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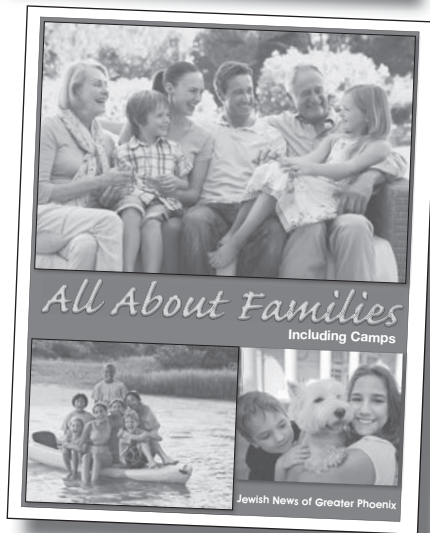


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EDUCATION



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Teaching doesn't end at the classroom door. In this edition of Jewish News' Education special section, you'll find ways to spark a love of learning in children and teens through programs that take place after school and during spring and summer breaks. There is also a look at programs where high school students can study abroad in Israel and tips for parents on how to raise a reader. Additionally, an Arizona State University journalism student who interned with Jewish News shares the ways she manages stress.

Happy learning.

Leisah Woldoff

On the cover: Top photo: From left, counselors Cody Rosen, Brenden Ginis and Nate Brooks greet campers to Camp Swift during the camp's first session in summer 2012. (Photo courtesy of Camp Swift)

Bottom photo: Clockwise from left, Sydney Saltzman, Trey Beattie, Madison Honigman, Nicholas Williams, Leo Weber, Izzy Stern and Ella Grossman stand before the Club J van. (Photo courtesy of Club J)

Education section is a special section of Jewish News of Greater Phoenix. Edited by Leisah Woldoff and designed by Becky Globokar. For additional copies and advertising information, contact Flo Eckstein, 602-870-9470 or eckstein@jewishaz.com.

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Follow that van

Club J transports students to world of after-school activities

SALVATORE CAPUTO
Assistant Managing Editor

If you see a van with a sign reading, “Follow us to Club J After School Program,” and you do indeed follow the van, you’ll end up at the Valley of the Sun Jewish Community Center, although you may stop at a few public schools along the way.

That’s because Club J, an after-school enrichment program, picks up students at nearby schools and transports them to the VOSJCC every school day. Club J offers a wide variety of activities to students in kindergarten through fifth grade including cooking, arts and crafts, sports, swimming and computer lab.

This year, the Club J vans (the program has two 14-passenger vans) stop at the Arts Academy at Scottsdale, Cherokee Elementary School, Cheyenne Traditional School, Redfield Elementary School and Sequoya Elementary School, according to Deborah Sheinbein Winegarden, VOSJCC’s co-director of youth and camping services.

“If a school has five or more kids that are signed up for Club J, we’ll go to pick them up at the school,” she says, noting that Club J is not restricted to children who need a ride.

The bulk of the 60 to 75 students, about 40, that attend Club J each day come from Sonoran Sky Elementary School, which is “just up the street.”

This Jewish option for after-school child care has been in place at the VOSJCC since 2003, and Winegarden and Mitch Cohen have been co-directors of youth and camping services for the past three years, overseeing Club J as well as Shemesh Day Camp in the summer and various holiday day camps at the VOSJCC.

Homework and a snack

The basic idea is simple, Winegarden says, “We’re trying to teach things until parents pick their kids up.”

The students can take advantage of after-school classes and athletic activities at the JCC as well as Club J’s program during that time after school lets out and before parents pick up their children.

Things start to gear up about 2:15 p.m. on regular school days, as students start to arrive. (Club J also operates on early dismissal days, she



From left, Garrett Geenan, Daniel Kimball, Brightyn Senner, Madison Honigman and Ella Geenan play ga-ga, an Israeli ballgame, while they’re at Club J.

says, picking up students early and bringing them to Club J till parents come to take them home.)

“We get a snack (Jewish dietary laws are observed) and do homework,” Winegarden says. “We try to have the kids do their homework here.”

The staff has had training to help the students with their homework.

Other activities, organized by age group, include sports, science and cooking, she says.

