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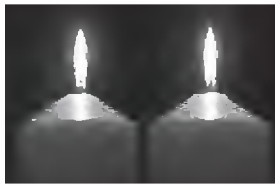
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JEWISH FEDERATION NEWS

Charlotte Educators Explore the Light Within Themselves During the P2G Educators Consortium in Israel

By Karen Brodsky, Educator and Participant

It is traditional for Jews to display their Chanukiot (Chanukah menorahs) in windows facing the street. A group of American and Israeli teachers were delighted by the types, designs, and beauty of Chanukiot displayed in the Old City of Jerusalem. Some featured candles; others colored and clear olive oil to celebrate the miracle of Chanukah. The group followed the festive lights throughout Israel during the recent Educators2Gether 2016 P2G Hadera-Eiron-SE Consortium program, December 23-December 29, 2016.

Four teachers from Charlotte received the Chanukah gift of the relationship between sister areas: the American Southeast and the Hadera-Eiron region of Israel. Opening the gift paved the way for creating relationships and encouraging cooperation between the two regions. The American educators visited schools, enjoyed Israeli hospitality, learned about social justice programs and explored about the possibilities of strengthening ties between the Jewish State and American Jews.

Co-run by the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) and representatives from the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), the P2G Consortium program strives to "enable American Jews and Israelis to share a connection of information, exchange of ideas between the sides and engage in mutual involvement and learning."

The recent teacher exchange gave educators from both sides



The educators with group leader Yael Naali Ben Zion (2nd from right).

lasting friendships, new channels of communication, and ideas to strengthen the relationships between the Israeli teacher communities of the cities in Hadera-Eiron, including Pardes Hanna-Karkur, Hadera, Menashe, and Alona.

Andrea Wise, AP Biology and Anatomy teacher for 11th and 12th graders at Providence High School; Kathryn Francine Smith, a Holocaust studies teacher at Porter Ridge High School; Limor Beeri and I, Hebrew teachers from Temple Israel Religious School, comprised the Charlotte delegation. In addition to the teachers from Charlotte, others came from Nashville; Chattanooga; Richmond, VA; Jacksonville and Pinellas, FL; and Charleston, SC, totaling 17.

Andrea Wise from the delegation said that "'Vision' is a concept that was explored in depth through our visit. At Beit Eliezer High School, we saw students actively engaged in Jewish Peoplehood Day, and we could see the results of the vision of the partnership. Student leaders who are trained in the P2G model organ-

ized and led classes in which students reflected on their Jewish identity. Religious school teachers in the U.S. will lead the same activities with their students. Teachers will exchange the responses between the sister cities, both electronically and physically. Many other avenues for exchange were opened when we met teachers, stayed in their homes, and celebrated Shabbat with their families."

I visited Sadot, an elementary school in Pardes Hanna-Karkur. I met with my hostess's fifth grade class, distributed Chanukah cards sent by students at Temple Israel Religious School, and visited younger classes to see how they learn English. Shlomit Shalev, my hostess, and other teachers, shared ideas for engaging students in learning Hebrew. I enjoyed Shabbat with Shlomit's family. Her in-laws made Aliyah more than 40 years ago from Australia, and the conversation was enlightening. Even with four children, a day of teaching fifth-graders, and having to acquire an American teacher, Shlomit managed to bake challah from scratch, cook several entrees and side dishes, and serve a beautiful Shabbat meal. I was glad to be reminded of the work women do throughout Israel and the United States.

Once the delegation left Hadera, Israelis and Americans visited pivotal points on the map of Israel. Each day was packed with touring, discussion, experiential learning, and meeting well-

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