

november 2009
cheshvan 5770

Kolenu קולנו

The voice of
Ilan High School



senior trip to Israel

Memories We Will Forever Cherish

This year's graduation trip to Israel combined spiritual growth and inspiration with fun and friendship to make for a memorable and valuable culmination of four years of learning and development. The following quotes from the participants' journals give a taste of our students' experience:

Visiting the Kotel:

Today we went to VATIKIN at 4:30 in the morning. It was probably one of the most spiritually uplifting moments of my life when the sunrise sparkled on the golden stones....

Words really can't express my feelings when I saw the Kotel for the first time. I felt that at that moment that I was standing directly near the Shechina and that this is the place where prayers go straight up to Hashem. I never prayed with more kavanah in my life.

There is nothing at the Kotel, there is no music, no incense, no awesome architecture. Yet the Shechina, the Presence of Hashem, is so real there. It is as if you can almost touch it.

As we joined the thousands of Jews streaming toward the

continued on p. 4



visit our new website: www.ilanhigh.org



community Yom Iyun

Learning How to Grow & Where to Aim

A guide to greatness.

A living visual aide of simcha and emunah, happiness and faith, through difficulty: proof that it can be done.

Attaining these ideals formed the focus of Ilan's Tzom Gedalia Yom Iyun, an annual event that is open to our entire Deal community, with over 600 invitations mailed out.

This year's event took place at the Ohel Simcha Synagogue across the street from Ilan. Mrs. Diamond warmly welcomed both community members and students.

Our program began with Rabbi Joey Haber, who encouraged us to aim for greatness. He emphasized that allowing ourselves to be satisfied with good impedes our drive to become our best. **Vicky Levy** (Grade 12) pointed out, "Rabbi Haber taught us that we don't feel the need to strive to be better if we are already good or just fine. People sometimes don't realize that being good is not the best, and you can strive to be great!" This

perspective opened up new vistas for us. **Rachel Assoulin** (Grade 12) learned that being 'good' can stop you from becoming 'great.' "This new idea was helpful and made me realize that being good and just staying where you are isn't good." Or as **Barbara Matalon** (Grade

The next speaker was Miss Breindy H., author of My Life on Wheels, who struggles with an advanced condition of Spastic Cerebral Palsy

12) put it, "I loved the idea that 'good is the enemy of great.'"

Rabbi Haber also gave us practical advice on how to reach this lofty goal: Find a new path, since staying on the old one will inevitably lead to the same error. We understood that this knowledge will enable us to grow in a more effective and lasting way. As

Toni Massry (Grade 9) said, "I think this part spoke out to me the most because when something doesn't work the way it should, I repeat the same strategy. The real solution, Rabbi Haber noted, is to try a different way."

The next speaker was Miss Breindy H., author of My Life on Wheels, who struggles with an advanced condition of Spastic Cerebral Palsy. We responded to her humor and honesty about her struggles and successes with our own resolve to enjoy life and to appreciate all the gifts that Hashem has bestowed upon us. In fact, in seeing someone severely restricted by her physical handicaps with such an attitude and joy for life, we realized that we have so much and wanted to measure up. As **Ariel Stoner** (Grade 10) put it, "I saw how Breindy was so happy and showed bitachon despite everything and it made me examine my own bitachon." **Lea Sabbagh** (Grade 12) commented, "I learned that no matter what the test is you still have the ability to use it to grow. Seeing someone in a wheelchair having so much pure strength really hit me and made me realize that everyone can really appreciate and love Hashem and His tests. She made me never want to complain again!"

Breindy also spoke about feeling grateful for the ability to help our parents rather than feeling burdened by family responsibilities. This message coupled with her own wish to have the ability to carry out even the slightest act of kibud av v'eim (respect for parents) opened for us a deeper understanding of the privilege of being able to carry out this mitzvah. **Leah Azancot** (Grade 12) was struck by Breindy's statement that "regular girls complain that they don't want to get up and help their moms," but she wishes she could get out of her wheelchair and do so." Other girls felt a similar desire to do more. As **Rivka Shemueli** (Grade 9) shared, "Breindy really made me want to do more mitzvot when she said that she wished she could get her mother water. It made me more eager to do it!"

"...allowing ourselves to be satisfied with good impedes our drive to become our best."