Athletic games such as the Israeli ballgame ga-ga (see photo above) give the students a break from the more academic pursuits, although she stresses that Club J’s staff works to make every part of the after-school day fun for the students.

As for the VOSJCC’s sports offerings available to the Club J students, off the top of her head, she mentions karate, soccer and Junior Suns basketball. However, the full list is much longer.

“They can even swim when it’s warm,” she says.

Jewish atmosphere

Although it’s the Jewish community center’s program, Club J is open to all, so there are non-Jewish children who attend as well, Winegarden says.

That actually enhances the program’s Jewish spirit because the non-Jewish children are curious about Shabbat and the holidays, she says.

“We do activities around all

the Jewish holidays,” she says, “and we do Shabbat every Friday.

“Even the kids that aren’t Jewish like doing Shabbat,” she says. “They enjoy the candle lighting” for both Shabbat and Hanukkah.

It helps that, as she says, “we twist it (the holiday observance) to make it fun for the kids.” For instance, Passover featured a chocolate seder.

“They keep coming back,” she says of the children, when asked how she knows Club J is a successful program.

Club J is open 2-6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 2-5 p.m. Friday, and it starts as early as needed on early dismissal days.

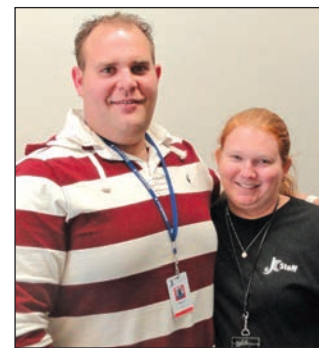
There is also a drop-in option for parents who need child care on a specific school day, 3-6 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 3-5 p.m. Friday. Parents must call in at least two hours before dropping their students off to make arrangements.

Call 480-483-7121 for further information on Club J and child-care options.



Eliana Berk has her listening ears on at Club J.

Photos courtesy of Club J



Mitch Cohen, left, and Deborah Sheinbein Winegarden are co-directors of Club J.

Photo by Salvatore Caputo



From left, Nicholas Williams, Izzy Stern, Leo Weber, Sydney Saltzman, Trey Beattie, Madison Honigman and Ella Grossman are just some of the students who ride the van to Club J.



Children participate in a Club J Hanukkah candle lighting. Club J provides a Jewish option for after-school child care.

Photos courtesy of Club J

Break away for new experiences

Programs offer students *tikkun olam* opportunities

MARILYN HAWKES
Staff Writer

Are your high school or college students looking for something different to do this spring or summer break? There are many options to choose from, some local and some in Europe and Israel. Here are a few programs to consider.

The **Hebrew High Care-a-van**, a 16-day summer program for Valley teens, will take place this year from June 18 to July 3. The Care-a-van, a program of the Bureau of Jewish Education, will travel to different locations throughout the West doing community service projects while forging friendships along the way.

The Care-a-van is open to all Jewish students in ninth through 12th grades who "enjoy the outdoors, have an interest in 'physical' *tikkun olam* projects and most importantly, enjoy the company of 30-35 fellow teens," according to a Care-a-van brochure.

The fee is \$2,013 per student, which includes all transportation, room and board and special-activity entrance fees. Scholarships are available.

For more information, call Myra Shindler, 480-634-8050 or email myras@bjephoenix.org.

The Scottsdale-based **Camp Swift** Youth Foundation runs a variety of summer and year-round programs, including Camp Swift, held every summer at Camp Stein in Prescott.



Michelle Jaffee, left, and Brenley Markowitz work at Three Square Food Bank in Las Vegas during Care-a-van 2012.

Photo courtesy of Myra Shindler

Volunteer counselors from Valley Jewish youth groups and other Southwest Jewish youth groups work with campers provided by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Phoenix, homeless shelters and schools with high percentages of at-risk students.

"Camp Swift is led by high school students serving as role models for campers by encouraging positive life choices," Whitney Jacobson, Camp Swift executive director, wrote in an email. "The teens gain self-esteem and maturity by putting campers' needs first and caring responsibly for others. While

learning leadership skills and problem-solving techniques, teens experience the gratification of making a positive difference in the lives of those less fortunate."

