

Camp Harlam Alumni Newsletter

Spring 2010

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Greetings!

Shalom!

Welcome to another edition of the CHAI newsletter! We hope that everyone had a good and meaningful Pesach! Those seven (or eight) days really flew by this year!

A special thanks to those who attended the NYC happy hour in March. We had a great turnout and a wonderful time. It was so nice to see all the people we haven't seen in way too long. And, best of all, we raised over \$1,000 for camper scholarships! A great achievement for those who attended!

There are many exciting things highlighted in this newsletter including a save the date for Alumni Day (August 7th) and a movie project two Harlam Alumni are producing.

As CHAI continues to grow we are able to do more and more events. Putting these events on takes a lot of hard work. We are always looking for people to become more involved in CHAI. No matter your age or number of summers at camp, if you would like to join us and help plan an event, help with the newsletter, or anything else you can think of, please email us at harlamalumni@yahoo.com. This is your organization, so we encourage everyone's participation.

Don't forget to check out our website (<http://harlam.urjcamp.org/alumni/>) so that you can browse Alumni Day photos, purchase Harlam alumni merchandise, update your profile in the alumni gateway, and much much more! You can also become a fan of ours on Facebook by clicking [here](#).

How great did this past week's spring weather feel!? This can only mean one thing - camp is just around the corner! The countdown continues...

Warm Regards,

CHAI

Alumni day 2010!!!

Alumni Day 2010 is just around the corner (well, still four months away, but it's a long corner and it will be here before you know it). In the coming weeks we will be sending you out information including how to pre-register online. But for now, here are some details for this summer's alumni day.

What: Camp Harlam and CHAI are hosting their annual Alumni Day! This tradition is the single greatest day for alumni to gather at camp and reminisce about summers past.

When: Saturday, August 7th, 2010

Where: Camp Harlam - Kunkletown or Kresgeville, PA - take your pick!

Remember, stay tuned to your email in the coming weeks as many more details will be released.

Alumni Around Town

Matt Stamm

An instrumental version of a song Matt wrote with Art Hays, called "Coming Out of the Dark", was being used as the music for a segment that ran repeatedly during NBC's primetime coverage of the 2010 Winter Olympics. The segment was presented by Coca-Cola and NBC, and was called Uplifting Moments - it recapped some great moments from the Olympic games. It was run both in primetime and during repeat broadcasts late at night. Did you see it? If not, you can hear the full version of the song here: www.myspace.com/mattstamm1. The song will also be included on Matt's next album.

Ian Mallitz

One of the pilots Ian shot and produced last year was purchased by Discovery. Plans came together quickly and before he knew it, the first season of Operation Wild was complete.

The show began airing on Planet Green on January 8th. You can read more about the series at <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/tv/operation-wild/>. Most of the footage Ian shot last year made it into the series. If you did see this show or are planning to catch up, when you see the Everglades and the Airboats, think MALLITZ!

What Year Was It?

Camp

- Ben Wachstein was the CIT Director/Administrative Assistant
- Gary Gershman worked in the kitchen as a cook
- The theme of the banquet was Alice in Wonderland for first session and Circus for second session
- Mountain biking, the tower, and fishing were all new

World

- The U.S. rescued Mexico's economy with a \$20-billion aid program
- The Russian space station, Mir, greeted the first Americans as a U.S. shuttle docked with the station
- A Nerve gas attack in the Tokyo subway killed eight and injured thousands
- The death toll in the Rwanda massacre reached 2,000
- France exploded a nuclear device in the Pacific

- Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was slain by a Jewish extremist at a peace rally

United States Events

- Many people were killed as a terrorist's car bomb blew up the Oklahoma City federal building. Timothy McVeigh was arrested as a suspect.
- A Los Angeles jury found O.J. Simpson not guilty of murder charges
- The Million Man March drew hundreds of thousands of black men to the capital

Sports and Entertainment

- The San Francisco 49ers won the superbowl; The Atlanta Braves won the World Series; The Houston Rockets won the NBA Championship; The New Jersey Devils won the Stanley Cup
- Steffi Graf and Pete Sampras won Wimbledon
- The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame museum opened in Cleveland
- Forrest Gump won the Academy Award for Best Picture while Sherly Crow's "All I Wanna Do" won the Grammy for the Record of the Year

[And the Year Was...](#)

Alumni News

Did you meet the love of your life at free swim? Did you share your first kiss at milk squad? If you met your significant other at camp, we want to know about it! Camp Harlam is now honoring all camp couples on our Alumni website. If you are interested in being listed, please email Nina Golboro at NGolboro@urj.org with your names (maiden included), address, anniversary and any other information you would like to share. Let us help you celebrate your fond memories!