Rabbi Joey Haber

"I learned that no matter what the test is you still have the ability to use it to grow"

Lea Sabbagh (Grade 12)



Breindy's happiness and sense of humor also inspired us to let go of unimportant issues. She helped us realize that "life has ups and downs and it's about being able to pick yourself up," as one twelfth grader expressed.

Rebecca Jemal (Grade 9) extended this idea to how we see ourselves, "I think what affected me the most was to look at the good in myself, because if I look down at myself I will never be able to get up and reach the higher goals that I want to achieve."

After nourishing our souls, we enjoyed a tastefully prepared dessert reception prepared by our very own Mrs. Chana Safdieh. We had the opportunity not only to socialize but also to discuss and begin to internalize the inspiring ideas of this special Yom Iyun. **Rita Shamie** (Grade 10) spoke for us all when she said, "I wish we would have more days like these!" ●

COMMENDED STUDENT IN THE 2010 NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Ilan's College Guidance Director, Dr. Heni Weisfogel, announced this fall that Devorah Shlian has been named a Commended Student in the 2010 National Merit Scholarship Program. A Letter of Commendation from the school and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), which conducts the program, was presented by Mrs. Chechik to this scholastically talented senior.

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Commended Students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2010 competition by taking the 2008 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

"Recognition of high-achieving students is essential to advancing educational excellence in our nation," commented a spokesperson for NMSC. "As demonstrated by their outstanding performance in our highly competitive program, the young men and women named Commended

Students represent some of the most academically talented students in our country. We sincerely hope this recognition will enhance their educational opportunities and encourage them in their pursuit of academic success."



Psychology Trip

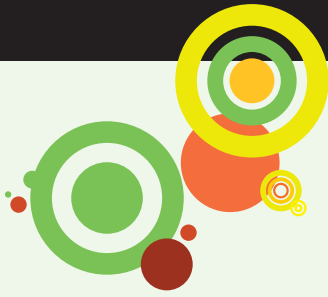
Last semester, the twelfth grade was fortunate to attend a fascinating trip to the New York Psychiatric Institute of Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, in conjunction with their psychology curriculum. This unique trip included interactive sessions with two top doctors in their fields. Dr. Francine Cournos actively involved the students with a question and answer session on her experiences dealing with interesting disorders like depression, anorexia, and schizophrenia. The girls were impressed with her personal success story of overcoming clinical depression. **Tunee Goldman** expressed what everyone was feeling when she said, "I liked her optimism and confidence when she spoke of her personal bout with depression." **Aline Alkayim** concurred, "I loved that I was able to understand how a person going through a mental health issue really feels. I'm very interested in pursuing a career in social work." The *Kishik*

This unique trip included interactive sessions with two top doctors in their fields

students then had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Mary Bon Jovi who expanded on her research with anorexia patients. It was an outstanding day filled with enthusiastic and hands-on learning. **Anna Tawil** reflected, "I think by the time we left the room we all wanted to further our education in psychology and use it to help people." Perhaps **Sara Nahem** said it best, "Not only was this trip educationally beneficial but it also taught us to look beyond the line. It showed us that in order to really understand things we must look at the deeper, underlying cause. I think that is something that will help us throughout life." ●



New York Psychiatric Institute of Columbia Presbyterian Hospital



senior Trip to Israel

(cont. from cover)

Kotel on Yom Yerushalayim, the streets of Jerusalem flooded with Jews thanking Hashem for the gift of our holy city. I've never seen so many Jewish people together! After praying, we went to dance on the women's side of the plaza, joining our sisters from all over the world in concentric circles of love and unity. I will never forget those moments!

Visiting Rebbetzin Kanievsky

Today we went to visit Rebbetzin Kanievsky, –a righteous and holy woman. She shared so many inspiring stories with us, and the warm smile on her face made it impossible not to smile with her. She invited us to submit notes with requests for her husband to pray for us, and our notes joined the folded appeals of so many on his table.

The Rav and Rebbetzin choose to live in the smallest and most humble of dwellings, sharing a silent and inspiring lessons on priorities.

Catching a Glimpse of Rav Eliashiv Coming Home from Giving a Shiur

When we saw R' Eliashiv, we were able to see the holiness on his face – it was a light of kedusha. It was only for a split second but it's something you remember forever and tell your children and grandchildren.