This summer, there will be two sessions in May and one in August, according to Jacobson. The camp is free for the campers, but counselors pay \$250 per session.

Teens must attend a full day of orientation in Phoenix, which includes CPR training, and 24 hours of orientation in Prescott before the campers arrive.

For more information, contact Jacobson at campswift@gmail.com.

United Synagogue Youth, an arm of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, offers many alternative summer options, including USY on Wheels, Mission: Mitzvah, a five-and-a-half-week summer program for teens in grades 9 through 11. The teens travel across the United States participating in *tikkun olam* projects, sightseeing and celebrating Shabbat. Projects from previous years include volunteering at a food bank, visiting nursing-home residents and volunteering at a camp for inner-city youth.

Registration is open for this and other USY summer programs at www.usy.org/escape.

Jewish National Fund (JNF) Winter/Spring Alternative Break is available to any Jewish adult 18 to 30 years old who wants to do work projects in Israel. Activities include planting, pruning, building, gardening, harvesting and working with children.

Students will also have opportunities to go sightseeing, hike, shop and do other activities.

Participants must raise a minimum of \$1,100 from family and friends and pay for round-trip domestic airfare. The rest of the trip is free, paid for by JNF donors.

For more information, visit www.jnf.org/asb.

The National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY), the youth arm of the Union for Reform Judaism, offers several summer options through its **Mitzvah Corps** that connect Reform Jewish teens with social-action opportunities throughout North America.

Hands-on projects include Urban Mitzvah Corps, with teens participating in Superstorm Sandy relief work in the New York and New Jersey area and a trip to the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; Mitzvah Corps of the South, which provides an opportunity for teens to work on Gulf Coast relief by building homes and schools; Mitzvah Corps Costa Rica, a nine-day program in which participants engage in service-learning projects while experiencing the Costa Rican landscape; Mitzvah Corps Nicaragua, a nine-day program that includes help-

ing to restore roads and educational facilities; and Mitzvah Corps at Kutz: NFTY's Campus for Reform Jewish Teens gives participants a chance to work at Camp Kutz with Jewish teens who have autism spectrum disorders.

Prices for summer programs range from \$2,500 to \$4,200. For more information, visit www.urj.org.

NCSY, the Orthodox Union's international youth program, has a variety of educational and fun-filled programs to help Jewish teens connect to Judaism and Jewish heritage. Options include BILT (Boys Israel Leadership Training), a five-week program in Israel for boys in grades 9-12; GIVE (Girls Israel Volunteer Experience), a five-week program in Israel for girls in grades 9-12; and Kollel, a six-week Jerusalem-based program for boys in grades 9-12 that will intensify their commitment to Judaism through learning, playing competitive sports, engaging in recreational activities and touring Israel.

The sessions range in price from \$1,000 to \$8,000. They include all hotel stays, round-trip group flights from New York, three meals a day, trips, and admission fees for regularly scheduled activities. Scholarships are available.

For more information, visit NCSY's website, ncsysummer.com, or email David Cutler, NCSY director of summer programs at summer@ncsy.org.

The Library of Congress is offering the 2013 Junior Fellows Summer Intern program, a 10-week paid fellowship for college students. From May 28 through Aug. 2, the 2013 class of junior fellows will work full-time with library specialists and curators to inventory, describe and explore collection holdings. The junior fellows will also help with digital-preservation outreach activities throughout the library.

Students will receive a \$3,000 stipend and will be eligible to take part in programs offered at the library.

Applications will be accepted online through midnight, Friday, Jan. 25 at usa-jobs.gov, keyword 333879100.

For more information, visit www.loc.gov/hr/jrfellows.

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Academic adventures

Israel study abroad an expanding option for high schoolers

LISÉ STERN
JNS.org

I sit in a cave near the Madras Ruins in Adullam Park just south of Jerusalem, my legs dusty with the powdery chalk of the rock floor. I'm surrounded by 17 high school students, all busily unfolding oversized maps as their teacher, Rabbi Aubrey Isaacs, instructs them to mark where we are. I see other circled cities and towns — places these students have visited since arriving at the end of August.

