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Welcome to ic.news – pages written by, for, and about Cleveland's Jewish teens!

In the section titled "ic.news" israel.cleveland.next (icnext) participants reflect on their 10-day Mission to Israel in June, 2017, and comment on current issues of interest. They are creating an ongoing source of news about the community, Jewish teens and Israel, inspired by knowledge gained from the icnext program. They will talk about Jewish identity, changing political, social, and

cultural perspectives of Jews and Israelis, the realities of the Israeli conflict, and more. There will be photos that document their 10-day Israel Mission, and those that document current events, whether in Jewish Cleveland or Israel. icnext is a two-year program that educates Cleveland's Jewish high school students from all denominations in core issues of Israeli society and the geopolitical situation in Israel today. icnext is a project of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, administered through @akiva.

For information about or to apply for

icnext, contact Tina Keller at tkeller@akiva-cleveland.org.

In "more.teen.news" @akiva presents different teen programs in the community. From preparing students for the challenges on their future college campus, to learning Hebrew and how to advocate for Israel; from theater (testimony.theater.cleveland) to music (HaZamir Cleveland), there are so many opportunities for our teens to form a special community. Most importantly, @akiva fosters an incredibly strong connection to Israel, and trains teens to be Jewish leaders.

ic.news

Wonder Woman

Before this summer, I would have been hard pressed to find a superhero movie in which the female characters

weren't reduced to love interests. But that all changed when Wonder Woman came out. Suddenly, I had not only a female superhero but I also had a female Israeli Jewish superhero. Gal Gadot, the actress who plays Wonder Woman, was born in Petah Tikvah to a Jewish family and is very vocal about what being a Jew and being an Israeli means to her. She's

a wonder woman both on screen and off, and her being Israeli and Jewish just makes this all the better.

When icnext went to Israel over the summer around the same time Wonder Woman was just released, I couldn't help but notice all the real life wonder women around me. The Israeli women I met on this trip were

committed, successful, and fearless. They spearheaded movements, they changed lives, and they showed us all what it's like to be a woman in power. Following are stories of real-life Israeli Wonder Women!

Hadas Galili (Cleveland, 2017)

Haredi Orthodox and Gender Roles



Tonight we met with Rabbi Bezalel Cohen, the head of Hachmey Lev Yeshiva, and Ms. Vered Bachar, The Society for Advancement of Education. Their presentation focused on Haredi Orthodox Jews in Israel and gender barriers within this group in the areas of education and employment. While Rabbi Cohen and Ms. Bachar have different stories about their experiences in the Haredi community, both are working to modernize its gender roles. Their discussion gave detailed insight into a different kind of orthodox community - different from the Modern orthodox community that I am familiar with.

Within the life of a Haredi Jew, a typical 3 room rented apartment houses a mother, father and 6 to 7 kids. Their biggest challenge is financial. Boys begin studying at a Yeshiva at a young age, continuing until marriage in order to learn Torah, prepping them to become Jewish religious leaders. Unfortunately, men leave school lacking skills for

everyday jobs. Rabbi Cohen studied until he was 29, then struggled to find work. He is now committed to finding employment and work-related studies for Haredi men. He was able to gain government help and created a Yeshiva focused on both biblical and general studies.

Haredi women are also struggling to get an education that will lead to success in the workforce. Ms. Vered Bachar grew up in a non-religious home. After the army, she and her boyfriend decided that they wanted to raise a religious family. With her 6 kids and husband, they formed a Haredi family, and as her girls grew older she began to understand the challenges of girls' education in their community. At the age of 40 she began 2 years of study at the Mandel Institute. That experience convinced to provide a school for girls with the kind of education she wished her own girls had received, and she is currently working on a school that offers studies in arts and

science for girls. This type of school will be new to the Haredi community and will open the doors to job opportunities for women. I loved this discussion! Both Rabbi Cohen and Ms. Bachar answered tons of questions about their community and its customs. I hope that both of their schools bring much success for the Haredi communities in Israel.