Amuka

For me, Amuka was one of the holiest, special, most inspiring places we went to. I felt so connected to Hashem. We prayed for a beautiful shidduch and for other people to get married. Watching the tears streaming down the faces of the young women at this holy site really inspired me.



Seeing History in the Present

I really wanted to see Masada –I love history – especially our history ... and seeing it as a reality before my eyes was incredible. As we stood on that ancient mountain, I heard the echoes of our ancestors and felt the flames of the Roman legions as the Jews on Masada made their fateful choice.

The sparkling waters of Ein Gedi were a welcome respite after our hike in the searing desert sun as we swam in the magnificent oasis where David HaMelech himself walked.

Avraham's Tent & Camel Ride

Eretz Bereishit was a highlight of our trip! We dressed in historic robes and followed a guide dressed as Eliezer to a tent that looked like Avraham Avinu's tent must have looked when he camped there thousands of years ago! After a desert repast of tea and dried fruits, learning to write ancient Hebrew script with quills and ink.

Camel riding was exhilarating and terrifying at the same time! So high above the ground and so close to the cliffs. I can't believe I was brave enough to do that! And I'm so glad those camels were two seaters so at least I had a friend to scream with!



Chessed Activities

Last night we went to the Yad Eliezer warehouse, where we packaged food for poor people in Israel. It was really such an experience seeing how some people live. Realizing that for many of these families, the box we were packing was their entire food supply for a month made me appreciate how lucky I am and how I have taken so much for granted. I also realized what a need there is for us to continue to support these important organizations.

What I loved most about the Ichlu Reim Soup Kitchen was that we actually washed the dishes, set the tables and prepared the food for the needy people who would be eating there just an hour later! This direct form of kindness was a very powerful experience, and made me want to do more for others.

Visiting Kevarim

I was extremely excited to pray at the kever of the holy Shelah in Tiberias on Rosh Chodesh Nissan because he wrote a prayer for one's children, that is meant to be said on that very day! Two friends and I were so into this prayer that we didn't notice we were praying on the men's side until they asked us to move!

The way you feel standing at these holy places is indescribable – uplifting – places where you feel so connected to Hashem and that you can pray for anything at all.

Taking the Memories Home

At R' Yochanan ben Zakkai's grave, I noticed something truly special about Rabbi Diamond. When he prays, he really cries out for our community. He is so amazing!

We are extremely lucky that he came with us and took a week out of his very busy schedule just for us.

That night at dinner, Michelle went around the room and shared what she learned from each girl in our grade, highlighting her unique strengths and how she inspires the rest of us, a "tradition" at Ilan. It really opened our eyes as we recognized the unbelievable qualities of each senior. Every single girl has so much to teach the rest of us! Thank God I was part of such a special grade! I also

This was really the experience of a lifetime!



spoke and I cried when I thought about how each girl helped me through a momentous time in my life – I wouldn't be the person I am without them!

It's so sad that this trip is over. I'm so grateful for everything Ilan has given me. I don't know how I'll ever be able to repay them. This was really the experience of a lifetime! ●

daily schedule

Monday, May 18

Arrive 7:15
at Ben Gurion Airport
Daven at Kotel
Rosh Hanikra

Tuesday, May 19

Tzefat
Kever Rash"bi – Amuka
Banana boating
Tveria

Wednesday, May 20

Mount Arbel
Jeep ride
Kayaking – Jordan River
Kever of Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes
Mount Scopus, Jerusalem

Thursday, May 20

Ein Gedi – Water Hike
Masada
Dead Sea
Eretz Bereshit

Friday, May 21

Yad Vashem
Volunteering – soup kitchen
Meah Shearim / Geula
Prepare for Shabbat
Kotel: Kabbalat Shabbat

Shabbat, May 23

Jerusalem Walking Tour
Melave Malka – Old City

Sunday, May 24

City of David – Sound & Light show
Hizkiahu's Tunnel
Kotel Tunnels
Southern Excavation at Davidson Center

Monday, May 25

Kever Rachel
Tel Azeka
Hirbat Midrass – Bar Kochva caves
Kotel
Farewell Party



An Alumna Reflects

Shirley Mamiye

NYU - 2012



While there is no doubt that I often wish to be back in an Ilan classroom, cozy and surrounded by close friends and encouraging teachers, I must admit that I have become quite content with the place that I now hold in the world. My four years spent at Ilan were a time of growth, inspiration, and preparation for the many aspects of “real life” that always loomed ahead. Now, after completing a year of college, and experiencing life outside the confines of high school, I can look back at those short years with pure appreciation.