This onsite "classroom" is one of many *tiyulim*, or field trips, the group of sophomores, juniors, and seniors is experiencing this year. They are the inaugural full-semester class participating in the **Alexander Muss High School in Israel** (AMHSI) program, based in newly built dorms at the Eshel Hanasi agricultural school in the Negev Desert.

AMHSI (www.amhsi.org), an unaffiliated pluralistic institution, has been around since 1972, offering six- and eight-week sessions throughout the year near Tel Aviv in Hod Hasharon at the Mosenson Youth Village. The program has more than 20,000 graduates, including popular singer Matisyahu and "The Devil Wears Prada" author Lauren Weisberger, as well as numerous rabbis and community leaders.

In the Valley, the Bureau of Jewish Education is an AMHSI affiliate. Since the late 1970s, BJE has sent nearly 400 students to Israel through this program, according to Elaine Hirsch, the local director of admissions, and several have made aliyah afterward. Last summer, juniors and seniors of BJE's Hebrew High attended a 10-day program through the organization.

While there have long been college study-abroad choices and a recent proliferation of gap-year programs in Israel, not to mention summer youth group trips, AMHSI is just the third organization to offer a high school semester option.

The philosophy of AMHSI is to offer high school students chronological experiential learning in Israel. The curriculum includes a core course covering Jewish history from the Bible on, and students travel to the places they learn

about (they also can get college credits for the course from the University of Miami). Isaacs, who taught core in the eight-week program, has been brought in to head the new semester program. "Investing in the Negev is investing in the future of Israel," he says. "The semester offers much more — things two months can't offer. I think the kids feel that they are actively involved in building the program with us."

Leana Silverberg, a junior who attends a day school in New Jersey, had been to Israel before, "But not on such an educational level," she says. "At school, we're learning about Tanach, but I wanted to live it, not just learn it."

"It's an academic adventure, but it's also fun," Hirsch said. The teachers are extremely knowledgeable and "they know Israel like the back of their hand — they know every grain of sand and they love what they do." She also notes that the faculty is pluralistic — "You have people who are secular and people who are more traditional and everything in between. It's a nice exposure for the students. What they see is the reality of Israel within the staff."

Rabbi Morris Kipper and his wife, Lenore, of Coral Gables, Fla., started AMHSI in 1972. A decade later, third-generation developer Stephen Muss was looking for a way to honor his late father, Alexander. "I never went to college," Muss says, "I barely got out of high school. I'm kind of proud that I'm involved in this superior educational program. It's just been an extraordinary opportunity for me to help Israel."

Muss, 84, has big plans to expand the scope of AMHSI. "I have a dream, a hope, a prayer to have 5,000 teenagers come to AMHSI from all over the Diaspora every year," Muss says. "Jewish continuity depends on Jewish teenagers from all over the world having a meaningful experience in Israel, in a meaningful educational program."

The price for the summer program is about \$8,000, Hirsch said, and the BJE offers a Sarah Levitz Study Fellowship in Israel. For more information call Hirsch at 480-634-8050. (Jewish Free Loan also offers interest-free loans for Israel experiences such as these; visit www.jewishfreeloan.org).

The **Union for Reform Judaism** has held programs for high school students in Israel since 1961; what began as an exchange with Israelis has evolved into semesters offered in the fall and spring, known as NFTY-EIE (North American Federation of Temple Youth Eisendrath International Exchange, www.nftyie.org). Since 2001, EIE has been located in the Judean Hills outside Jerusalem, on the grounds of Kibbutz Tzuba.

"Part of our program is that it is part of the larger Reform Movement," says Leah Guskin, director of marketing and recruitment. "Kids go to URJ summer camps, and those feed into EIE, and when they go home, they go back to those communities."

More than 100 students attend each year, and more than 2,000 have completed EIE. In 2012, 20 students from around the U.S. were enrolled for the fall.

Shaina Wolinsky, a junior from Cleveland, is in Israel for the first time. She heard of the program through her URJ summer camp, and thought it would be great to spend a semester with a bunch of



Danielle Rosenberg, left, and Gabrielle Hafalia, Valley participants in the Alexander Muss High School in Israel program, enjoy dinner in a Bedouin tent. Photo courtesy of Myra Shindler

friends. Those friends are all new — she knew no one when she arrived.

