

Memories of Levin Middle School Trip to Israel

As many of you know, the students of the Barbara and Jerry Levin Middle School traveled to Israel this past April and spent a week visiting various cities and historical sites. While the students were responsible for raising the greater portion of the funds needed for the trip, the event would not have been possible without the generous \$500 subsidy each student received from the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte.

When the students returned, they were asked to reminisce about their experience and to put into words the most meaningful memories of their week in Israel.



Reuven describes his war experience to the students of the Levin Middle School.

Tali deGroot wrote the following narrative about their bus driver in Israel:

All week long we sat on a bus, completely oblivious to the fact

that our driver had participated in one of the hardest wars Israel has ever fought. We didn't hear anything from him until we reached the Syrian border. We all stood at the edge of a cliff, looking down into the beautiful valley where we could see Damascus. To our left we saw Har Chermon.

As we gazed at this astonishing view, Reuven, our bus driver, began to tell his story. He could barely contain his emotion as he explained to us how he was in bunker 105 and bunker 106 and was captured by Syrians in 1973. In every syllable he uttered, I could hear pride, grief, and triumph. I thought to myself how this man, standing right in front of me, knows hundreds of stories of heroism. I realized that this is what modern Israel is all about. Israelis are soldiers, immigrants, and pioneers. Each and every one of them has more history within them than the entire American population. In America, most bus drivers are looked down on as being stupid

people that couldn't get a good job. I can't describe how special I felt to be a part of a country where everyone treats their fellow citizen like a brother. I'm not so naïve as to think that they are nice to every-

one around them all the time. What I'm saying is that, when it all comes down to it, Israelis stand up for each other and their country. This little piece of history from our bus driver sparked so many emotions within me. I wish the dictionary had words to describe them. ☆

"Special" Opportunities are Everywhere at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool

Specialist teachers at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool provide many enrichment activities to complement what children are learning in their regular classrooms. Don't tell the kids they're learning, though. CJP kids just know that specials are fun.

Spend even a few minutes talking to Dan Vizzini, Athletic Director at the JCC, about his work with preschoolers and his enthusiasm for his job becomes

her youngest children were CJP students. Her children have graduated. (Continued on page 23)



Coach Dan with daughter Mia.

obvious. "Coach Dan" has been teaching weekly gym classes to CJP kids for seven years. His seventeen-month-old daughter, Mia, is one of CJP's newest students. Currently working with thirteen classes of CJP three and four year olds, Dan says his goal is to get children "hooked on physical activity" at a young age. He worries about the health of today's youth, with constant, easy access to television and video games, and works hard to make physical fitness fun for young children. Coach Dan's gym classes involve fun games and activities that promote balance, fine motor and gross motor skills, but that's not all. Dan uses his background in elementary education to incorporate lessons in more "academic" concepts like numbers and colors. He also works with the children on personal hygiene and respectful behavior. The children learn without even knowing they're doing it.

All age levels at CJP enjoy Patty Torcellini-Hartman's weekly music classes. Miss Patty's classes incorporate traditional preschool music with Hebrew words and music, Jewish holidays and dramatic play. When Patty first started teaching at CJP four years ago,

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All aboard for another great year at The Charlotte Jewish Preschool

Please join us for our
Annual Open House

Friday, January 4th

9:30 to 11:00 AM

Learn about our program. Come see us shine!

For further information, please check out our website:
www.cjpkids.org or give us a call at (704)-944-6776



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