Theoretically, I entered college last year as a sophomore. Thanks to Ilan’s affiliation with the Farleigh Dickinson University, I earned twenty-seven credits during high school (almost a full year’s worth), most of them exempting me from even required core classes. Currently enrolled at NYU, I am fortunate to be able to take only classes that intrigue me, as this school promotes the student’s design of their own major. I strongly hope to use what I am learning to someday contribute to my community.

I enjoy going to school, and contrary to my initial assumptions, the three-day-a-week program, and the work that it entails, is anything but overwhelming. The slight schedule, filled with classes that truly pique my interest, leaves much room to fill my days with other worthwhile things: Shaare Binah Seminary, working in an office, and even launching my own business, just to name a few!

Within Ilan’s secure, sheltered environment, I was given the tools necessary to assertively blossom in a post-high school world. I feel myself growing closer to Hashem with each day, and rather than become part of a forgotten past, the lessons of truth that were absorbed during high school have become even stronger and more relevant in my life. In fact, a worldly professor of mine pulled me aside last semester and almost longingly inquired, “Shirley, you seem to hold a secret. I can just sense that you know something that I don’t.” Ilan imbued me with a clear set of Torah values, and this “secret” of mine must be somewhat obvious to those still in search of it.

I will always be grateful for being given the foundation that has enabled me to be exposed to the outside world, without being influenced by its negativity. I feel as though I am now a stronger, more independent young woman, with a newfound confidence toward the world around me. Thank you, Ilan! ●

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From our mailbox

Dear Mrs. Checkik,

Thank you so much for your message. It was wonderful hearing from you! As you know, after graduating from Ilan, I spent a meaningful year in Israel at Midreshet Tehilla. I deferred my admission to Stern College of Yeshiva University, which I presently attend. This past summer I had the opportunity of interning at a NJ legislative office for Senator Jennifer Beck, Assemblyman Declan O’Scanlon and Assemblywoman Caroline Casagrande. As an intern there I saw what really goes on behind the scenes to help make the state run.

I truly believe that Ilan gave me the abilities to succeed and handle responsibilities beyond a typical intern. When I first started, I worked on the constituent databases and the mailings using different programs like Microsoft Excel, Word, and Outlook. Ilan not only prepared me for these tasks but helped me to excel in them. My bosses noticed my ability and consequently moved me up to better positions in the office. I worked closely with the Chief of Staff who had me compose different letters to various companies, organizations, specific people, and Governor Jon Corzine, himself. Ilan helped me develop my writing skills and because of this I felt confident in writing these letters on the legislature’s behalf.

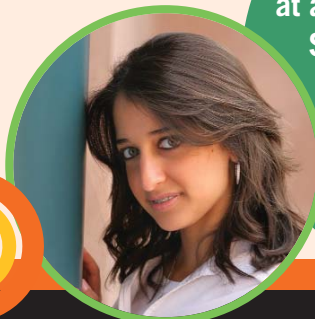
I also had to deal with many different kinds of people while working there, whether it was the actual staff or different people who called or came into the office looking for some assistance from their senator. The ability to deal with diverse kinds of people, I learned at Ilan.

I can never truly thank Ilan for how it has helped me achieve such lofty goals.

Love,
Daniella Ahdout, Ilan 2007
Stern College - 2011



This past summer I had the opportunity of interning at a NJ legislative office for Senator Jennifer Beck, Assemblyman Declan O’Scanlon and Assemblywoman Caroline Casagrande



Spotlight on Our New Faculty



Mrs. Nina Kaweblum

Mrs. Kaweblum holds a BA degree in English from Yale University and graduated cum laude with a distinction in the major, as well as a Masters of

Arts in Remedial Reading from Teachers College of Columbia University. A creative and experienced educator, Mrs. Kaweblum has taught on the high school and graduate levels, most recently at Reenas Bais Yaakov and Daemen College. Mrs. Kaweblum has developed and supervised writing curricula for elementary and secondary schools. We are pleased to welcome her as an instructor of writing for our freshman and sophomore classes.