Hannah Hochberg-Miller, from Ventura, Calif., is in Israel for her third time. "I like the independence," she says. "Living with girlfriends, not parents, is very cool."

Guskin says that more than 80 students from 20 states are now enrolled for the spring semester. Like AMHSI, the

program includes a stint in Gadna (an introduction to the Israeli army), a Yam le Yam hike (Sea to Sea, a four-day trek between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean), plus a trip to Poland.

The Conservative movement's Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim, literally **Ramah High School Jerusalem** and

See 'Israel' on Page S18

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Too much pressure

College senior shares tips for managing stress

GABRIELLA JAFFEE
Special to Jewish News

Stress is an issue that every college student faces. For me, this past semester brought with it more stress than I have ever faced in my entire life. Stress takes a toll on one's mind and body — I have been sick more times in this past year than I have ever been.

So why is college so stressful? Perhaps it is because teachers continually pile project after project on top of regular homework, tests, midterms and finals. Perhaps it is because money is an issue, and we kill ourselves trying to make it while still maintaining our grades. Or maybe it is because we try to also have a social life and do more than just study all

the time.

Not only was I taking a full semester of classes, but I also had an internship with the Jewish News for 15 hours a week, as well as a part-time job and a photography business. As a senior, I am used to the stress that college life brings, but this past semester brought stress to a whole different level.

This upcoming spring semester, I now have the stress of figuring out what I want to do with my life and trying to find a job before I graduate in May.

Through all this stress, however, I have found several things that help to calm me down and manage the insane amounts of stress that college life puts on you.

1. Get out of the house/dorm/apartment. Some-

thing as simple as just going for a walk — and luckily, living in Arizona, we have lots of gorgeous walking weather — can clear your mind and gear you up for whatever you have to do. Hiking works just as well. Take a camera and snap some gorgeous pictures to help ease your mind once you do start working on things.

2. Prioritize. One of the biggest issues I faced my freshman and sophomore years was not being able to prioritize correctly. I'd put off work I didn't want to do in favor of work that was due later. Do big projects in bits and pieces and don't leave everything until the last minute. The best piece of advice I can give is do not go down the procrastination road. While it may have worked in high school, it certainly will not work in college. Finish what is due first before work that is due later. If you don't, it creates an unnecessary time crunch that will just pile more stress onto your plate.

3. Spend time with animals. Animals have an amazing therapeutic quality. Spend time with your special critter. Above all, however, horseback riding clears my mind like nothing else. If you've never been horseback riding — give it a try. I promise you won't regret it.

4. Have a snack and drink plenty of water. Something about the repeti-

tive motion of chewing really helps me to focus. But this tip doesn't help if you eat junk food! My favorite snacks to eat while working are pretzels, pomegranate seeds, rice cakes and apples. Always remember to drink plenty of water, too. It's so easy to get sick when you're really stressed, and keeping hydrated helps to keep you healthy.

5. Make time for friends and family. No matter how stressed you are, spending time with friends, family and loved ones can really help. Talking to them about what you are feeling helps as well. Keeping things bottled up is akin to a stopped-up volcano — it's going to erupt eventually. If you let a little out at a time, you can avert a big blow-up.

6. Get plenty of sleep — or at least try to. One of the things I hear so many people my age talking about is their lack of sleep. I have never pulled an all-nighter, but there are plenty of people in college who do. It's so important to get enough sleep. Not only so you can focus, but to keep you healthy. While



homework can keep you up late into the night — make sure to get some rest eventually.

As long as you keep on top of your assignments, don't freak out too much and enjoy your college experience — the future is bright. I can't wait to graduate and start my life.

Gabriella Jaffee is a senior at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. She was Jewish News' fall 2012 editorial intern.