Jen Stovsky (Israel, 2017)

An Israeli Perspective on the Golan – Sarit Zehavi

To have an identity is to truly know who you are. It is to understand your roots and how they affect you. Major (Res.) Sarit Zehavi, our tour guide for the Golan Heights, identifies as a Jew, as a mother, and as a first generation Israeli. To me, she is a powerhouse; sharp witted, intimidating, brave with a heart of gold. Sarit served in the IDF Intelligence for 15 years. Sarit's father came to Israel from Damascus, Syria

and on the day of his Bar Mitzvah the UN Security Council voted in favor of the partition plan. War broke out and no one could come to his Bar Mitzvah. Maybe that's what it means to be Israeli, I thought - to let your story be a part of your life, as Sarit does. The Golan Heights is a very important part of her father's story and she involves it in her job and her life. Sarit went on to explain that during the Six Day War the Israeli forces didn't have intelligence telling them where the Wall was, they just went in to the Old City. She laughed as she explained this, "We had chutzpa" she said. Maybe, that's what being Israeli means. To have chutzpah, to defend what you know even if you aren't completely sure how. I thought about this as Sarit took us to a beautiful point where we could see almost all of the Sea of Galilee. But then Sarit started talking to us about Israel's mandatory military service. She said that we were



more.teen.news

Thinking About Jewish Life in College

On Sunday, November 19, 2017, @akiva led a delegation of 31 high school students as part of the community's college prep initiative to The Ohio State University. Participants met with our community's graduates including Abby Ophir (Cohort 2), Hannah Borow (Cohort 3), Miriam Bennett (Cohort 2) and Shane Strongosky (Cohort 3). The trip was led by Zach Reizes, icnext Cohort 2, and explored collegiate Jewish life, and Israel engagement on campuses. The itinerary included meetings with Buckeyes for Israel, AIPAC on Campus, Stand With Us, Jewish Center for Justice, Chabad and Hillel. The trip was sponsored by The William and Anita Heller Family Jewish Continuity Fund.

I decided to visit OSU with the @akiva trip because I have never had any interaction in terms of Judaism or Israel advocacy on a college campus. I thought this would be beneficial because soon I will be in college. During the visit I learned how prominent the Hillel is for many students reform, conservative and orthodox. My biggest worry about being Jewish and pro-Israel on a college campus is conflict with peers due to our views on Israel. Also I am concerned about handling any anti-Semitism in an appropriate way. As for joining Hillel, I think it depends on the Jewish community at the campus I attend but most likely I will join.

Anna Jaffe (Cleveland, 2017)



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From Israel advocacy, leadership training and college prep for Jewish students to HaZamir Cleveland Choir and original Jewish theatre, @akiva offers Hebrew and so much more! @akiva is a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland and a partner agency of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland.

For more info visit www.akivacleveland.org.



all nearing the age of 18, the age Israelis start serving. She said "So what does this mean? It means that at 18 you might have to fight this battle [in the north]. That's it. That's what it means to be Israeli." I stood there in complete shock. That's it? That's what it means to be Israeli? How could that possibly be it? But then she went on to say that "I will be recruited [if war breaks out]. I will be underground, I will be okay. But my kids? They have a problem. [They live] 6 miles from the border, and have 9 seconds to get to shelter... it's Israeli instinct." Okay, so is that what it means to be Israeli? To have the instinct of going to the bomb shelter? But then Sarit explained more about her kids "I let my sons go everywhere in the village by themselves... I let them live a normal, regular life... We don't feel all of this fear... To be an Israeli means to live a normal life, to not be afraid anymore." And that is when I understood. To be Israeli, to live in Israel, to be immersed in the country means to be brave in the face of danger. To move forward, to stand alone, to know what to do in times of crisis but to also know how to celebrate in times of happiness. This is the Israeli identity, Sarit's identity, and the identity of the Promised Land itself.

Hadas Galili (Israel, 2017)

Journey through a Special IDF Experience

As our icnext group approached the IDF base, Havat HaShomer, we were greeted by friendly IDF soldiers. I was excited to learn about the soldiers experiences in the military, but little did I know about the hardships,



and the difficult times these soldiers had gone through before coming to Havat HaShomer. This is a special base, run by female officers to help soldiers with "adjustment problems" prepare to join the IDF.

We were introduced to Tal, a commander and a woman. Tal works with soldiers (all men) who come from low income families, dangerous areas around Israel, have criminal records, and have adjustment problems. There is a longer course of basic training for this group, which lasts from five to ten weeks, depending on each of the soldier's strengths and weaknesses as determined by their physical strength, mental strength, and past experiences.

At first, I believed that physical strength, and obedience were the most important traits to gain from becoming an IDF soldier. However, Tal explained the importance of trust within the IDF soldiers; since all of

the Havat HaShomer soldiers come from difficult past experiences, trust has to be built between soldiers, commanders, and officers on the base. In November of 2016, Tal was in charge of a soldier who had been left by his father at the age of five. He had been sent to boarding school (not like our private schools), and he had been in and out of foster homes. He lacked trust, and he did not follow orders on the base. However, after three attempts at basic training, and special care and protection from the commander, he was finally able to finish his special training and become an IDF soldier. Although these special soldiers may lack trust in the beginning, they eventually finish their service in the army, creating a sense of humility, connection and success.

Leah Roter (Israel, 2017)

