



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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My wife and I have a tremendous amount of *hakarat hatov* for the amazing elementary school called the Mamad Torani Har Nof for Boys, which was instrumental in educating our seven sons. *Baruch Hashem*, they all have positive experiences from their time there, and they grew tremendously in their spirituality and Torah learning. When I think about the staff there, from the principal to the teachers and all the other staff, I know that they really give their utmost to be role models for the students there.

One of those teachers is Rav Gidon, who taught our son Yechezkel. He has since retired from teaching in the classroom, but his positive impact on his students was tremendous. His special talent that made him such an impactful educator was being able to teach through his gift of song. Children would come home singing entire paragraphs of Torah, *mishnayot*, *gemara*, and so on, through the songs that he taught them.

One of the songs that he taught them, which I remember well 13 years later, is the blessings that Yaakov Avinu gave his children in this week's *parsha*. The reason it was so memorable was that six year old Yechezkel would come home after school, stand on a chair and proudly sing this song to everyone.

Now, I know what songs I was singing in the third grade. Believe me, they were not entire stories of the Torah, and if I did sing a Hebrew song, growing up in America, I certainly did not understand what I was saying. Yet, here was my son, an Israeli child, proudly singing the blessings and really understanding the words that were coming out of his mouth.

In my opinion, this is exactly the reason Yaakov Avinu gave the *brachot* in the first place. He knew his sons were the future of the Jewish people. He wanted to pass along to them the charge to take their unique attributes and focus them in a positive way for the Jewish nation and for their *avodat Hashem*. Yaakov Avinu gave each of them the right words, the right encouragement and guidance, that they needed to carry on the banner of the Jewish people. We too need to give the next generation the right words to express their unique talents to help the Jewish people flourish.

One of the great things about the OU is its focus on the next generation, from NCSY to Yachad to JLIC and so many other departments and programs. When I look

**The Ziegler Family and OU Israel
invite the public to a
Sheloshim Commemoration for**

HaRav Aharon Ziegler zt'l

Sunday January 19th, 7pm

Bet Knesset Hanasi

Featuring Reflections

and Torah thoughts

from family members,

Rabbi Sam Shor

and Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler

Maariv and Refreshments to follow

at everything our organization is accomplishing, it is evident how the future of the Jewish people is being shaped. 24 years ago, in 2001, my wife and I arrived in Vancouver to run NCSY there. Although I had worked with Bnei Akiva and other youth programs beforehand, NCSY was a whole new ball game for me. It wasn't just running activities on Shabbat



NCSY Chai Girls Shabbaton



Teen Centers Shabbaton

afternoons. My entire life revolved around working with teenagers and constantly thinking about how we could do more for the Jewish youth of Vancouver to help them create strong bonds with the Jewish people, their Jewish heritage, and the Land of Israel.

My children grew up from very young ages with NCSY in their blood. They would come to every single Shabbaton, to all sorts of NCSY events, to *shul* on Shabbat where they would see me running youth programming. I remember well that at every NCSY Shabbaton *havdalah*, or *ebbing* (where we sing songs at the end of Shabbat), my children would sit in the front row eagerly waiting for their father to speak. NCSY enveloped our family and influenced my children tremendously. Being around it, and really part of it, is something they will have for the rest of their lives.

With the amount of different OU Israel

Shabbatonim and programs and our family schedule, it's not possible to attend all of them. *Baruch Hashem*, we have incredible staff members who make every Shabbaton inspiring and impactful, and it's always meaningful when I am able to join them.

This past Shabbat, OU Israel ran a Shabbaton for one hundred 12th graders from our OU Israel Teen Centers across the country

In loving memory of
our dear Father, Grandfather
& Great-Grandfather

JACK BEER ז"ל
יעקב שמואל זנוול בן צבי אריה ז"ל
on his 35th Yahrzeit - ת"א טבת

May the Torah learned
from this issue be לעילוי נשמתו

*Cooki & Howie Maisel, Efrat
Lenny & Penny Beer, Cleveland
Ester Sarah Carroll, Norfolk*

in Givat Washington. *Yasher koach* to Chaim Pelzner and our Teen Centers staff on such a powerful Shabbat for our teens. At the same time, we had an NCSY Chai Girls Shabbaton in Yad Binyamin. While I wanted to attend both, this Shabbat my family and I hosted our Teen Centers staff from Sderot at our home in Givat Ze'ev. It was wonderful to turn on my phone on *motzei* Shabbat to amazing feedback from these two teen Shabbatons.

Over Chanukah, I attended NCSY Israel's Chanukah Community Concert with Shmuel celebrating 10 years of NCSY Israel which took place at the Nefesh B'Nefesh campus in Yerushalayim. Hundreds of people of all ages joined this meaningful celebration and enjoyable concert. I saw my own children (my four youngest) dance and sing along with such excitement. It reminded me of the singing we did in Vancouver as part of NCSY (with my older children), and how those moments influenced and inspired our family forever.

I *shep* tremendous OU *nachat* seeing NCSY thrive here in Israel. Its amazing leaders, Rabbi Yosef Ginsberg, Rabbi Michael Kahn, Emily Stemp, Gaby Novick and the rest of their dedicated staff, are literally building a program from the ground up that is influencing hundreds of English-speaking

teenagers in Israel. With the help of NCSY Israel, these teens, who have made *aliyah* and want to integrate in Israel, are finding their own place and getting the tools they need to succeed here in Israel. NCSY Israel is helping them stay connected to the Jewish people, their heritage and their homeland.

NCSY is also expanding its programming. Our NCSY Chai summer programs are getting longer, and NCSY has started single-gender programming called Chai during the year beyond the regular co-ed programming of NCSY Israel. NCSY's single gender Chai programming came as a result of feedback we received from parents and teens alike that they want NCSY's value based programming in a single gender environment. Seeing these programs thrive, expand, and be very popular, we can say to Yaakov Avinu that just like he gave a charge to the next generation, we are doing our best to continue his legacy and prepare our youth for the grand future that lies ahead.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman
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יצחק מרדכי בן ישראל יעקב ז"ל
On his 18th yearzeit - י"ג טבת
Beloved father and grandfather
We miss you so much
Nechama & Elliot Rosner