



# Ziv Birenzwige

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Hey guys!

My name is Ziv Birenzwige. Yes I know, it's a pretty complicated name – try to imagine growing up with it. So I use an abbreviation – Biri, which is my grandfather's nickname from the Kibbutz. In just a few months we will meet to spend the whole year together, and I thought I'd tell you a little about myself before my arrival.

I'm almost 18. My older brother is 21 years old, and he is so smart that I still doubt we're related. At the age of 19 he got his Bachelor degree in Mathematics, and before he joined the army he worked at "Waze" (the leading mobile navigation app). Nowadays, during his service he is doing his M.A. I also have a little sister who isn't really that little. She is only one year, one month and one day younger than me, so I couldn't get away from being close to her even if I wanted to. Some people say we look alike, but don't believe them. My sister and I are similar, but different in so many ways. My father is a purchasing manager at a computer company, and though that sounds fascinating, he is actually the funniest and most optimistic person I know. I hope I inherited a little of that from him. My mother passed away 8 months ago of cancer. She was a very special person to me and also to everyone around us. Her

smile had a great impact on every person she met. The illness was totally unexpected, and we managed to fight it for only a short period of time. Ever since her passing I have learned that I'm surrounded by people who love me and are here for me.

On a happier note, all my life I've lived in a little town (it is called a "Yeshuv") where you feel at home everywhere you go. In our Yeshuv there is a youth movement called "Bnei HaMoshavim". I wanted to join it even before I was old enough. I would see the counselors come and sing songs and do cheers at our school, and I just wanted to dance and sing along with them even though I didn't know the words... Eventually I joined the movement at 4<sup>th</sup> grade and never left. For the past two years I was a counselor, and today I am counseling the counselors, and more specifically I am leading the young counselors in the ODT team. We do projects involving, well...ODT. One of our goals is to reach out to the kids that are more reachable through physical activities. For example, this Passover holiday we organized an IDF camp for the whole movement, and built an entire ODT area for the "Elite Unites". You can see the movement is a big part of my life, and especially this year.



The other half of my life is dedicated to theater. I joined a drama class at the age of seven (and of course – my little sister came along), and at the end of that year we put on a show for all the families. That was when I understood theater was my passion. In high school I majored in theater. As part of the final exams I re-wrote a play that is a spin-off on "Alice in Wonderland", and was so excited to see my text come to life before an audience.

When I told my family I'd been chosen to be a Shinshinit in Cleveland, everybody started to discover connections with the community. We found out that a part of my family resides in Cleveland. I also learned that the city right next to my grandparents' Kibbutz, Beit She'an, is actually Cleveland's twin city! I have to admit I'm very excited about my arrival next year! I hope we will have a blast, and that we will learn much from each other.

See you in 103 days (but who's counting?).

Ziv