

JEWISH FEDERATION NEWS

P2G Teacher Delegation Builds Bridges With Israel

This past December, four Jewish educators from Charlotte, including Rabbi Tracy Klirs, Education Director of Temple Israel Religious School, Sherri

Arab relationship as well as Jewish identity. The delegation visited the Seam Line, introducing many to the Arab minority, who live among the Israelis, certainly a different angle of Israeli society. This was a moment of thought, realizing how much the Jewish People, have in common. Behind the diversity of the Jewish people, scattered over the world, lies a common heritage between our American and Israeli families- the Jewish family tradition and the Jewish way of life.



The entire Southeast delegation with the Partnership staff at the Herzl Museum.

Leonard, 6th Grade Math Teacher at Charlotte Country Day School, Shelia Spitz, 6th grade teacher at Temple Israel Religious School, and Liat Gabay-Fisher, K-5 Hebrew teacher at Temple Israel, participated in the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte Partnership Together (P2G) Educator Delegation. Teachers travelled to Israel along with seven other Southeast Consortium communities on a specially designed week-long program of touring schools, visiting classrooms, enjoying home hospitality, as well as in-depth visits to schools in Hadera, our partner city.

Over the next few months, Charlotte educators will begin implementing joint learning activities in their classrooms connecting their American students with Israeli students, further deepening "living bridge" experiences. The educators also had the opportunity to meet up with last year's Shaliach, Dor Hollander in Tel Aviv.



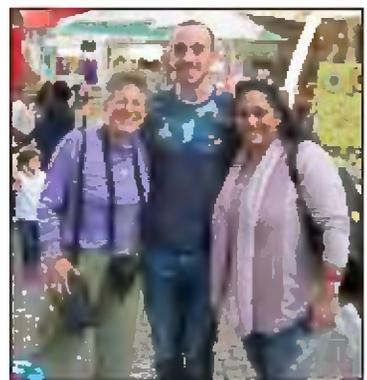
The Charlotte delegates: Rabbi Tracy Klirs, Sheila Spitz, Liat Gabay-Fisher, Sherri Leonard.

The P2G Educator Delegation is an ongoing reciprocal program that has been in existence for several years. Educators experienced the opportunity to establish long lasting connections with their host families and fellow colleagues while building deep relationships among our community in Charlotte and in Hadera. Throughout the trip, educators felt the challenges of Judaism, admiring the vision, the dream and understanding and appreciating where Israel is today.

Educators shared the following comments regarding their experiences:

"As an educator and as a Jew this delegation trip was life altering. Experiencing Israel as a native with wonderful host families and connecting with Israeli students and teachers was an unforgettable experience. I am bringing back not only new and exciting lessons but a renewed enthusiasm to spread to my students towards Eretz Yisrael." - Morah Sheila Spitz

"This was my 8th trip to Israel, so at this point I've seen all the major sites, most of them multiple times. So I was very excited to see some new sites and have many new experiences while participating in the Partnership2gether Hadera region educator exchange. I found the visit to the First Aliyah Museum in Zichron Ya'akov to be particularly moving as it brought to life the incredible hardships and sacrifices the first settlers underwent to try to establish a foothold in Eretz Yisrael. I was inspired and uplifted by the beautiful Neve Michael children's home and the life-saving work they do every day for children in crisis. And the entire group was moved to tears as we shared our stories of our Jewish journeys and identities through the meaningful Jewish objects we brought to share. I made new friends and established what I hope will be life-



Rabbi Tracy Klirs, former Charlotte shaliach Dor Hollander, and Liat Gabay-Fisher in Tel Aviv.

long connections." - Rabbi Tracy Klirs

"This was the most amazing journey of my life. From the moment I got off the plane I felt like I was where I needed to be; deep in my heart this was amazing. Meeting all those passionate educators and working with Yael and Maya was life changing - they brought life to wanting to do more in the classroom. Working in the schools in the region was so informative - cultural differences were highlighted (the informality of the classes there compared to our structure in the classroom) and the similarities of children were reinforced (those hungry for more and those wanting only what is given). The emphasis on sustainability was paramount and I am hoping to be able to bring some of the ideas to Charlotte Country Day School - we are a pretty 'green' school, but could always improve." — Sherri Leonard

If you are an educator and interested in learning more, please contact Tal Stein, Director of

Community Relations and Israel Affairs, at 704-944-6751 or tal.stein@jewishcharlotte.org. ☆

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