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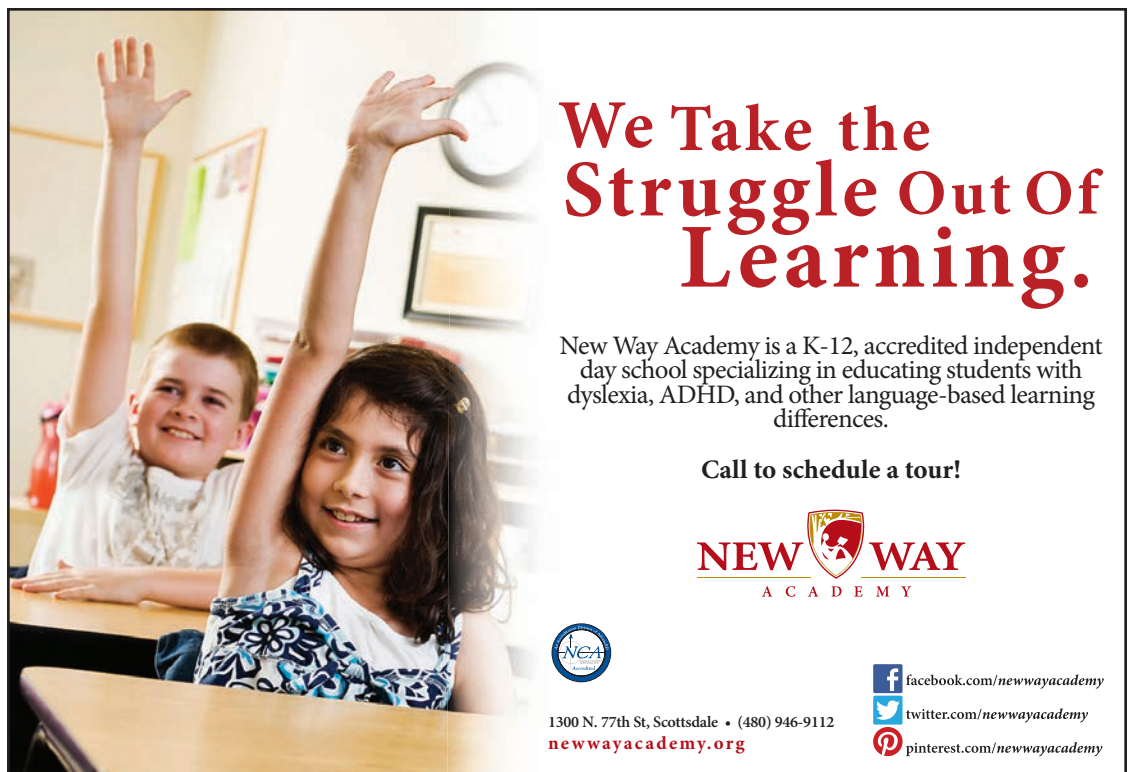
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How to raise a reader

Raising a skilled reader is one of the most crucial gifts we can give our children. Reading is not only an enjoyable human experience, but it is also a way to build brain connections, improve concentration, develop vocabulary and expand imagination. Literacy is an essential part of being a productive citizen in society and paramount to success in school.

The single most powerful tool parents possess in raising a reader is quite basic: Read to your child.

Experts suggest that you begin reading to your child the day he or she is born. This simple act of reading to your child in a warm and nurturing way invites him or her into the world of literacy. Books develop curiosity, set the foundation for later learning and build language. Often books teach children how to interact with others and foster empathy. Books give children opportunities to learn about people, places and events outside of their own experiences.

Reading to your child also teaches important reading readiness skills such as left to right progression, that print has meaning and an understanding of “book language.” When you read to your child, he or she will begin to develop phonological awareness, the ability to hear and discriminate the sounds in the spoken language. As children get older they will begin to connect those sounds to letters and begin to sound out words.

Five tips to help raise a reader

1. Create a reading ritual: Spend a few minutes reading with your child every day. Be sure to keep this time sacred and special. Find a comfortable spot in which to read. Invite your child to sit on your lap or cuddle up in a pool of blankets on the floor. Encourage your child to invite a favorite stuffed animal to join the reading ritual or set up a fun reading tent. If multiple children are involved, allow each child a turn to select the book.

2. Surround your child with print: Children begin to understand the written word has meaning at a very young age. Begin by labeling your child’s clothing drawers or toy bins. Make sure the print is large and at eye level for your child. Label frequently used items such as a lunchbox, juice and cup.

