



YJ IN-Sites

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Summer 2010

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Welcome to the 1st issue of Young Judaea's e-Newsletter! Each issue will feature highlights from our Israel and American programs and projects and will give you a glimpse of what's happening as Young Judaea begins its 101st year!

- Year Course
- Camps
- Merkaz
- WUJS
- Birthright
- Scholarships
- and more...

Learning Hebrew on WUJS

WUJS Israel Hadassah: Leading the way in post-college Israel programs



The WUJS program continues to offer Hebrew ulpan of the highest standard. As such we have recently partnered with Ulpan Or. The method of teaching adopts the theory of Rapid Language Acquisition in which participants learn intensively in small class sizes for four hours a day for the first three weeks of the program and then settle into a routine of two classes a week each one for two hours. It has been proven that this method builds up a strong feeling of self confidence in using Hebrew to communicate in Israel from the first week of the program. Ulpan Or uses modern teaching

methods that involve participants downloading Hebrew programs to their MP3 players and using the innovative online electronic newspaper.

Yali Lewis from New York writes about her Ulpan experience so far:

Shalom! Ma kore? That's about all I could say in Hebrew when I arrived in Jerusalem two months ago. Since then, I've been learning Hebrew on the WJUS program with Ulpan Or. From day one, we spoke only Hebrew in class. At first it was very challenging and I felt like the words were just flying past me, but quickly I started to understand more and more.

I have discovered that the best way to learn Hebrew is to speak with Israelis, and to do that you

need to leave the classroom. That's why T-Ulpan, Ulpan Or's program of Hebrew field trips is so



successful. For each trip, the students prepare a small presentation about the destination. This way we practice our language skills and learn about Jerusalem at the same time. Throughout the course, our teacher has encouraged us to use our Hebrew as much as possible. Being comfortable speaking really changes the way I feel in Israel. Even a few sentences can mean the difference between feeling like a tourist and feeling like a local and this is exactly why I came on the program.

1909 - YOUNG JUDAEA - 2010: 2nd Century • Same Spirit

YOUNG JUDAEA TAGLIT-BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL provides the gift of first-time, peer group, educational trips to Israel for Jewish young adults ages 18 to 26.

News flash from recent Young Judaea Taglit-Birthright participants!

Flash! Four girls and two boys become B'nei Mitzvah at the Western Wall

Flash! Young woman discovers that her grandmother's Hadassah "helps SO MANY people"

Flash! Three young women discover that they love hiking!

Flash! "Israel feels like home!"

YOU can write the next news flash. Connect someone with Birthright **TODAY!**

Registration dates for the Winter 2010 program

For those previously registered: September 13, 2010 • General registration: September 14, 2010

Young Judaea-run trips provide some of the most enriching and in-depth Taglit-Birthright Israel experiences. For more information, contact ylibedinsky@youngjudaea.org or call 212-303-8170.

Year Course: Personal Perspectives



Shosana Nolan, age 19, from Lincolnwood, IL

An unforgettable Year! The nine months I spent in Israel were beyond anything I had hoped for...The sense of unity here is so powerful.

What impressed me most was seeing how much my Israeli friends enjoy life. Hanging out with the tzofim gave me a more personal connection to Israelis my age; they showed us Israel through their eyes, Israel the way they see it, not what others see on the news...Their spirit and resilience is what I take with me. It has made me so proud of my Jewish heritage. Wherever we live, Eretz Israel will always be our second home.

Talk about getting in touch with the desert! Here is Year Course, Simon Palombi, Shaker Heights, Ohio, during a sunrise workshop where young artists buried each other under desert stones at Mitzpe Ramon in the Negev. "Feeling the weight of the desert on you makes you feel truly at one with the earth," says the director of the Arts Track, "and builds some serious trust with your peers!"

Year Course is a gap year program of volunteering, studying and traveling in Israel which provides college credit and an opportunity for service and personal growth. Students can also choose to pursue hands-on experience in a variety of special fields, including Business, Culinary, Athletic and Medical.

Young Judaea, the Zionist Youth Movement of Hadassah, recently celebrated its 100th year. For more information, go to our new website, yearcourse.org.

