

JEWISH FEDERATION NEWS

L'hitraot, from Inbal Ozeri

"I don't know why you say good bye, I say hello."

Last month I ended my position as Charlotte's Community Shlichah after two full amazing years. I feel like I came to share with the community about Israel and in the end, I also learned so much about what it means to be Jewish outside of Israel. I treasure the connections that I have made here with members of the Jewish community from the youngest children in the preschools to the seniors at Oasis. I would like to share here some of my favorite memories.

During my first year at Chanukah time, Rabbi Judy Schindler and I dressed up as dreidels and performed a skit for the Charlotte Jewish Preschool students explaining the difference between the dreidels that children play with in Israel and the ones from America.

The first time that I joined the CJDS students on the playground for recess, they impressed me that they already knew an Israeli game and they invited me to play. They were eager to learn other games as well. Afterward we went into the cafeteria and I was so impressed with their singing of the Birkat Hamazon that I filmed it and sent it to my family in Israel. I was touched by the fact that they were singing the whole thing in Hebrew.

As the community Shlichah, I

was often asked to represent Israel at the local public schools. One of my favorite parts was meeting the non-Jewish students who were so interested in my background and my tiny country. It was amazing to see that when I did find a Jewish student and they came to speak to me after the presentation, I often realized that I knew someone in their family from some other community connection.

I worked a lot with teenagers at Hebrew High, BBYO, NFTY, Religious Schools, leading the teen trip to Israel, and working with other groups that are part of the Teen Coalition. It is difficult to choose one memory here, but the one that makes me smile is the adventure of taking the students on the Partnership 2Gether Teen Trip to Israel. I enjoyed watching the students experience for the first time so many things that have been part of my life always. The connections that the students made with the Israelis in Hadera and watching them experiment with Hebrew was so much fun.

There were also many opportunities to work with young adults including Moishe house, Hillel, groups from all the Temples, and more. Israeli dancing and food events were my favorite. I really liked teaching people to cook foods that are so delicious and not that hard to make. Watching them learn to cook in Hebrew was also enjoyable.

I will always cherish the connections that I made with my host families and many of you who invited me into your homes and became like family for me here. I feel like we established deep and meaningful relationships and I can't wait to see you again.

With adults, I was privileged to visit with many havurot and to spend time at Oasis and other senior programs around Charlotte. One of my favorite memories from Oasis was sharing my Yemenite heritage with them including a traditional Henna ceremony and Yemenite dances.

As a result of my time in Charlotte, it is especially important to me that we stick together and stay united.

Keep supporting Israel, keep supporting Israeli organizations, continue going to Israel, and staying in touch with Israelis (and me). It is so clear to me now how much we Jews need one another.

Please know that it has been a true pleasure getting to know and work with this amazing community here in Charlotte and the surrounding area. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Please (it is an order!) contact me when you are in Israel.

The Federation has all my updated contact info – Email, Facebook, phone number. Please stay in touch. ✨

Since 2005, the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte has actively participated in The Jewish Agency's Volunteer Shlichut program. The primary goal of the Shlichut program has been to promote a positive image of Israel by infusing Israeli culture, history, politics, and society into Diaspora Jewish communities in the form of a young Israeli.

After 12 years with this initiative, Federation has made the decision to end our participation in the Shlichut program. Thanks to our relationship with this program, our community's connections with Israel have grown and evolved over the last decade, and as such, our needs have also changed.

Federation's commitment to Israel education and engagement remains as strong as ever. We are currently exploring options for what will come next in the realm of Israel Education and Engagement for our community - stay tuned.

For more information, please contact the Federation office at 704-944-6757.



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