

## **Bnei Akiva Reports 2014**

### ***David Goodman – Hachshara 2013***

My experience helped provide me with the ability for me to lead in all environments. In addition, it allowed me to grow intellectually about Jewish topics and it allowed me to learn how to be an activist for Israel and combat those wishing to defame it. Moreover, the experience laid down the framework for further growth and development in all of my aspects of life. The program met my expectations in numerous phases throughout the year. The quality of the program, on the whole, was very good and I would recommend it to others.

I have taken an active role in the Jewish community since returning. I have assumed the position of treasurer of Bnei Akiva Auckland, helping running numerous community events, for example, the Second Seder. In addition, I have been organising weekly programs for the Jewish youth to learn and be in a Jewish environment with the intent of teaching them different aspects of Judaism and Israel. I have also just returned from the biannual camp where I, for a week, allowed Jewish youth from all over New Zealand to be immersed in the Jewish culture and environment.

I will continue to be involved in Bnei Akiva Auckland and New Zealand providing high quality informal Jewish education to the youth. In addition to this, I plan to support AUJS and other Jewish community groups so that they can provide services to the Jewish community.

After a year in Israel I knew one thing for certain, that there are more streams of Judaism than there are Jews in the world. The experience of meeting so many different Jews from countless different backgrounds and seeing how each had a unique perspective and connection to our mutual faith, religion and culture astounded me and helped to shape my own Jewish identity.

On a more secular level I experienced a culture totally different to the one here in New Zealand and this helped me grow and developed my interpersonal skills as well as giving me an added appreciation for new cultures.

### ***Danya Klapaukh - Hachshara 2013***

Without a doubt the program was an unbelievable experience without which I would not be where I am today. The program greatly exceeded my expectations and I would undoubtedly recommend it to anyone who wished to experience multiple sides of Israel in a structured program while still having the opportunity to pursue individual pursuits.

At the beginning of the year I was elected to the role of head of Bnei Akiva Wellington. In this role I have reinstated weekly educational programs which had been missed in the previous year. Furthermore, as part of this I have been involved in the organisation and running of several successful community events. These include the Purim party, the Yom Haatzmaut celebrations, both of which we ran in conjunction with Habonim Dror; separately, we also ran the highly successful second seder and community Friday night dinner.

For the rest of the year I intend to increase the number of projects which I play a part in in Wellington with a focus on strengthening and invigorating the local community. To this end I am in the process of planning a number of community events the most exciting of which I am in the process of planning a community shabbaton/weekend away.

On a more national front I am leading the next Bnei Akiva winter camp and hope to continue the tradition of exciting and inspiring camps. I also am currently looking at ways of connecting the Nelson community with the other communities in New Zealand.

***Seth Schanzer - Hachshara 2013***

The experiences I had on Limmud contributed to various parts of my personal development, but most obviously knowledge of Judaism and Zionism. The time that we spent in different yeshivot was most important to my Jewish identity in the way of religious knowledge, however being in a Jewish environment continually was equally as influential. There was a lot of experiential learning incorporated into the programme, and I found hiking and visiting important places with top quality tour guides the most useful to growing my knowledge of Israel's history.

I honestly didn't have any expectations for the programme before going into it. I had a few goals that I wanted to achieve like better knowledge of Judaism, Zionism and hadracha skills that I knew would be fulfilled in certain parts of the programme. Coming out the other side I feel I have gotten far more out of Limmud than I ever would have expected, and because of this I believe it is the best hachshara programme that is on offer and remarkably suited to young people of the Jewish communities in New Zealand.

Since returning to Israel I have moved from my home community in Auckland to a new one in Wellington due to university. Since moving here a new and motivated group of madrichim including myself have brought new life into a Bnei Akiva chapter that has been essentially dormant for the past 2 years. I now hold the position of Gizbar (treasurer) in Bnei Akiva Wellington and just came back from the first of many Bnei Akiva camps that I take a part in running. I also do my best in attending as many Jewish events in this city as possible, be it at the WJCC, AUJS or the Israeli Embassy and do whatever I can to help out.

To fulfil my commitment to the Erman Trust I will continue to play the role of an active young community member, be in the leading team of madrichim in Bnei Akiva Wellington and in the future, hold positions in the mazkirut of Bnei Akiva New Zealand and eventually take charge of a Bnei Akiva camp.

Since returning to New Zealand I have become the Gizbar (treasurer) of Bnei Akiva Wellington and have just completed my first Bnei Akiva camp as a senior madrich . On top of this I make very regular appearances to religious services and often help co-ordinate events based around Jewish holidays at the Wellington Jewish Community Centre. I also am an active member of the Australasian Union of Jewish Students in Wellington and Hagshama Wellington, regularly attending events hosted by them. I have also written an article about my experiences on Limmud in the Auckland Hebrew Congregation's monthly Keshet. I am also looking into taking a session at the Limmud learning conference in 2015.