Israel, we had many conversations about past summer, as we traveled through the 70th year. In Israel next we learned about the fascinating history of the country and the impact of Ben Gurion’s dream for Israel’s south into the Negev region caused by anticipated population increase. Building up the Negev and Galilee to relieve the overcrowding of the existing cities in Israel was a major goal of the immigration efforts during the 20th century. The program's goal is to move thousands more to these underpopulated regions through strategy, community, and awareness, providing space for Israel's underpopulated population. This goal will enable 16 million people to ultimately be living comfortably in a more populated Israel.

Sderot: The coffee in Israel is so simple! Here we have about 20 different options and there all the longest names in Israel. I usually drink coffee, without sugar with very little milk, so anything else is really sweet for me but the different flavors are cool, and I’m working on trying as many different Turkish coffees as I can.

While there are many differences and one of them is the food. I miss Israeli food, the salads, the fresh vegetables and the core ingredient of delicious food: Israeli olive oil.

What is your favorite thing about Cleveland?

Yuval: The Jewish community! It is so diverse and welcoming. Lots of families have invited us over for dinners and offered help to us. This is a great opportunity to say thank you to everybody and especially to my host family, the Gold family.

Yuval: For a long time it has been a dream of mine to be a shinshin abroad in a Jewish Community. Now, after being here as a shinshin for a few weeks and having experienced how significant it is, I would tell myself to never be afraid to pursue your dreams.

Noa: I want to do the best that I can in everything in my life. I want to be aware of what happens and be an influential person.

From Israel advocacy, leadership training and community growth, to professional development, NCSY and @akiva are dedicated to empowering Jewish youth to make an impact in the Jewish community. Visit www.akivacleveland.org.