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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

The Fascinating Cultures of Israel

As Jews, we normally think about Israel in terms of it being the homeland

of our people. Israel is and has been our home for the history of our nation. But what we often don't think about is that it is home to many other peoples as well. Traveling the streets of the Machaneh Yehuda market, visiting the holy sites of multiple religions in Jerusalem, and even spending an afternoon in a coffee shop, our Cohort was able to experience

firsthand Israeli culture and all of the diversity that comes with it. We met people - all sorts of people - of varying ethnicities, faiths, cultures and political beliefs. We tasted foods that were brought to Israel by people from all over the world. We listened to the music of Israeli teenagers and stories of Israel's ancient cities. And we saw that these

diverse and unique pieces together make up the state's culture, and is what makes our home so special. The following blogs were written during this time in Israel.

Ethan Geis (Cleveland, 2018)



loved by many, is loved throughout the world, but this had its own twist. Next, we tried homemade fruit smoothies. Fruit grown in Israel is used in fruit sprays and smoothies - unique flavors that create a marvelous taste. Next, we went to Marzipan, known as the best bakery in Jerusalem. We stepped in to try their chocolate rugelach. It was warm, fresh, and delicate. Every time you took a bite the flavor was so intense. Following that, we made homemade pita. Each of us took turns making the pita by stretching the dough out and putting it into the fire oven. It was warm and soft, covered with zaatar, representing Israeli culture. We then enjoyed Georgian cheese stuffed bread: it was warm and crispy, making our mouths water. Finally, at the end, we were handed cookie ice cream sandwiches. It was homemade ice cream in between 2 homemade cookies, giving it the sweet taste we all were looking for. This market exposed us to a wealth of culture and flavor, filling us with happiness and a celebration of all aspects of Israeli culture.

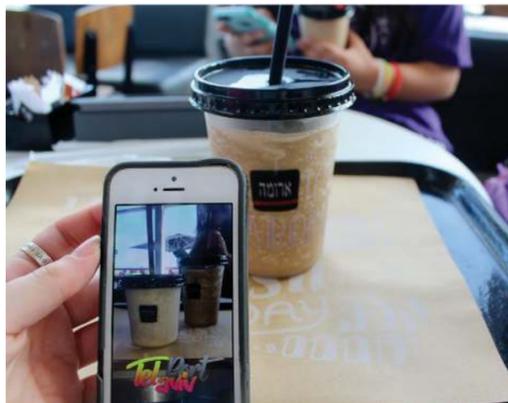
Ben Muenz (Israel, 2017)

The Taste of Diversity at Machane Yehuda Market

Today we took a tour of Machane Yehuda Market in Jerusalem. This was not an ordinary tour but a tasting tour led by Assaf Boker, a former commander in an IDF intelligence unit. He likes to introduce groups to all the complexity of Israel. All of the food we tasted had a specific meaning that intertwined with different cultures. First, of course, was falafel – the best in Israel according to Assaf. It was warm with a bold taste of chickpea and spices forming an amazing creation. This traditional Middle Eastern food,



My Afternoon in an Israeli Coffee Shop



Being sick during a once in a lifetime trip to Israel is quite the disappointment, but I was determined to not let my



constant sneezing and sniffing ruin my time in Jerusalem. While the group trekked through the massive Machane Yehuda market on a tasting tour, I was left behind with a pack of tissues and a glass of lemonade in a bustling coffee shop at the entrance to the market. People were coming and going and running. The baristas called out names to an earless mass, growing exceedingly frustrated until they just slammed the drinks on the counter. I sat and watched over the group's backpacks. But I watched not only luggage in that coffee shop, I watched people too, and while it was not a tasting tour, it was an adventure for my senses. There was Hebrew in that coffee shop, and there was Arabic, too. And there was English and other languages I couldn't even identify. My sneezes pierced the noise and the whole shop asserted themselves to yell “bless you” and “gazuntite” and “labriut” and other unique ways of responding to a sneeze. They wore such colors! Their hijabs glowed in floral wraps and their khaki shorts were stuffed with goods. Girls in crop tops and girls in burkas coexisted in that coffee shop. Over the tones of their chatter were the melodies of Israeli hip-hop. Some teenagers bounced on their heels to the music while waiting in line. A kid in a kippah mouthed along to the Hebrew rap. The lemonade was watery but the culture was rich, and I inadvertently learned something in Machane Yehuda that doesn't come from a tasting tour. That day I was no tourist. I was a fly on the wall who happened to

