

American and Israeli Teens Connect and Do Good Together

This spring, middle school students from Tulsa, Oklahoma visited their peers in Tiberias, Israel as part of the Sovev Kinneret Partnership2Gether program. Not only did the teens enjoy getting to know Israel and each other, but they also joined together to help others – by giving toys and charity to the pediatric department of the Poriyah Hospital.



This March, students from the Carver Middle School, a public school in Tulsa, Oklahoma, visited students from their partner school, Amal Nofarim Ba-Galil, in Tiberias, Israel. The weeklong encounter was led by Lori Abramson of the Oranim International School.

The Tulsa teens travelled throughout Israel, visited their partner school, and got to know the Sovev Kinneret region (the area around the Sea of Galilee). They also enjoyed home hospitality with their peers at the Amal Ha-Nofarim School. In the process, the American and Israeli teens built friendships and learned about each other's cultures and identities.

Children Helping Children

A highlight of the trip was the teens' visit to the Baruch Padeh Medical Center, Poriyah to give toys and other gifts to the pediatric department there. The gifts were part of the Purim tradition of sending gifts to one another (*mishloach manot*).

Students at the Mizel Jewish Community Day School and the B'nai Emunah Religious School, both in Tulsa, collected *tzedakah* (charity) to purchase gifts for the pediatric department, and made beautiful Purim cards for the patients. When the other schools in the Sovev Kinneret Partnership2Gether program heard about the project, they were excited to contribute, so they too collected *tzedakah* for the project. Then, together, the students from Carver, and from the Israeli schools, Ha-Nofarim, Kadoori, and Har Nof, delivered the gifts and cards to the hospital.

Alin Avitan, who initiated the project, said: "Because of experiences like this, we realize why we go into teaching."

One Diverse Family

Following the encounter in Israel, Carver and Ha-Nofarim students reported that they learned about other cultures and, in the process, learned to appreciate their own culture. As one Israeli student said, "I learned that I am proud of my country and of being Israeli." Both Israeli and American students described how learning about their differences helped them to respect one another; "I understood how much is different between Israelis and Americans, and with that, how to accept one another, to connect, and to become like family." Another said that as a result of the trip, "I have a greater appreciation for other cultures."

Sovev Kinneret Partnership2Gether

This delegation is part of the School-to-School program of the Sovev Kinneret Partnership2Gether, pairing 6 schools in Tulsa, Milwaukee, Madison, and St. Paul, with six schools in Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee region. Oranim International School facilitates the program, which includes a yearlong joint educational program and building connections between the Israeli and American students and teachers via email, phone, and skype.

For example, in February, Lori Abramson facilitated an exciting virtual meeting between the Israeli and American teachers involved in the partnership. The Israeli teachers met in a restaurant, and the American teachers joined them via google hangout. Together, they shared highlights from their partnership programs. In the words of one teacher, "the encounter was productive, meaningful, and inspiring."

Read more about Oranim International School's School-to-School program [here](#).