

What does a Development Director do?

By Shari Dym

Chocolate chip cookies were dunked into yummy hot chocolate on Monday January 29th after lunch by our students. This was the development departments way to say thank you to all of our students for their help with The Silver Academy's Annual Campaign. Annual Campaign Community Chair Robert Harringer did an awesome job making the hot chocolate.

In the cafeteria one of the students looked at me and asked, "Mrs. Dym, I don't mean to be disrespectful, but what do you do?" It really made me smile, since so many have the same question. Here is what I told the students:

You know that this is a private school. That means that your tuition pays for all of our teachers, books, supplies, the rent for our space and everything that it takes to run a school. Tuition only covers a small amount of those costs. It is my job to find the rest of the money to cover for scholarships for those who can't afford full tuition and make up the difference between the cost of running the school and what tuition pays.

How do I do that? The Annual Campaign is a big part of what I do. Writing the annual report, calling all of the past donors and finding new donors is a large part of my job. Reaching out to our alumni and asking them to remember the school with an annual gift comprises part of the Annual Campaign.

Another big part is finding businesses to contribute their Educational Improvement Tax Credit dollars to our school so we can offer scholarships to our students. I meet with legislators and ask them to give more tax credits for PA School Choice. I also ask our legislators to give us money to help pay for our security. The Silver Academy does not currently receive any federal or state financial aid for security.

I spend my time running our Life and Legacy program requesting that our donors remember The Silver Academy in their will, trust, retirement account or life insurance policy. We have more people who have signed a letter of intent than any other Jewish Day School in the country. The Harold Grinspoon Foundation has contributed \$15,000 to The Silver Academy for our achievements in Life and Legacy.

There are a lot of other things that I do, but that is the majority of what a Development Director for The Silver Academy does. Currently, I have a committee who is working on bringing mentalist Oz Pearlman to Harrisburg for a show. This will raise money for our Annual Campaign. If anyone wants to help, the more the merrier. So in summary, I ask people to help cover the expenses of maintaining a fabulous Jewish Day School in our community.