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On Friday, January 12, 2018, @akiva led a delegation of six, 9th grade students to the Club Z Conference in San Francisco. Club Z is a youth movement that fosters a commitment to Israel and Zionism among today's teens. The six participants (Ilan Amkraut, Isaiah Jacobs, Jacob Rudin-Luria, Avery Steinberg, Ezra, and Shai Galili) networked with and learned from educators who embrace Zionism, and took a step toward preparing themselves to address the anti-Israel challenges facing their generation. The trip was led by Danielle Frankel, @akiva outreach director and Elrom Kala, one of the five Shin-Shinim

Normally we'd spend our Friday at school going to class and doing work all day, however, January 12 was not a normal Friday. We each woke up 2 hours earlier than usual, and rushed to the airport to be there by 5:00am. Our group met to fly to San Francisco for the Club-Z Conference. The most memorable and interesting part of this conference were the speakers and their backstories. We found them fascinating because most speakers were not Jewish and many of them did not grow up with a close connection to Israel or Zionism.

The first speaker we heard from was an Egyptian man named Hussein Aboubakr. He grew up being taught to hate Israel. Eventually he became curious and decided to find out more about this “enemy”. He went to the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo that was founded as a result of the two nation's peace agreement. As he left the center a sergeant from the military confronted him about this venture and warn him about the Israelis. Eventually, Hussein made the hard decision to tell his parents about his love for Israel, and as a result he was disowned by his family and arrested by the Egyptian government. Since then, he

sneeze a lot, and I was able to observe without hindrance the music and motion of Israeli life. Not only is their shuk a melting pot of flavors, but it is a melting pot of cultures, stewing and steaming and evolving together. In that coffee shop, the biggest controversy was whose latte was on the counter, and whether to get strawberry or chocolate milkshakes. Even as I felt ill, I felt empowered and hopeful there. A tourist grandmother asked me if I thought her grandson would like an IDF hat. A teenage boy started talking to me rapidly in Hebrew before I could explain I didn't understand him. I am somehow grateful that I missed the tasting tour, because I not only tasted, I saw and I heard and I most of all felt. I felt love and connection among the smell of pastry and coffee. I felt heartbeats syncing to hip hop and Middle Eastern drum-lines. So I sneezed. And I sniffled. And I smiled.

Tess Kelly (Israel, 2017)

Learning on the Haas Promenade



moved to the United States, became a Hebrew teacher, and has continued his education on Israeli Zionism. He talks about how he stands with Israel despite now being disconnected from his family.

We learned that the Jewish community and pro-Israel community is strong in America. Even though it is strong, our generation is the pinnacle of defense for the next wave of anti-Zionism. We are so happy to be able to participate in the Club-Z conference because we acquired new skills how to advocate for Israel and our Jewish identities. We'd like to thank the Jewish Federation of Cleveland for making this experience possible.

Ilan Amkraut, Ezra Galili, Shai Galili, Isaiah Jacobs, Jacob Rudin-Luria, Avery Steinberg (San Francisco, 2018)



The city of Jerusalem is considered holy by many different religions including Judaism, Islam and Christianity. We took a tour of this holy city with Yaron Ovadia, an old friend of Amnon's from the army. Yaron gave us a tour of the Haas Promenade. As we wandered the promenade we had a panoramic view of the Holy City of Jerusalem. The view could be confused with a postcard, it was so beautiful. Looking out, we could see three major buildings that rose above the rest. The first was the Dome of the Rock, a holy site for Muslims; next was a white dome, the Horva Synagogue; and lastly we saw the top of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. From this view we could see these three buildings – representations of the three religions that see Jerusalem as a holy city. However there was another part to this picture, a large wall in the middle. To the Jews this site is a security barrier, but to the Palestinians it is the separation wall. The idea of this wall was taken from the fences in Gaza. There, a fence was built on the Gaza border that effectively stopped terrorist from entering Israel. The success of this fence led to implement-

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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.



ing this same technique in the West Bank. Ariel Sharon, the conservative prime minister at the time, did not like the idea of the wall but ultimately felt it was necessary for security and it was built.

We drove along the separation wall to see what it was like. The enormous wall made it difficult to observe our surroundings. This barrier completely blocked us off from the world of the West Bank. For the Jews it is unsafe to go into the Arab neighborhoods, but the Arabs venture into the Jewish neighborhoods every day for work. The fence is not simply a matter of security, but has become a religious and territorial matter as well.

Natalie Cohen and Noa Marcus (Israel, 2018)



**THE THIRD ANNUAL
@AKIVA COMMUNITY CELEBRATION**

SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday March 13, 2018 6:30-8:30PM

We will be joined by close to 40 teens from Beit Shean – our sister city – as well as the Cleveland Shinshinim!

@akiva Auditorium 26500 Shaker Blvd, Beachwood
Free and open to the community
RSVP to @akiva at 216.367.1388