Early every morning, my roommates and I (Ilanah Cassell) heave ourselves out of bed, hobble around the apartment to find SOMETHING to eat, then leave, half asleep, dragging our feet to our volunteer placements. Hours later we arrive home exhausted, collapsing on the couch for a few minutes before preparing our materials for class. This is the core of our existence, our daily routine here in Bat Yam. Why do we do it? Why not go straight to university in the US like everybody else, and wake up at 10 or 11 before heading out to class?

As Jews of the Diaspora it is essential for us to come to know our brothers and sisters here in the Homeland in order to realize our own Jewish identities. We are answering a call--filling in gaps in Israeli society because communities here need our help. I believe that being here restores their hope and faith in Judaism.

When I meet a new batch of Israeli teens at Shazar, the middle school where I volunteer, they usually ask me how old I am and I reply that I am 18. This number, the drafting age for all Israelis, frequently arouses great interest. Their next question is, "Why are you here? Why Israel of all places?" These kids realize the immense sacrifice we are making for them in being here. Rather than going straight to college and pursuing our own futures, we proudly chose to live here with them – to teach and shape

them. By giving something of myself, I motivate, inspire, and enrich lives in this community. It is important for these kids and all Israelis to understand we care about them deeply and support them with all our hearts, so that they can become the best they can be and achieve success and happiness in their lives. We love Israelis and want them to love us back.

This is not a year of unilateral giving; the kids at Shazar teach me just as I teach them. Year Course Program volunteers not only give their passion and enthusiasm, but also take a great deal from this experience. We are working not merely for the betterment of the community, but also for the betterment of ourselves.

Ittai Eres, age 19, from Lexington, Kentucky

The volunteering that we did has had an ineffable impact upon both Israel and ourselves. My work with the Sudanese and Darfurian refugees this year through Garin Tzedek has left me feeling more satisfied than ever before. Even when I received a placement I was not particularly excited about - an English tutor in a Bat Yam elementary school - by the end of the trimester, I appreciated the work and was proud of what I'd done.

Tochnit Shalem

TOCHNIT SHALEM, the Orthodox track of Young Judaea's year course, is excitedly gearing up for a new year. Shalem is an alternative gap year program for high-school graduates from the Modern-Orthodox community who want more than just a yeshiva or seminary. 2010-11 will be the second year directed by Rabbi Yossela Ote, a dynamic young American-born Rabbi who has lived most of his life in Israel.

Shalem participants will begin their year in Jerusalem. After three months, they will move to Bat Yam

and then spend their final semester on a religious Kibbutz. The students will study *Limudei Kodesh*, learn in Ulpan, and take other college-credit courses. They will volunteer based on their specific interests and travel around the country every week, getting to know the land and people of Israel first hand.

Shalem students live in separate apartments where they shop, cook and clean for themselves, gaining a sense of independence and maturity. Spending time with other YC students gives Shalem participants the opportunity to meet people

from different Jewish backgrounds and learn about the lives of other Orthodox Jews. It also serves as preparation for life on college campuses where not everyone is a religious Jew.

Our recruitment process is focused in the Fall when we present our program around the country at various *yeshivot* during their "Israel Nights" and conduct interviews with our applicants. If you know someone who would be interested in participating in Tochnit Shalem, please feel free to contact us for more information (212-451-6215).

NJ Tzofim Concert Benefits Young Judaea Scholarships

Several Southern New Jersey Region area Hadassah Chapters together with a local Reform Congregation sponsored an exciting afternoon of song and dance performed by the *Tzofim* (Israeli Scouts) Friendship Caravan on Sunday June 13, 2010. Proceeds from this event will benefit Young Judaea Scholarships.

Kids and teens, parents, singles and folks of all ages exhibited their love for Israel and were inspired to participate in this high-energy event.

The Young Judaea Dance Troupe started the show. This is the 59th year the troupe has performed in the Annual Israel Folk Dance Festival and Festival of the Arts at

Queens College in New York City. It is the only group that has performed every year at this festival. The YJ Dance Troupe included the following NJ Young Judaeans: *Maya Yair, Mindy Fleigelman, Shelby Lipson, Elizabeth Binstein, Stephanie Blitzer, Elyssa Hirsch, Sara Rosen, Brian Harkavy, and Caitlyn Hyman*. Choreographer Sara Alter and Troupe Manager Jerri Blitzer are currently seeking additional Young Judaeans for the troupe.