You can view the webpage at http://harlam.urjcamp.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=1865&pge_prg_id=6419&pge_id=1162 to see if you are listed in our official log!

***Please note that only names and wedding date will be listed online.**

Weddings and Engagements

Harlam Alum Rebecca Brown was married to Charlie Fadem on October 17, 2009.

Harlam Alum Caroline Kallman got engaged to Keith Joffe on February 15, 2010.

Jill Finkelstein and Jason Kleinman (both Camp Harlam Alums!) got engaged on February 20, 2010.

Matthew Soffer and Nicole Vengrove got engaged on Sunday, March 21, 2010. They are both Harlam alums!

Births

Yael Harel and Oded Kleinman, who met while schlichim at camp in 2004, had twin girls Omer And Maayan on November 19th 2009. They were featured on cnn, which you can see by clicking [here](#).

Camp Harlam alum Amy (Nissim) Kagan and her husband Jeffrey Kagan welcomed a baby girl, Sophie Michal Kagan, on February 21, 2010.

Camp Harlam alums Ben and Lisa (Bieber) David welcomed a baby boy, Elijah Nathan David, on April 5, 2010.

Passings

Samuel Brody, father of Harlam Alum Jeff Brody, passed away on January 10th, 2010. We'd like to extend our condolences to the whole Brody family.

Harlam Alum Make Documentary Movie *Mifgash: Encountering Jewish Identity in the 21st Century*

The following section was written by Seth Kroll, a Camp Harlam Alum, who, along with Dan Levine, is documenting and producing "Mifgash: Encountering Jewish Identity in the 21st Century".

Taglit: Birthright Israel is undoubtedly a revolutionary program within the Jewish world. In ten years, nearly a quarter of a million young Jews between the ages of 18 and 26, who have never been on a peer trip to Israel, have been touched by it. Quantitative research shows that participants return from these trips with a new sense of inspiration about their Jewish identity. And even though Camp Harlam provides a peer trip to Israel between Chavurah and CIT summers, which would disqualify someone from later going on Birthright, many members of the Camp Harlam family have participated on the Birthright program.

For the past two and a half years Dan Levine and I have been making, "*Mifgash: Encountering Jewish Identity in the 21st Century*," which will be the first feature length documentary about Taglit: Birthright Israel, how and why it has a profound affect on its participants, and what this means for the future of the Jewish community. Mifgash follows the story of one particular bus of participants, highlighting the challenging, enlightening, and ultimately life changing moments as they question, reflect, and grapple with their own Jewish identity. Among others, the film features interviews with philanthropists Charles Bronfman, Michael Steinhardt, and Lynn Shusterman; Israeli Knesset members Yossie Beilin and Isaac Herzog; Jewish Federation leader Barry Shrage; and Brandeis University Jewish social researcher Professor Leonard Saxe.

For both Dan and me, the Camp Harlam community has been a continual source of inspiration and encouragement, as well as being a primary force in developing our sense of Jewish identity and community. As we complete the editing phase of this film, we are appealing to the Camp Harlam community for additional support. In order to license music and archival footage, have the film color corrected and the audio professionally mixed, and to ensure we are able to submit Mifgash to Jewish film festivals throughout North America and Israel we need to raise additional funds. We are collecting pledges to complete this project through [Kickstarter.com](http://kck.st/aNHJdH), which is an online fundraising platform for creative projects. To learn more about the film, watch the trailer, and make a pledge, please visit our Kickstarter page at <http://kck.st/aNHJdH>.



Left to right: Sarah Binder, Julie Malyn, Jessie Jacobson, and Rachel Horn enjoying falafel in the Old City; Andrew Kahner; Ira Rosenberg, Seth Podell, Alan Neuhauser, Rachel Horn, Sarah Binder, Jessie Jacobson, Dan Cate, Meredith Rosenberg, Julie Malyn, Darian Healy

Andrew Kahner

1. What years did you attend camp and in what capacity?

Hmm, don't recall the years...I graduated HS in 1999 and was at Camp Harlam for Galil (junior Camp), K'Far Noar, and Chavurah second sessions.

2. When did you go on the Birthright trip to Israel?

Winter 2000

3. What impact did Birthright have on you?

Reconnection to my Jewish identity, made it important to my daily life as a single adult living in New York City. Similar impact as a Bar Mitzvah: Body, Mind, and Soul experience. In addition, it gave me a sense of pride and better understanding of Israel as a nation of blended cultures and provided a direct link to our past as a people.

4. Having gone to camp and interacted with the Israeli staff, did they give you an accurate feel of what Israel was really like?

