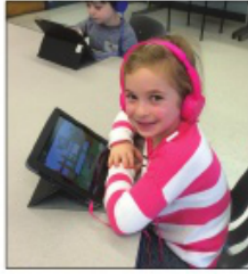


HEARD IN THE BAGEL STORE

BY LARRY GORDON

High Tech At HAFTR

School principals and administrators are dealing with an interesting challenge out there today, which is how to use the advances in modern technology to aid the learning process. One place that this latest phenomenon is being



A HAFTR student

Continued on Page 6

BAGEL STORE

Continued from Front Cover

carefully studied and implemented is the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway.

Several weeks ago I was invited to HAFTR to see how computer technology is being utilized there to educate students in the elementary and mid-

which entails educational institutions bringing computer technology into classrooms, often as a way of cutting down on personnel while simultaneously reaching greater numbers of students. That is not the case here, and Gross adds that HAFTR educators firmly believe that there is no replacement for the personal interfacing with a teacher in the classroom. At the same time, the value



Inside the media center at HAFTR Lower School

dle schools. My host was HAFTR's "ed tech" coordinator, Benjamin Gross, who patiently walked me through several HAFTR computer labs where we observed students dealing with a series of online educational assignments.

Gross talks at length about the much-used concept of "blended learning,"

of accelerating the learning process is something that this and other local schools are exploring and implementing.

On Monday, Ben Gross stopped by my office to bring me a *dreidel*. As you can imagine, I have many *dreidels*, both

Continued on Page 9

BAGEL STORE

Continued from Page 6

at home and in my office, but this large red one was special. The other day Ben called to say the students at HAFTR had created a gift for me on their computers and their 3-D printer. That's right—this *dreidel* was designed on students' computer screens and then "printed," or produced, on this high-tech printer that is capable of producing multidimensional items.

I left the *dreidel* on my desk and, over the course of conversation during a few meetings that day, I mentioned, "Oh, you see that *dreidel*? It was made on a 3-D printer at HAFTR." Across the board the reaction was that it's sensational.

Through a special grant from the Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education and HAFTR families, the school was able to launch this unique ed-tech adventure. Through this funding, HAFTR acquired the equipment needed to create this special program. Currently the yeshiva has two of these 3-D printers, desktops, iPads, and related supplies.

It is really something to behold, observing young students working studiously on iPads and laptops, paying careful attention to what looks like plain old video games from the distance. But students were actually sharpening skills in mathematics or other subjects, using specially designed programs that teach and improve those skills.

laptops or iPads instead of some of the many games kids play today for entertainment purposes.

The expectations are high at HAFTR for the innovative, advanced technological programs. To that end, the school has contracted with HAFTR parent Dr. Edward Roberts to run the Learning to Code program. Professor

**"You see that *dreidel*? It was made
on a 3-D printer at HAFTR."**

The principal of the middle school, Ms. Joy Hammer, with whom we met for just a few minutes, shared in the enthusiasm for the computer projects and how the technology is facilitating the educational process. She related to us that some parents had commented to her that when their children come home from school they prefer engaging with educational videos on their

Roberts has a doctorate in technology from North Carolina University and extensive experience teaching technology to students and staff. Along with the HAFTR skilled educational technology department, Dr. Roberts will facilitate the students' understanding of the 3-D printing process.

Continued on Page 12

BAGEL STORE

Continued from Page 9

There is great promise and possibilities that 3-D printing is introducing to society. A quick look online tells us that amongst the things that can be designed on computers and produced in 3-D are guitars, some medical models used to train doctors, iPhone cases (everyone can use those), lighting fixtures, coffee mugs, and I even saw a pair of shoes that were produced by a 3-D printer.

As the HAFTR project evolves, the school has teamed up with Hofstra University. Ben Gross, the ed tech director, is currently a doctoral candidate at Hofstra and will be assisting in creating professional development for college students based on curriculum created at HAFTR.

So how has the new computer project evolved at HAFTR? "Our iPad program has grown to over 100 iPads across all divisions of the school," says Mr. Gross. "KidBlog, Ariot, Dreambox, and Vocabulary City are some of the programs in use in our lower school," he says. He adds that all the students have their own e-mail through Google Education. The programs will allow for

collaboration between students and teachers and will follow students throughout their HAFTR career. When they graduate, they will have a full student portfolio of projects that they have accomplished over the years.

The HAFTR model is commitment to academic excellence, and it's clear that the incorporation of high-tech innovations into the curriculum will only enhance that effort and the school's sterling reputation.

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A Drink And A Check

This was a first of sorts. Two bearded young men came into my office last week with a bottle of vodka and a few small schnapps glasses. They poured three cups and wanted to drink *l'chaim*. I rarely drink, and if I do, it's Shabbos morning at *Kiddush* and not Wednesday afternoon in my office.

They are two Chabad young men who are raising money to finance a spot on the globe they found where they feel they can influence Jews who might live there or visit there on business. They are both from Arad, Israel and they are making the rounds, they say, to put together \$50,000