Mrs. Esther Kurtz

Mrs. Kurtz comes to Ilan from Masores High School in Brooklyn, where she taught sophomore and junior English Language Arts. She previously served



as the Assistant Language Arts Coordinator at Mesivta Yeshiva Chaim Berlin, where she developed and implemented the writing curriculum. Mrs. Kurtz holds a BS in Behavioral Science with a focus on Education and Masters of Science in Literacy from Mercy College, as well as New Jersey State Certification. She is a welcome addition to our faculty.



Ms. Mozelle Mimran

Ms. Mimran LCSW has been a private practitioner working with couples, adults and teens for thirteen years. In addition, she has facilitated award winning workshops on parenting and relationships and taught life skills courses including communication skills and parenting. Her articles on mental health issues have been published in the Community Magazine. Ms. Mimran has previously taught AP Psychology at Ilan.

Mrs. Ahuva Reichman

Mrs. Reichman earned a Bachelors of Science in Psychology, and holds an MA degree in Political Science from the Graduate School and University Center of the City



University of New York, where she received a prestigious graduate fellowship. Mrs. Reichman also holds NJ State certification. A veteran educator with a vibrant personality and a wonderful rapport with her students, Mrs. Reichman served as an adjunct lecturer at Hunter College and a research assistant at Queens College. In addition to her role at Ilan High School, Mrs. Reichman serves on the faculty of Manhattan High School for Girls, where she has taught English Language Arts, History and Political Science.

college Bound

Congratulations to the Ilan students pursuing higher education at the following fine schools!

Brookdale College
Brooklyn College
Fashion Institute of Technology
Hunter College
Kingsborough College
Monmouth University

New York University
Rutgers University
Stern College
The College of New Jersey
Touro College





2009 Committees

Student life at Ilan is off to a running start this year, with a plethora of programs designed for enjoyment, inspiration and enrichment. The Kolenu staff took a few moments this week to speak with some of the senior committees and get a preview of the year ahead.

Student Council

Our theme for this year is "Get in the Game," noted **Carol Ashear**, who serves as president of the student council along with **Andree Franco** and **Barbara Matalon**, and the focus is Achdut-inclusion." The opening activity, a school wide trip, was an enjoyable icebreaker for all of the students, and served as a wonderful vehicle for freshmen and upperclassmen to spend time getting to know each other. "On a personal note," added Carol, "I am thrilled to be part of the student council presidium, and give back to the school that has given me so much."

Chessed

This year's talented chessed heads, **Joyce Kishk**, **Grace Mamiye** and **Sally Shamosh**, innovated a chessed club in addition to the traditional monthly chessed project required of all students. Sally Shamosh shared her enthusiasm for this important program. "It was incredible how many students chose to join this club - at this point a majority of the school belongs to it!" commented Sally. Each committee - the Tuesday night bridal gemach group, the Sunday morning special children volunteers, the Thursday night challah baking - has two seniors in charge. This also serves to foster friendships between girls from the different grades. We are proud of the Ilan students' commitment to chessed and to our community at large!

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"I love taking all of the skills that our terrific computer teachers have gifted us with and using them to create something we will cherish forever"
Cari Snider
Grade 12

mishmeres

Mishmeres

A national program for high school girls focusing on midot improvement, Mishmeres links Ilan with other schools across America in an exciting, hands-on program of personal growth. "Each month we introduce a new midah in a fun and creative way, and then work throughout the month to bring the message home with a series of skits, workshops and activities," pointed out **Rachel Assoulin**. Sarah and her fellow coordinators, **Keke Cohen**, **Francie Dweck** and **Frieda Rahmey**, help infuse the school environment with caring, consideration and growth.

Yearbook

A highlight of the senior year is the work done toward producing a beautiful yearbook that serves as a repository of memories and reflections. "My favorite part of yearbook work is the graphics," shared **Cari Snider**, who serves along with **Marlene Bibi**. "Ever since freshman year, my dream was to work on yearbook. I love taking all of the skills that our terrific computer teachers have gifted us with - Photoshop, Indesign, Corell and others, and using them to create something we will cherish forever." ●

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