

## Press Release

Marymount Academy  
October 24, 2013  
For Immediate Release

### Shekinah: The Intimate Life of Hasidic Women moves Marymount students



“There’s wisdom in tradition but much of that world is gone now”

In its search for excellence, *Marymount Academy* has made it tradition that students learn more about society by going out into it and discovering for themselves, asking questions and thinking. They do this through hands on experiences in the community, lectures at the school and by film. Marymount Academy offers ‘A World of Possibilities’ to its students.

On October 24, 19 students, along with their vice-principal, Dina Vourdousis and two teachers, hopped on public transit and headed off to the Outremont Theatre to see the film, *Shekinah: The Intimate Life of Hasidic Women*, to learn more about a religious group that, up until now, lived quietly amongst us. The filmmakers were given access to *The Sanctuary BMC* in Ste. Agathe and were allowed to follow a group of young girls at the Sanctuary to find out why they live and think the way they do. With unprecedented access, *Shekinah* captures the intimate details of every aspect of how they live, what they want out of life and what they believe.

It also captured the interest of the Marymount students in the audience - Throughout the film you could hear a pin drop as they learned that the young women at the sanctuary were not allowed iPhones, iPads, etc. That they never had physical contact with boys. They learned why the women wore wigs after marriage and why long sleeves and skirts were always worn.

The Marymount students were deeply affected by the attitude of the young women, so different from their world. But deep down all needing the same things in life - they just go about it differently. It clearly left them thinking - and asking questions:

“Interesting lifestyles, my mother is very strict and this is similar but different in that it’s a faith and for my mom it’s what she believes in and I don’t necessarily agree but my mom knows what is best for me. The film was really really something...it hit me in the heart. (Alexandra)

Another saw it differently, “I think their freedom is limited and they don’t have much choice and they are still kids”. (Denisha)

During a question period at the end of the movie, “Besides sharing your traditions with Gentiles what other message were you trying to send?” (Alexandra) The director, Abbey Jack Neidik, replied, “ First, to show that in dividing us from them it’s easy to put others down, even to the point of extermination. I hope this film shows that humans have to ask questions and even question authority, otherwise division makes it easy to destroy other humans for being different and I hope this film shows that we share human values and to always question ...even God.”

One of the Marymount girls put it quite succinctly - “It was trying to tell you, do what you want to do, not what others tell you to do. Also, I thought it was inspiring that it is not your body that makes you beautiful, it’s the type of person that you are”. (Sequoia)

What better lesson can anyone walk away with after seeing a film?

Marymount Academy - A World International Baccalaureate School  
A World of Possibilities.

Marymount Academy  
Principal: Craig Olenik  
514-488-8144  
[www.emsb.qc.ca/marymount](http://www.emsb.qc.ca/marymount)