

## Bnei Akiva Reports – Hachshara 2015

### Benya Klapaukh

Being in so many different situations and having so many amazing experiences truly has formed me into a more knowledgeable and confident person in general and more proud and active member of the Jewish community. My time in Yeshiva and Machon, learning about all aspects of Judaism, Israel and Zionism has really strengthened my Jewish identity and connection to Israel. I now feel like I have the skills and the knowledge to give back to the community that has given so much to me.

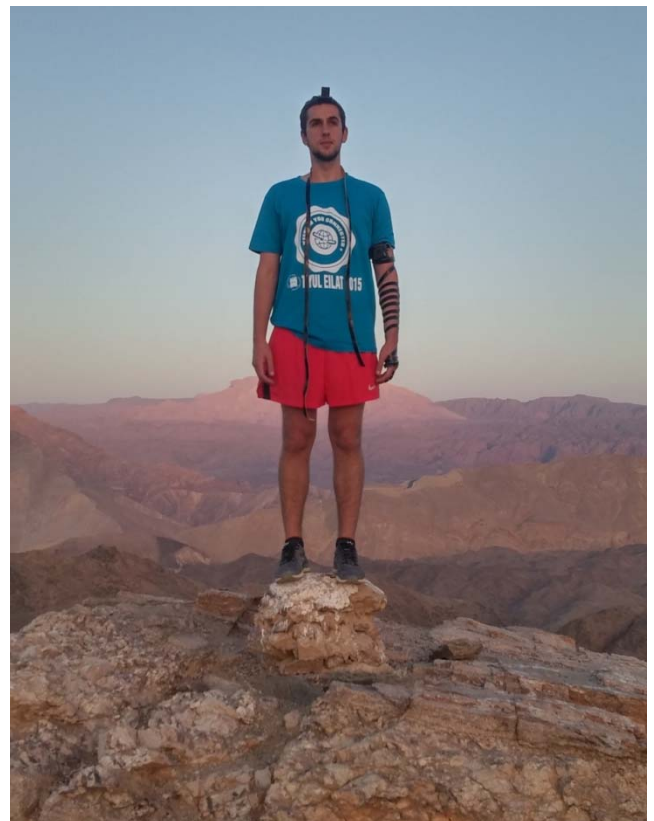
The program was much better than expected. I really enjoyed all aspects and parts of the program and thought that the organisation of the program overall was to a very high standard. The quality of the program was also superb; we were always comfortable and happy with how we were looked after.

Since I have returned I have been attending shul and have lead the children's services on Saturday. I was also present and involved in the Waiheke getaway where the madrichim of Bnei Akiva New Zealand planned and got ready for the year ahead as well as doing more hadracha training.

In this and coming years I will be a very active madrich of Bnei Akiva New Zealand; planning and running peulot for chanichim and being a hardworking and enthusiastic madrich at our bi-annual camps. I will support community events, such as the Jewish community picnic where Bnei Akiva Wellington plan to run a stall and sports games. I also plan to help out the Jewish community in whichever other ways I am needed.



Magen David Adom



Mount Tsfachot by Eilat after our sunrise hike

## **Evan Rosin**

Being a participant in Bnei Akiva's Limmud 2015 has allowed me to grow in many different areas of my personality. I felt that different parts of the programme contributed to the development of various aspects of my life. Studying in the yeshiva allowed me to develop a much more coherent understanding of Judaism as a religion. My favourite part of Yeshiva was learning about the medical ethics of Judaism. Having the opportunity to volunteer on an ambulance with Magen David Adom allowed me not only to experience the adrenaline filled lifestyle of a paramedic, it also provided me with an insight to medicine as well as sparked an interest in pursuing medicine as a career.

Before the commencing of Limmud 2015, I spoke to many individuals who, in the past, had attended a Bnei Akiva Limmud programme. This was to gain an understanding of what I should expect throughout the year. Some basic expectations of the programme I had after consulting with these previous participants were:

- For the madrichim (leaders) to be helpful, co-operative and inspiring,
- For the other participants of Limmud to be supportive, friendly and have a good mindset,
- For the programme to be educational, fun and allow us to have a multitude of new experiences.

