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# TORAH ACADEMY

of San Antonio

THE TASA TIMES

SHEMOT

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## Ready to Launch



TASA is partnering with The Bullying Prevention Association of America, whose mission is to help decrease bullying by uplifting children, building confidence and encouraging positive behavior!

No Bullies Allowed educates, empowers children, encourages positive behavior, and shares the knowledge! TASA Students are currently getting their "No Bullies Allowed Certification" while learning about the four types of bullying, how to advocate for themselves and their friends, as well as becoming positive leaders in their classrooms, the school, and ultimately the community. TASA wants our students to speak the language of confident team players who share social responsibility to be the change in the world that we want to see!

There are simple ways that parents can get involved to support this TASA Project: volunteer with your child, bring the cause to work, email family & friends, share on social media, get certified and help your child get certified. TASA wants to make a difference by sharing this cause with others, and YOU can help!

Check out our No Bullies Allowed Partner Page and see how this program will benefit your children, your neighbor's children, our school, and for San Antonio as a whole! <https://nobulliesallowed.org/.../torah-academy-of-san-antonio/>



## The Ultimate Fire Station Visit

This past Tuesday, our Kindergarten through 2nd grade TASA students paid a visit to "The City of Shavano Park Fire Station". In social studies, each class had already learned about these important community helpers, and their different job responsibilities, so this trip brought their learning to life!

Chief Dover and his team of firefighters, Sam, Mike, and Jason, showed our students their ambulances, fire trucks, and all their special gear they have to put on before leaving for a "first response emergency calling". They also educated our students on crucial fire safety tips. We are so grateful for the hands-on lessons.

Our students presented the firefighters with drawings and letters made especially for them, as well as some treats for the firehouse as a token of appreciation for their time.

The fire station team were so amazing and gifted our students with junior firefighter hats and stickers.



# What's New TASA Crew!



## Coming Soon!!

- \* **January 20th** - MLK Jr. Day, No School / Parent-Teacher Conference
- \* **January 21st** - End of 2nd Quarter
- \* **January 30th** - TASA's Kindergarten Preview Day 10:00am - 11:30am

## D'VAR TORAH

### Parshat Shemot - What's in a Name?

The book of Exodus, the second book of the Torah tells the story of the Jewish people's pain. The slavery, cruelty and discrimination, as we struggled to become a nation. These horrid tools were used by the Egyptians to inflict maximum damage and subjugate the Jews. Instead of saying thank you for our contributions, they turned their backs on all the good Joseph and the Jews had done for their country and economy. Historically, we have seen this pattern of hatred too many times. Anti-semitism has its root in our Torah portion. The Egyptians were the first to institutionalize it.



In modern times, as we see antisemitism raise its ugly head some may be expressing fear or the notion that we should react by going underground or curbing our Judaism. Now is the time to take a lesson from **Shemot**. Unabashed Jewish pride. We must focus on our **Shemot**, our proud sense of being Jewish, our Jewish identity and stick together as a strong and vibrant community. That is how we overcome darkness and exile.

*Am Yisrael Chai! Shabbat Shalom*  
*Rabbi Y. Marrus*

But when you look at the Hebrew word for this book you will see that it reads **Shemot** - names. No mention of the pain and suffering. No mention of exile and redemption. Just names! The Torah is the book of the Jewish people's history. Of course there are the 613 Mitzvot and so much more, but essentially it is a manual of how Jews are supposed to live. While not the best history book by any means, every story and episode in the Torah is trying to teach us a lesson. That is why some stories and the lives of certain individuals are greatly expounded upon, but other individuals and decades of history are sometimes skipped over. It is because the Torah only tells us what we need to know in order to live our lives with a higher purpose.

In this context we can understand the name of this book - **Shemot**.

When we read the story of servitude, we are struck with a simple but mind boggling question: How in the world did the Jewish people, a young nation, survive two hundred and ten years of intense slavery? How did they possibly endure it? Our rabbis (Chazal) explain in a number of different Midrashim that throughout all the years of exile, the Jewish people kept certain things even while under duress. They maintained their (1) Jewish Names-**Shemot**, (2) Jewish clothing, (3) Jewish language, and according to some commentaries (4) keeping the Mitzvot that they had i.e., Brit Milah, Lashon Hara, marrying within the Jewish community etc. In other words, it was their strong sense of identity and self-awareness, that allowed them to stick together and persevere.

This is why the Torah uses the word **Shemot** because it indicates the secret to how the Jewish people survived the exile of Egypt and how we would continue to survive the many subsequent exiles and travails of our people.

## Science & Reading

Mrs. E class has started a new unit in Science class about different materials and their properties.

1st and 2nd grade students got very creative and had an amazing hands-on science experience making hats out of different materials such as paper plates and towels, silver foil and clips. They also tried to insulate their hands with foam cups, socks and silver foil. Videos of metal and glass changing to liquid through heat, were a big hit and they experimented with hot water and candy.

For the reading part, students have benefited from Ms. Diana Agron and her dog Roxy's once a week visits, with their "story tails" reading therapy program. Our TASA students have made such an amazing progress in their reading while enjoying a fluffy cuddle with sweet Roxy.