3. Reading mystery box: Create a mystery box by covering a shoebox with wrapping paper. Place a familiar book in the box every week. Give your child hints about the book all week. “This book is about an animal. Can you guess what book it is?” Once your child guesses the book, read the book to your child. Have your child become a mystery character from the story. Encourage other family members to guess the character. You can include a costume for your child that goes along with the book. Keep it super fun!

4. Book corner: Create a space in your home for making books. Provide your children with fresh paper and a variety of writing utensils that are neatly organized and labeled. Think of this corner as a storefront. You want this space to be inviting to your child. Include a variety of reading materials in the corner such as magazines, books and newspapers to help inspire your child to write. Your child does not need to know how to write letters in order to be an author. Scribbling is the first stage in writing. Celebrate your child’s writing by stapling it into a book and by including the book in your reading ritual. Be sure to change out the writing utensils and introduce new crayons and markers to keep the book corner fun and new.

5. Lunchbox letters and Post-it notes: Children love to get mail. Write your child a note and secretly place it in his or her lunchbox. If your child does not read, your child’s teacher will most likely read it to your child. Attach a Post-it note to your child’s bedroom door with a special message. Give your child some Post-it notes and encourage your child to write you back. Remember, scribbles are a form of writing.

Happy reading!

Jill Leshin, M. Ed. is a certified reading specialist and the early literacy consultant for the Valley of the Sun JCC Early Childhood Center. She is also the founder of Pre-K Academy, which provides preschool-enrichment classes that build strong reading and writing foundations for children. Classes are held at the VOSJCC Early Childhood Center. She also offers summer programs to help children keep their skills sharp over the summer. Contact her at jill@pre-kacademy.com, 480-822-READ (7323) or visit www.pre-kacademy.com.

**Jill Leshin,
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Israel study abroad

Continued from Page S15

known as TRY (try.ramah.org.il), is a semester-long program offered in the spring for students in grades 10 to 12. It's located at the Goldstein Youth Village in the San Simon neighborhood of Jerusalem. There's also a two-month option, known as USY High, which is folded into the semester program; the majority of the 50 to 80 kids enrolled each year stay for the full semester, according to Judy Greene, Israel program coordinator. "Our program is an oppor-

tunity for students to live a complete Jewish life in the Conservative Jewish mode while living in Israel," says Arie Hasit, TRY recruitment coordinator. "We are about exploring Judaism through Israel, and helping students develop their Jewish identities and their relationship to Israel." Hebrew is a strong component of this; in addition to the core course covering Jewish history, plus regular high school classes like algebra and chemistry, students

take 3 1/2 hours of Hebrew a week.

Youth villages are common in Israel, and are essentially boarding schools, often set up for kids without parents, such as refugees and immigrants. A few other schools, including an arts school and a day school for Israelis, are also on the Goldstein campus, giving the TRY students opportunities to interact with Israelis.

Elite Academy, also called Naale (www.elite-academy.org), is for the high school stu-

dent who wants to make aliyah. It's a three-year commitment, starting with grade 10, under the auspices of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the state. Tuition, room and board, and some travel and expenses are covered.

Lapid (www.lapidisrael.org) lists all Israel programs for high school students — most are summer options. **Masa** (www.masaisrael.org) has a catalog of study choices in Israel, from ulpanim and service programs to graduate university programs.

For high school students who study abroad during the spring semester, the Jewish holidays of Purim, Passover, and Shavuot can provide an even more meaningful Israel experience.

"We do Tikun Leyl Shavuot," TRY's Hasit says, describing the tradition of studying all night at the start of the holiday. "Then, an hour before sunrise, we walk up to the Old City. The students see that actual aliyah — going up — is something you can only do in Jerusalem."

TRY Director Daniel Laufer says the program "definitely affects our students for many years to come."

"I continue to hear from alumni — even from many years ago — who reassert how profound the TRY program was in guiding their life choices," he says.



High schoolers in the Conservative movement's Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim program share a laugh on the road.

Photo courtesy of National Ramah Commission

Managing Editor Leisah Woldoff contributed to this article.

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Details

What: Israel Fair to present various Israel programs for high school students

Who: Bureau of Jewish Education Hebrew High

When: 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 15

Where: Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus, 12701 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale

Call: 480-634-8050



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