

Jewish Science and Social Action Academy

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What happens when you combine neurology, marital arts, and social action? Students at Solomon Schechter School of Queens are finding out, transforming science and Torah learning into profoundly meaningful action. Adults can become involved as well and there are a plethora of volunteer opportunities with the Jewish Science & Social Action Academy opening at our school.

Twenty middle schoolers met for the first time today with Rabbi Sensai Gavriael Moskowitz in the opening session of our Jewish Science & Social Action Academy; aimed at utilizing martial arts therapy to combat disease and disability. Weekly sessions during lunch/recess will focus on the neurology of disease and disability, Jewish text, and martial arts techniques to support children struggling with pain. Bi-monthly Sunday programs beginning in several months at our school, to which our entire school community will be invited, will bring our students into direct contact with children with cancer and other illnesses and disabilities, utilizing martial arts for fun, pain management, and development of motor skills. Middle School student volunteers will lead the free community sessions for children with illness and disability. They will participate in outreach to hospitals, organizations and agencies who work with children with cancer and other illnesses and disabilities to invite them to come to our free programs. Students also will learn about legislative advocacy and will lobby local government and the private sector to support these initiatives. They will also engage in journalism to report on our programs. Bio-medical and bio-engineering research will be additional components of our program as students learn about the illnesses and disabilities of the children with whom we are working. Jewish text study will ground our initiative in the *Mitzvot* (commandments) and values of our tradition.

The curriculum for the Jewish Science and Social Action Academy will include:

- Introduction to basic anatomy and physiology
- Introduction to psychology of human relations
- Introduction to physics of martial arts
- Chai-Chi – Children’s Health Initiative - Applied physical and emotional health tips
- Public speaking and Writing
- Personal and public safety
- *Torah Umadah* – Torah and Science – Biblical, Talmudic and Jewish philosophical support

Students participating in the Jewish Science and Social Action Academy will each receive a membership card designating their school chapter and their current rank and will earn a *teudah* (certification) when they complete each phase of the Martial Arts Therapy program. Students will have the opportunity to take on a range of leadership positions within the program. In addition all students participating in our program will receive a letter of commendation and community service credit.

We are seeking parent volunteers to support this innovative program. Please contact me if you are interested.

To see entire blog go to: <http://sssqblog.wordpress.com/2013/10/07/jewish-science-and-social-action-academy/>