

# JEWISH FEDERATION NEWS

## Teen Girls from Charlotte and Hadera Meet This Summer Next Meeting in Hadera in December

On July 12, 2009, four Jewish girls from the Charlotte, NC area met five girls from Charlotte's sister city of Hadera, Israel for what would be the start of the Partnership 2000 Teen Leadership Program run through the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte. We had no idea how the first meeting would go; even most of the Charlotte girls didn't know each other before the arrival of the Israelis. However, after the many leadership activities, trips around North Carolina, and hours of bonding time, all of the girls involved felt as if we had known each other forever.

Previous misconceptions of one another's cultures were corrected in a matter of hours as each girl realized that we are all the same: Israeli and American teenage girls with similar interests and all with the common underlying thread of Judaism. Throughout our two weeks together, we all learned about similarities and differences in our respective cultures, our thoughts on world events and American "going-ons" (like Michael Jackson's death, or the election of President Obama), likes and dislikes, but most of all what it is like to live Jewish lives as a teenager in two very different places.

As American Jews, we naturally felt a pull towards Israel as

the "perfect place"—a country full of Jews where all restaurants are kosher and where the history of the Jewish people we had been taught for years surrounds daily life. Not surprisingly, it came as a mild shock to some of us to find that the Israeli girls had never had an aliyah on the bimah, and that we Americans have more opportunity for being religious in whatever way we choose than our Israeli counterparts. It was a nice moment at Temple Israel—and again in Charleston—when all nine of us received an aliyah on a bimah shared with a woman rabbi, an opportunity that is for the most part nonexistent in Israel.

However, not all of our activities together took place at Shalom Park. Early on in our first week we traveled to the American Hebrew Academy to participate in BBYO programs at their CLTC leadership training camp. We also traveled to Charleston, SC, a trip preceded by day trips to Carowinds, various volunteer centers, Grandfather Mountain, and more. Our leadership activities, including sessions with Betsy Olinger and Eric Rowles, were insightful into cultural perspectives and also helped us to learn more about ourselves.

In December this year, we girls from North Carolina

(Miriam Aniel, Jordan Bernstein, Rebecca Brenner, Lila Kelso, and Blair Sly) will fly to Hadera, Israel and spend two weeks with the Israeli girls that we are now close to. We can't wait to experience our homeland firsthand. A big thank you goes to the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte for sponsoring this P2K delegation and all of our activities, to Sarah Kaplan, our amazing advisor who made our experience even greater, and to all those who were involved in other, helpful ways.

—Miriam Aniel

I wasn't sure what to expect as I walked into the airport that Monday morning. I'm participating in an Israeli-American exchange program, P2K, through the Jewish Federation, and on that morning I was meeting for the first time the six Israelis that I, and four other American girls, would be spending all of our time with for the next two weeks. Not only had I never met any of the Israelis before, but I had also never met any of the other Americans that I was participating with. So I was more than a little anxious.

However, with all of the exciting activities and fun events planned for us, there was hardly any time to remain closed up in my shell. In the beginning, the days were filled with team building exercises that quickly formed friendships. From there we helped out in the Jewish community as well as the greater Charlotte community through service projects. When we weren't busy with activities, we were all still together and enjoying one another's company whether it was relaxing by the pool or shopping at the mall.

In the end, I found that even though we were from different parts of the world, Israeli and American teens have a lot in common. I learned about our differences too, and we broke many stereotypes about both of our cultures. We learned about Israel's conflicts, and how the American media blows the 'war' in Israel way out of proportion. Through this program I made strong bonds and memories with all of the girls, and when we took them to the airport to go back home, I knew I would miss them terribly. However, I can't wait to reunite with my friends when I head over to Israel in December for the next part of our P2K Teen Leadership program!

—Blair Sly ☆

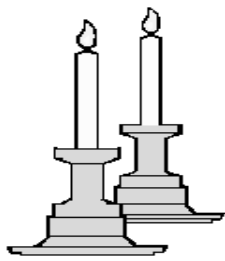


The girls from both Charlotte and Hadera had fun together and created lasting bonds this summer.



### SHABBAT AND HOLIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING FOR SEPTEMBER 2009

- Friday, September 4, 7:29 PM
- Friday, September 11, 7:19 PM
- Friday, September 18, 7:09 PM
- Saturday, September 19, 8:03 PM
- Friday, September 25, 6:59 PM
- Sunday, September 27, 6:56 PM



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