

Charlotte Hosts Teens from Israel

By Sara Hunt

Editor's Note: Five teens from Tichon Hadera High School in Israel traveled to Charlotte in July as part of the Federation's Partnership 2000 program. The teens ranging in age from 15 to 18, were accompanied by their chaperone, Lee Tofach, a mature twenty-one year old, who recently completed three years in the Israeli army. The teens worked each day at Camp Mindy, intermingling with campers and staff, teaching Hebrew words, songs, and games. The Ugol, Coben, Birnbaum and Littauer/Brodsky Families hosted the teens during their ten-day visit. In addition to spending time at Camp, the teens visited the Levine Museum of the New South, the Mint Museum of Craft and Design, a Knights Game, Carowinds, the Omnimax Theatre and many area shopping centers. Many thanks to Emily Zimmern, Annette Gross, Julie Levine, Cindy Czarlinsky, Anna Gunsher, Dan Vizzini, Mark Didonato, Stephanie Garner and the staff at Camp Mindy. The following article was written by Sara Hunt, one of the teen buddies who accompanied the teens during their stay, in the evenings and weekends. The other teen buddies were Jamie and Sara Bryan, Phil

Brodsky, Matt Gordan, Samantha Zelin.

When I first heard that Anna Gunsher wanted to pair me up with an Israeli girl for ten days, I was very excited. I had already had the opportunity to become very close with two other Israelis staying here for the summer who had already taught me so much. I was paired with a sixteen-year old girl named Efrat. She was very excited to be in the U.S. on her second trip to the States; whereas, four of the other five Israelis were here for the first time.

They were amazed by how big and bright everything appeared and how everyone was so happy and seemed so peaceful. Efrat told me about how she liked not having to watch out for crowded areas and other signs that there might be a suicide bombing; however she still held her guard up. We spent almost every night together whether it was shopping, a movie, or Carowinds. They were in shock when we found them seven dollar jeans at Old Navy and

they had a great time singing for everyone when we went to Karaoke one night. However, the



Camp Mindy Staff poses with teens from Hadera. Left to right, first row: Mark Didonato, Solomon Tafta, Lee Tofach. Second row: Jaime Cojac, Tal Zeidman, Phil Brodsky. Third row: Maran Cohen, Simvan Amira, Anna Gunsher, Efrat Baron, Ori Shabtai, Dan Vizzini and Ivy Saul. Photo by Andrea Mellen.

best part about spending time with them was when we were able to sit down and really talk. I spoke with them about the situation in Israel and how it affected them. They explained about how they do not ride the bus or go to malls and crowded places. The leader of the group, Lee who was 21 and out of the army, told of how during her EMS service, she had to attend to

people who were injured in a bombing. I also spoke with Efrat and Sivan about September 11th. They told me about how upset they were for America and how they deal with the terrorism every day and understand how different it is for us. It was very interesting to hear a person from another country's view about that day as opposed to a fellow American. Other topics we discussed were racism and the importance of Judaism. Their views on these subjects taught me so much in the few short days they were here. Despite the fact that they were not very religious, we attended a Temple Israel service where the girls stood up on the Bimah for the first time and Lee gave a touching speech about her visit here and her hopes for the future of Israel. All of

them have high hopes for the promise of peace for Israel. They are a very amazing group of people. They have learned so much already and soon will enter the army for their service. Saying goodbye was very difficult since none of them wanted to leave; however, they will bug me until the day I go to Israel to visit them, which I hope will be in the near

future. Until then, I keep in touch with them through email practicing the Hebrew they taught me and catching up on all the latest gossip they have for me. But I now have many different views to look at about Israel, Judaism, and people in general that they shared with me; and I only have more to learn in hopes for the promise of peace in Israel. ❖

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Bernstein Leadership Program Announces Chairs for Upcoming Year

The Donald H. and Barbara K. Bernstein Leadership Development Program is proud to announce that Andrea Cronson and Marc Wojnowich are the co-chairs for the upcoming year.

Andrea has lived in Charlotte ten years with her husband George, and children, Deena (age 8) and Scott (age 6). They are JCC and Temple Beth El members. Her children attended the Charlotte Jewish Preschool and now are enrolled in the Charlotte Jewish Day School. Andrea works full time with her husband in their retail fabric decorating chain, Midas Fabrics. They have five locations. Andrea has served on the boards of the JCC Early Childhood Committee, and the Campaign Cabinet of the Jewish Federation, co-chaired and worked on numerous Super Sunday Federation Campaigns, and was one of the initiators for the Jewish Day School's Thrift Store, which is now operating. Andrea and George were both participants in Bernstein Leadership Group III.

Marc and his wife, Kim, were also active participants in Bernstein Leadership Group III.

He is currently completing his MBA at Queens University. As a native Charlottean, Marc is a member of Temple Israel and currently working in the family business, Highland Mills Inc. Marc



Andrea Cronson and Marc Wojnowich, new co-chairs of the Bernstein Leadership Group.

and Kim are expecting their first child in October.

The Leadership Program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte seeks to prepare the next generation of leaders to confront the needs of our rapidly changing Jewish community.

The program will increase Jewish identity and its effect on roles as leaders within the Jewish community. It will also deepen and broaden participant awareness of Jewish heritage, commitments to Tzedakah, Tikkun Olam, Chesed and Jewish continuity.

Together we will learn about the issues facing our community in Charlotte and around the world. The program will enhance your understanding of the Jewish community and its local, national, and international agencies. In addition,

participation in the leadership program will create a bond among our future leaders to foster strong working relationships today and for the future. If you are excited about these topics, we welcome your time, energy and commitment. We invite you to join us to explore the relevant issues that affect our lives individually and as members of the world wide Jewish community.

Participants will meet to engage in discussions and participate in high quality programs presented by top-notch local and national authorities and Jewish leaders of our time.

On Sunday, October 6, at 6:30 PM at Dakota's Restaurant, the Bernstein Leadership Group will be hosting a Preview Reception to acquaint those interested members of our Jewish community with more details about the program. If you are interested in learning more about the BLG IV, please contact Marnie Moskowitz, Director of Program Development, at 944-6764 or email her at mmoskowitz@shalomcharlotte.org. ❖

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