

The LJCC Participates in the Maccabi Games

This past August, 16 Jewish teens from the LJCC trekked to Houston with Coach Dan Vizzini, Coach Casey Bogarad, and Coach Jonny Levine to participate in the Maccabi Games. The Maccabi Games present athletic, cultural, and social opportunities to Jews from around the world. Each year, the Games take place in a different city and are open to Jewish teenagers ages 13-16. This year Houston welcomed 1,400 athletes from forty JCC's stateside and three international delegations (Israel, Panama, and Great Britain). The teens are housed with local families where they become an extension of that family for the week. Many families have their own children participating in the games and many do not. Even if the families were personally involved in the games, bonds were formed and lifelong friendships secured.

The Charlotte delegation participated in boys and girls basketball, tennis, and swimming. The week began with a festive Opening Ceremonies held on the Rice University campus where the teens marched in holding flags that announced what city they represented. Speeches were made and the ceremony ended with a huge dance party on the gymnasium floor.

After each day of competition all the athletes were treated to an evening of fun. One night the group attended a party at the Houston JCC's Ranch complete with swimming, video games, mechanical bull rides, and armadillo races. The closing ceremony was held at the Bayou Center and featured a neon themed night highlighted by a dancing and a state-of-the-art light show.

With all of the evening social events planned and attended by our athletes, they were still raring to go each morning for their daily competition in their respective sports. Team Charlotte represented our community well and came away with plenty of hardware after the week of competition. After impressive wins over San Diego and Houston, the boys' basketball team faced Denver in the Gold Medal Final game. After fighting hard, the boys proudly walked away with the Silver Medal. Congratulations to Sam Lahn, Max Lahn, Matthew Kagan, Jake Miller, Roy Kasher, Zack Rabinowitz, and Daniel Zimmermann who were loyally lead by Coach Jonny Levine.

The boys' tennis players all came home with medals in the doubles competition. Congratulations to Jeremy Berglass, Brian Handelsman, and Mitchell Koch.

The Team Charlotte Swimmers had a fantastic showing at their first Maccabi Games, each bringing home several medals. Congratulations to David Safir, five Medals; Anna Corrado, seven medals; Rachel Fellman, three medals.

Our three girls' basketball players joined a mixed team with players from Cincinnati, Columbus,



and Rhode Island. The girls had a great time meeting new friends from different cities, playing lots of basketball, and being part of the 2012 Maccabi Games

Even though we only participated in these few events, there are many other options for participation. If you are a Jewish teen between the ages of 13-16, don't miss out on this once in a lifetime experience. Join us next summer in the OC. Orange County, CA will be hosting the Maccabi Games August 4-9, 2013.

If you'd like more information about the JCC Maccabi Games, contact Dan Vizzini, Athletic Director of the Levine JCC at 704-944-6773 or dan.vizzini@charlottejcc.org. ☆

The LJCC Oasis Group Goes to Bright Blessings

By Thelma Wand

We, the Oasis Group, visited "Bright Blessings" on August 22. What a revelation that was. "Bright Blessings" strives to bring some joy and happiness to home-

less children. With the cooperation of social workers, a birthday care package of new items is provided for each child. Also, when young homeless women give birth, a small layette of necessary items is

given. It is mind boggling to think there are thousands of homeless children in Mecklenburg County. We all can do something to help bring a smile to a homeless child. ☆



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