Yes, I believe so. They told us interesting stories, shared their experiences, and showed us the culture of Israelis; whether it was cooking, prayer, or the arts.

5. Has going on birthright changed your perspective on Israel?

Yes, better understanding of the land, its people and history; incomparable to watching the news and media coverage.

6. Did the trip impact your life once you arrived back home?

Yes, I participate in the Jewish community of New York through the Jewish Enrichment Center. I volunteer in different pro-Israel groups such as AIPAC, Dror for Wounded Israeli Soldiers, and several Young Jewish Professional committees.

7. What do you know now that you wish you knew before you went on Birthright?

I would have liked to have known more information about the geographic and culture of present day Israel, rather than simply the holidays, rituals, and stories of the Torah.

8. Going back to camp, how would you explain your trip to Israel to Arava kids?

Arava? It's an invaluable experience. Changes your perception of the world and makes you appreciate the current environment we live in and how well we have it as Jewish-Americans.

9. What would you tell someone who is undecided about going - someone who wants to go, but doesn't understand the security situation and is a bit scared?

Israel felt safer than the streets of NY City. The people are friendly and the soldiers that act as our guides ensure we do not come within the vicinity of hostile territories. I never felt my well-being was at risk. Of course nothing comes without some degree of risk but this is truly a reward that far outweighs the concerns. I'm sure there are statistics that show no issues on any past trips.

I'd also share my wallet story, how it was lost in a cab and returned to me by the driver who found me in a nightclub 20 minutes later. Where else in the world would someone be that honest. Lastly, my parents have been now and loved the experience more than any other place they've ever visited. They too had the same skepticism when I told them I was going ten years ago to visit the homeland. If any child is dealing with resistance from parents, I'd bet the parents have either not been to Israel themselves or do not fully understand the current situation and may have personal reasons to address.

10. What was your favorite part of the trip?

Our group held Shabbat one evening at the Western Wall and also participated in an orthodox wedding at the Western Wall while in Jerusalem.

11. What do you do now with your life?

Financial Advisor at UBS. I use my expertise and talent to help individuals, families, businesses, and non-profits of my community with their financial matters so they are protected and can focus on enjoying life.

12. If you could sit in a room with the sponsors of Birthright, what would you tell them...or ask them?

I have already...I'd thank them for their generous contribution and ask what I could do to pass the experience forward. I currently sit on the Birthright Israel committee in New York. Our objective is to produce self-funded organized trips through the donations of Birthright Israel alumni.

13. Anything else to add?

Seth Kroll rocks my world.

Rachel Horn

1. What years did you attend camp and in what capacity?

2004-2010 (2004-CIT, 2005-2010-Staff Member; Assistant Unit Head 2008 & 2009, Unit Head 2010)

2. When did you go on the Birthright trip to Israel?

June 2006

3. What impact did Birthright have on you?

It was a great opportunity to travel with my camp friends, experience Israel, and made me want to come back and spend more time in Israel, specifically in Jerusalem, which was my favorite city on the Birthright tour.

4. Having gone to camp and interacted with the Israeli staff, did they give you an accurate feel of what Israel was really like?

Yes; Israeli staff always gave me the impression that beyond wanting to experience Jewish life in America, they really wanted to educate American Jews about Jewish life in Israel and the possibilities for living and learning in Israel. While traveling on Birthright, so many of the Israelis we met and toured with, as well as the soldiers who joined our trip, wanted to help us learn about Israel, from the history and culture to the smallest detail of their everyday lives. Whether at camp or on Birthright, Israelis really want Americans to get to know Israel inside and out.

5. Has going on birthright changed your perspective on Israel?

Our Birthright trip was such a whirlwind that it was hard to get a distinct impression of the country; the two impressions that stuck out the most were how close I felt to Israel and how important it is to have a continuing relationship with Israel. Traveling there even for a short time helped develop the connection that I felt with Israel and cement my feelings that it is the Jewish homeland. I also knew that it was important for me to return and spend more time living in the country, which helped me decide to spend my junior year abroad in Israel.

6. Did the trip impact your life once you arrived back home?

I had a really personal connection with Israel because I traveled through and learned about the country with my camp friends. I also really missed Israel when I came home and couldn't wait to go back.

7. What do you know now that you wish you knew before you went on Birthright?

I wish that I knew how many types of trips were available through Birthright. I was really happy to be able to travel with my camp friends by traveling with a Keshet Birthright trip, but I think that I might have chosen a trip with a specific focus (like nature, volunteerism, kibbutzim, etc) if I had known about those options.

