to-day basis including homework, grades, assignments, and attendance. Parents' emails are answered promptly, and every parent has every administrator's cell phone number. "Because we have such a healthy staff-to-student ratio, very little drops beneath the radar. If something changes about a girl's behavior, those changes are noticed. The faculty decides as a team on strategies to facilitate the success of every girl," says Mrs. Janowski.

Happily, a dorm counselor got married in the final week of the school year. It was a simchah to be sure, but a bit of a difficulty for the school to find a replacement dorm counselor for such a short period of time. An alumna, who happened to be in Florida for a friend's wedding, called Rabbi Rabin and said, "As a student in RBCA, I took upon myself to say Chitas every day and to refrain from reading secular books on Shabbos as a result of the Achos HaTemimim program. That commitment changed my life. I became more focused and more chassidish and now I want to come back as your substitute dorm counselor to repay YOU for all you have given me." She gave up her Florida vacation in order to give back to RBCA for all it had given her. Need I say more? ■

To find out more about RBCA, email Rabbi Moshe Rabin at myrabin@rohrbaischaya.com, or call the school at 954.788.8781. To watch a fast-moving and enjoyable eight-minute video about Rohr Bais Chaya, go to www.baischaya.com.

Thank You from Alumnae in Seminaries Around the World

"I think it's safe to say that based on all of the girls here in seminary, the academic education at RBCA is the best. The staff and faculty of Rohr Bais Chaya did a wonderful job – may they go michayil el chayil! Thanks a million!" – ***Chaya Y.***

"I just wanted to thank you for all the education I received at Bais Chaya. I fully understand all the Chassidus we learn in seminary, and I am in all of the advanced learning classes. Most things are easy for me, even a bit repetitive, and it would not have been this way if not for the classes at RBCA. I was definitely well prepared for seminary – and I feel very fortunate, unlike some of the girls who have a hard time understanding the classes." – ***Mushky***

"Bais Chaya will always be a part of me. It molded my life. I wouldn't be the same person if not for Bais Chaya. I can't wait until I am able to give back." – ***Alumna***

"Bais Chaya should be very proud! The Chassidus and Tanya level in the school are above average! Rabbi Denburg's class is really advanced as well as Mrs. Janowski's Maamorim class. A lot of the stuff we learn in seminary, I already know because of those classes." – ***Maia S.***

Thank You from Parents

"We have been very impressed with the nurturing environment, high academic standards, and chesed activities. Our daughter is encouraged to take risks as well as leadership roles in the school." – ***Sari Marcovich***

"I thank you for the wonderful job you are doing and I am so glad that Chaya is thriving and growing as a young woman and a student. It was impressive to see that Chaya is exposed to new opportunities that she has never had. Seeing her on stage at the production and being excited and enthusiastic was very rewarding. Thanks for all your hard work. May your school continue to go from strength to strength." – ***Rochel Leah Kosofsky***

"I want to thank you... my daughter is so happy and successful being with you. My husband and I are happy that our daughter is in an environment where she will grow, mature and be successful." – ***Dena S.***