

Partnership 2Gether 2016 Summer Israel Teen Trip – A Life-Changing Experience

They rode camels in the Judean desert, floated in the salty water of the Dead Sea, hiked to the top of a mountain in the Negev, watched the sun rise from the top of Masada, walked through the narrow streets of Jerusalem's Old City, danced and prayed at the Kotel, and perhaps most important, spent five nights in the homes of Israeli families in Hadera.

As much fun as it was, the five Charlotte teens who travelled to Israel on the 2013 P2G Summer Teen Exchange trip will tell you that it was more than just a great adventure. It was a transformative experience that created enduring connections to the land and people of Israel – and to their own Jewish heritage. This summer, the Jewish Federation is again sponsoring the 2016 Summer Teen Trip to Israel. Jewish teens will have a chance to personally experience getting to know Israeli teens in our Hadera-Eiron Partnership city as well as tour the land through meaningful moments in Israel.

The Jewish Federation asked teens from the 2014 P2G trip to talk about their experiences and how it affected them. Read to find out first-hand accounts from Joey Kelso, Katy Smith, David Rabinovich, Ari Rabinovich and Jessica Soto about what they learned on this vital journey.

"I had such an amazing experience. I loved experiencing the culture of the Israeli teens and seeing how they live their life and showing them how we live ours." -- **Jessica Soto**

"I had an amazing experience with the Tikkun Olam program. It was my first time in Israel, and I had a warm welcome from my host Dolev, and his entire extended family. They said I was like their American son. The food was delicious and there was always plenty of it. We hung out like normal teenagers, shopping,

going to movies, everything we do in Charlotte. Israel is small enough that we got to see just about everything, from Masada to Jerusalem to Masada. I felt a renewed sense of my Judaism when I saw how it's observed in another country." – **Joey Kelso**

"My experience in Israel started the moment I met my new friends at Ben Gurion Airport. At first it was a little awkward but as we began to bond at the Bedouin tents, we grew more comfortable with each other. We started the bonding experience with camel rides. They were bumpy and wild but fun at the same time. That night we all slept in the same tent, which was awesome, we all got to know each other better, I even found out more about the Americans I was with. After only a few hours of sleep we woke up to climb Masada. The sunrise on top of Masada was like nothing I had ever seen before, it was priceless. This exchange program has changed my vision of Israel and Judaism because I am now really connected to our Homeland, to the people there, we are very different, our cultures and way of living but at the same time we are so alike, it is cool to discover that." – **Ari Rabinovich**

"Wow, just wow, people always come back from Israel and say 'It was so amazing!' and 'I can't wait to go there again!' Clichés that are not only true but fall short of the feelings and emotions that surge forward after spending time in the Holy Land. Israel is all the more endearing to me knowing that I have now a personal connection to it. I know that I will always have friends there and I know more about the places and history of Jews and Israel. It is my belief that, given the opportunity, all Jews should visit Israel

on programs like this one so that they can experience the beauty of Israel's land and people." – **David Rabinovich**

"Participating in this teen exchange program was one of the best decisions of my life. Not only did I get to travel to Israel for two weeks, I got to stay with an Israeli host family and truly experience Israeli culture. Swimming in the Dead Sea, watching the sunrise on Masada, and visiting many other amazing sites in Israel was just incredible. But, eating a Shabbat dinner with a family of over 20 people was an extraordinary experience that not everyone gets on their trip to Israel. I also got the chance to see America through the eyes of Israelis my age." – **Katy Smith**

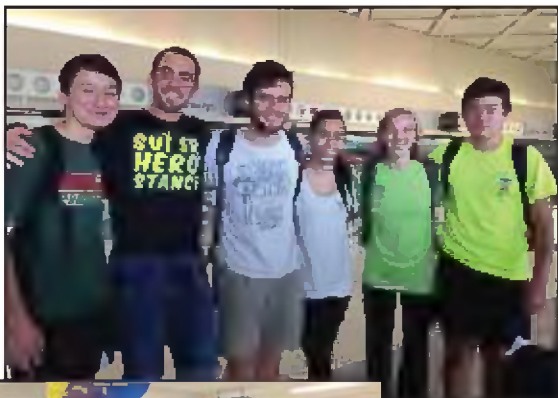
Summer travel dates are: June 28-June 13 to Israel; July 18-July 31 to Charlotte. The Jewish Federation offers subsidies for travel. For more information or to sign up, please contact Tal Stein, Director of Community Relations and Israel Affairs at The Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte at tal.stein@jewishcharlotte.org or at 704-944-6751. ☆

Participants are still eligible for Taglit Birthright Israel Experiences.



The Jewish Federation OF GREATER CHARLOTTE

Local teens visit Israel and host Israeli teens on the 2014 P2G Summer Israel Teen Trip.



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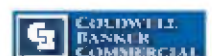


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