8. Is it true that Israelis are pretty bad drivers?

Israelis are terrible drivers; the roads are really narrow and don't follow any specific road plan, and the cars are all so tiny!

9. Going back to camp, how would you explain your trip to Israel to Arava kids?

I would emphasize how amazing it was to experience Israel with my friends from camp, and how that definitely strengthened my connection to the country. I would also talk about how incredible it is that so many Jewish individuals and businesses are committed to making sure that every Jewish student has the opportunity to travel to Israel and form his or her own bond with the Jewish homeland.

10. What would you tell someone who is undecided about going - someone who wants to go, but doesn't understand the security situation and is a bit scared?

When we were at the Kotel, there was a bomb scare. The soldiers were so efficient at clearing the area and solving the problem that I never felt unsafe. The irony is that because of the concerns, security is much more efficient than it is anywhere else, and I never felt insecure, even during my semester there.

11. What was your favorite part of the trip?

I loved spending Shabbat in Jerusalem. It was so peaceful and I felt such a strong connection to my religion, watching so many Jews gather at the Kotel. I also loved our trip to S'fat; it is a uniquely beautiful city with such a strong blend of religion, artistry, and culture.

12. What do you do now with your life?

I currently work as the Youth Programming Director at Congregation Shaarai Shomayim in Lancaster, PA. I am going back to camp in Summer 2010 as a Unit Head, and I will be starting law school in the fall.

13. If you could sit in a room with the sponsors of Birthright, what would you tell them...or ask them?

I would tell them how amazing their commitment to strengthening the connection between American Jews and Israel is, and I would ask them about their own personal experiences in Israel and why they feel so strongly about passing that gift on to others.

14. Anything else to add?

Go to Israel!

Ira Rosenberg

1. What years did you attend camp and in what capacity?

I attended camp from 1997-2009 as a camper and worked on staff for five summers.

2. When did you go on the Birthright trip to Israel?

I went on my Birthright trip in May 2006.

3. What impact did Birthright have on you?

Birthright had a great impact on me. For one, I did not go on the NFTY Israel trip, so Birthright allowed me to go on an Israel trip with all of my camp friends. Birthright also allowed me to visit Israel for the first time.

4. Having gone to camp and interacted with the Israeli staff, did they give you an accurate feel of what Israel was really like?

Working with Israeli staff gives you some sense of what Israel is like but it is difficult to understand without seeing it. Being able to visit them in Israel with Birthright and having them show me their home was a really cool experience.

5. Has going on birthright changed your perspective on Israel?

Going on birthright definitely changed my perspective on Israel. I had always wanted to visit Israel but I really understood how important Israel is to our people when I visited with Birthright.

6. Did the trip impact your life once you arrived back home?

I wouldn't say the trip impacted my life once I arrived back home but it made me want to go back to Israel on a regular basis.

7. What do you know now that you wish you knew before you went on Birthright?

I never truly understood the connection between Israel and the Jewish people until I went there and experienced it.

8. Is it true that Israelis are pretty bad drivers?

Not at all! They are able to drive huge buses around mountains with no railings!

9. Going back to camp, how would you explain your trip to Israel to Arava kids?

I would tell them that they should absolutely visit Israel at some point in their young life, especially with their camp friends. It was a great trip and took us all around Israel. We saw all of the major sites and also had a lot of time to socialize and have fun.

10. What would you tell someone who is undecided about going - someone who wants to go, but doesn't understand the security situation and is a bit scared?

I would tell them that there is nothing to be worried about. I never once felt scared while I was in Israel. There was a security guard with our group at all times as well.

11. What was your favorite part of the trip?

My favorite part of the trip was when we were in Jerusalem and we toured all of the historical sites. It was amazing going to the Kotel and seeing all of the remnants of the Second Temple and the Old City.


12. What do you do now with your life?

Right now I am working for a not-for-profit organization called Pitch In For Baseball. I also work as a youth group advisor and teach in a religious school.

13. If you could sit in a room with the sponsors of Birthright, what would you tell them...or ask them?

I would thank them! Birthright was an awesome trip and allowed me to go to Israel for free. I would tell them their organization is doing great things, promoting Israel to many Jewish individuals who otherwise would not visit.

Thank You so much Andrew, Rachel and Ira, for your insightful views on the trip. Birthright is an incredible experience and we hope that it continues for many years to come! We are very proud that so many Harlam Alumni have been able to take advantage of this unique experience.



We hope you enjoyed this newsletter, but if you didn't, we'd like to know! So feel free to contact us using the information at the bottom of this email. We also like to hear what we are doing right! Enjoy the spring.

Warm Regards,

Camp Harlam Alumni International

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