Prior to the performance, area youth from YJ, USY, Kadima, NFTY, and BBYO were invited to a special 2-hour program with the Scouts. The *Tzofim* led 3rd to 12th grade students in an interactive program that provided a way to learn about Israel

through the eyes of Israeli teenagers and brought kids from various youth movements together.

For over 35 years, the *Tzofim* have been sending troops of 10 Boy and Girl Scouts to North America. Their show provides a taste of Israel: its people and cultures, its hopes and aspirations, its history and its current state. The program develops and maintains a connection between the *Tzofim* (Israeli Scouts) movement in Israel and North American Jewry. And thanks to this year's 12 host families, the Scouts got a taste of a unique piece of American culture – bowling!

(If you'd like to donate to YJ Scholarships, contact mladin@hadassah.org.)

Merkaz Hamagshamim Hadassah

Two exciting community events took place in the Month of May at Merkaz Hamagshamim Hadassah:

On May 2nd, the day of Lag BaOmer celebrations, Merkaz Hamagshamim together with Chabad hosted dozens of young *olim* (those who have made *aliyah*) families who came for an afternoon of fun, including games, music, arts and food. The celebration took place at the beautiful Beit Ar-El campus Young Judaea's center in Jerusalem.

Later that Month, at the same lovely spot, The Merkaz, in cooperation with Nefesh B'Nefesh, held their annual Shavuot Solidarity Packaging. Over 500 Packages for lone soldiers

were packed (the most ever) by close to 80 volunteers. These volunteers were a great mix of native Israelis and Anglo olim, who donate their time and energy for this worthy cause. Merkaz's Solidarity - Lone Soldier Project, sends out care packages with snacks and treats three times a year, to take care of those soldiers who have no family in Israel.





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**YOUNG JUDAEA -
 100 YEARS YOUNG...**

www.youngjudaea.org

YJ Camps Make a Difference

Summer camp affects the value system of a child while building powerful memories that last a lifetime. Young Judaea sponsors the following summer camps for youngsters from age 8 to 14:

Young Judaea Sprout Lake –
 Verbank, NY

Camp Judaea – Hendersonville, NC

Young Judaea Midwest –
 Waupaca, WI

Young Judaea Texas –
 Wimberly, TX

Camp Tel Yehudah – Barryville,
 NY, YJ's senior leadership camp
 for teens from all across the US

For information on any of our camps, please visit our website at www.youngjudaea.org and click on camps under Programs in America.

Camp Judaea Kicks Off its 50th Anniversary with a New Amphitheater

Camp Judaea, a non-profit summer camp in Hendersonville, North Carolina, dedicated a new



amphitheater commemorating the camp's 50th Anniversary and the beginning of a multi-phased makeover.

The amphitheater, an open-air venue for plays, concerts and films, includes a performance-style stage surrounded by ascended seating overlooking the lake. Construction of the \$140,000 amphitheater was funded by the sale of personalized bricks and generous donors including the Florida Atlantic Region and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

"I loved the years that I spent at Camp Judaea. While there, I may have written my name on a few walls. I'm sure those have been painted over by now." said donor Matt Wollner. "This is a chance for me to leave my mark for my children and grandchildren."



Each summer over 500 campers from the South and Mid-Atlantic states participate in 2, 4, or 8 week sessions at Camp Judaea.

Located on 118 acres of lush terrain that offers clean air, blue skies, and a beautiful mountain setting nestled in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Camp Judaea places special emphasis on Jewish heritage and a connection to Israel.

Each age group's theme-oriented program consists of informal educational activities as well as horseback riding, sports, a challenge course, arts & crafts, the Israeli Scouts, drama, a swimming program, canoeing, archery, and more. Camp Judaea is equipped with two kosher kitchens and provides an enriching Shabbat experience.

For further information, contact Sandra Bass at sandra@campjudaea.org or visit us at www.CampJudaea.org.

YOUNG JUDAEA, the Zionist Youth Movement of Hadassah ensures a lifetime of connection to Jewish life, community and leadership through camps, volunteer opportunities in the United States, and varied programs in Israel.

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THE ZIONIST YOUTH MOVEMENT OF HADASSAH