In my opinion, Limmud 2015 exceeded all of these expectations and I would very highly recommend the programme to anyone that asks.

On returning I have led services at the Stiebel at the Raye Freedman Library. I participated in the Waiheke Island trip where we learnt about Bnei Akiva New Zealand's values and visions for the future. During this trip, I also expressed my interest and took on the responsibility of Rosh Snif Auckland during the Snif AGM. I find it only fair to take up leadership positions specifically within the Bnei Akiva movement and educate young participants so they too, can experience a life-changing year. I intend to tutor bar mitzvah students, lead services at the shuls and further involve myself in the community.

## **Ariel Rosenbaum**

Being surrounded by other Jews my age really opened my eyes to the many different levels of Judaism and showed me how everyone has their own definition of what Judaism is to them; some being more religious, others political. This allowed me to evaluate my own definition of Judaism and add to it throughout the different opportunities I was given throughout the year. Jewish identity aside, meeting many different people from many different backgrounds, some that I could connect with easily and others that took some work really allowed me to grow as a person and I became much more confident in myself, not only seeing who I am but learning from those around me and seeing who I want to be.

The programme definitely exceeded my expectations but in surprising ways. Obviously, being a year programme there were parts of the year I didn't agree with or didn't enjoy as much as others but I think that is necessary in a year programme; it just wouldn't be a realistic experience of Israel if it only showed the easy, likeable parts and that I appreciate. The programme could work a little bit more on organisational skills as there were a couple of moments in the year that we all seemed very unmotivated and were in a dark space wanting to go home but overall the year was unbelievable and I wouldn't trade it for the world.

Back In New Zealand we had a WJCC picnic where I was there with my fellow Bnei Akiva madrichim selling sausages, playing games with children and overall adding to the presence of Jewish youth in the community which I think is one of the most important jobs for Bnei Akiva Wellington.

I plan on being a Bnei Akiva madricha for the next 3 years, spreading my knowledge from my year away and through the youth, building up the WJCC to a thriving community. I also plan on being active in helping out the community in Chagim and different celebrations that I can aid in.

## **Yarden Grinberg**

The experiences I had has effected most aspects of my life and has contributed greatly to my personal development. Going on Limmud has given me good ground knowledge about Judaism and Zionism, which I cannot wait to develop more. I feel that not only learning about the religious aspect of Judaism in a midrasha, but being in a Jewish environment constantly has really influenced my Jewish identity and what I think about certain aspects of the religion. I feel that also learning about the politics and history of the country makes it easier to connect with the people and feel a sense of pride in being Jewish.

I went to Limmud expecting a year like no other. I expected to have a year filled with learning and personal growth, as well as fun. However, I knew that there would be things I would disagree with and parts of the program that I would like more than others, but overall the year exceeded all expectations. Limmud is one of the many Bnei Akiva Hachshara programs around the world, and with such a big organisation there have been a few issues, but the organisers worked super hard to make sure that everything was sorted as soon as possible and that everyone was having the best year they could have. I personally believe that Limmud is the best program for young Jewish adults from New Zealand if they want to become leaders in their communities.

I am currently a madricha at Bnei Akiva, and plan on doing so for the next few years. I believe it is important for me to give back, especially to Bnei Akiva, as for many years of my life they were my only source of Jewish education in New Zealand that didn't come from home, and I want to be able to offer that opportunity to the many young Jewish children in New Zealand. I have also run children's service at the Wellington Jewish Community Centre, and plan on running it more often. I plan on continuing to play an active role of a young community member, be a madricha for Bnei Akiva, work closely with Habonim as well to ensure that the community has a constant presence of young adults. My goals for the future include holding a position in the mazkirut of Bnei Akiva New Zealand and eventually run my very own Bnei Akiva camp.