

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

In the section titled “ic.news” israel.cleveland.next participants (icnext Cohort 8) reflect on an icnext “first” - a 4-day virtual conference held June 7-10, 2020. Inspired by knowledge gained from the icnext program, they write about this experience. 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@akivacleveland.org.

In “more.teen.news” @akiva presents 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 opportunities for our teens to form a special community, develop an incredibly strong connection to Israel, and become Jewish leaders.

more.teen.news

Cleveland welcomes the 2020-2021 Shinshinim - or at least ½ of them!

Not even coronavirus can stop the Cleveland Shin Shinim (young Israelis who are participating in a gap year between the completion of high school and their conscription into the Israeli Defense Force). After arriving in Cleveland and living in quarantine for 2 weeks, Guy Gibor, Ido Margalit and Ori Arnon are ready for their mission - to connect with our community’s teens.

Each Shin Shin comes from a different part of Israel, with individual goals, and a shared vision of volunteering in our community. Ido is a water polo enthusiast who is looking for tips on where to ski/snowboard near Cleveland. Guy is a beach lover who can’t believe that people swim in Lake Erie all year long.

And Ori is a musician and runner who hopes you can keep up with him. Dan Badnani, Noa Budin, and Daniel Shalem will be coming from Israel to join us later this fall.

Our Shin Shinim will work with students in grades 6-12 this year, using their experiences as Israeli teens to connect individuals within the Cleveland Jewish community.

Online or (socially distant) in-person meetings are planned. All three ShinShinim are available for Hebrew lessons, Israeli culture/content, and more. To set up a session with a Shin-Shin, go to www.akivacleveland.org or email svinokor@akivacleveland.org.



family, who didn’t know where to go or how they could escape the atrocities they went through. After the Holocaust, many countries closed their borders to Jewish refugees. Because of these closed borders, in 1951 at the refugee convention, the definition of “refugee” was created. It basically said a refugee was somebody whose life is being seriously threatened by political or environmental conditions. Elliot showed us a YouTube video of people who came to Israel from Africa in search of Asylum, not for work or to infiltrate the country, as some people think of refugees. The refugees made a good point that nobody, especially from certain places in Africa, would risk their lives to get to Israel just to work there. There is no freedom of movement or press in Eritrea. There are genocides in Sudan.

talked about how Israelis look at American Jews as family. He used an analogy: when you invite family over, you want them to like your house. Israelis want American Jews to like their house, meaning they want them to support the country. People don’t want to hear opinions from non-family, because they think “who are you to judge my house?” Israel is more likely to listen to their family, us American Jews. Ultimately, Elliot taught me that this is a global challenge, so we need to “think globally and act locally.” I appreciate that I now know more about this topic, and I will advocate to help in this crisis.

- Perry Gelwasser, June 2020



A GRAFFITI ARTIST, A REFUGEE ACTIVIST, AND ME

2020 - A menacing jingle should be played every time this year is spoken. Yes, 2020 has been a terrible year. But it is 2020’s fear-inducing connotation that makes its positive aspects pop out in bold. Although Cohort 8 did not have the experience of traveling to Israel and learning about Israeli culture and politics in the immersive and potentially life-changing setting that we may have, we gained something else. This “something” is extremely important in the isolating times we live in - connection. Our Cohort connected in an online seminar - four days in June of pure connection, ranging from wifi, neuron, and human. We connected with experts from Israel, and with each other all over Cleveland. We discussed Israeli issues and culture during this time, everything from the refugee crisis to graffiti art. This incredible range of information and conversation really broadened our perspective of Israel, enriching what we had discussed during the year. This connection truly bonded us during these difficult times.

ICNEXT is a cohesive unit...it doesn’t seem to fall apart even when troubles arise.

- Nora Igelnik and Sydney Moss, Co-editors

THE POWER OF GRAFFITI

Stop in the street, look at a sign, look at a building, take in the views around you. Notice the art on the wall – but not just any art – graffiti. Some people think it’s a crime, some think it’s destructive, but others think it’s beautiful and meaningful. People like these are individuals like Elinoy Kisslove. Kisslove is a graffiti artist in Tel Aviv that teaches people to look past the image on the wall and find the meaning behind it. Elinoy has found a way to take a stance on political issues, and affect the lives of people in her community who can’t or won’t stick up for themselves. She says that graffiti is long lasting and can make history; I personally think she’s right. It’s a way for citizens to say what’s important without being scrutinized by the public for acting or looking a certain way. Being anonymous is powerful and it allows any message to be seen without preconceived thoughts from the audience. In times



like today with the BLM (Black Lives Matter) protests, thousands of people gather rallying against the deaths of hundreds of innocent Black people, and many images of graffiti from these protests have been shared on all social media platforms. Graffiti provides a way for people to be heard when they normally wouldn’t be. One voice might not be able to speak to thousands, but one image can. We can’t change everyone’s opinions, but icnext is providing us with the tools we’ll need to make a stance and stand up for what we believe in.

- Jordana Turoff, June 2020

THE MIFGASH (VIRTUALLY OF COURSE)

The Stay at Home Orders have not stopped icnext from meeting with Israeli teens. Even though we are all stuck in different countries, we are still able to find time to meet these students our age. Thank you Zoom. The second time we met, each of us chatted about a symbol, recipe, or photo that defines our personal Jewish culture and story. Although we are all Jewish, I realized that being Jewish can mean many different things to people. I brought a Jewish blessing book that I received at my bat mitzvah. One of the Israelis brought a kibbutz sign that her parents had passed down to her from their time traveling to Israel. We both had sentimental objects

that essentially represented our individual feelings towards Jewish tradition and lineage. As we talked, it was eye-opening to learn about everyone’s unique take on items that represent Judaism. Even though we were in two separate countries, Clevelanders and Israelis were able to build connections and learn about how others value being Jewish.

- Charlotte Wasserman, June 2020

THINK GLOBALLY AND ACT LOCALLY

Tuesday June 9 - the global refugee crisis and Israel

On Tuesday, June 9, our group met with Israeli activist Elliot Glassenberg. Elliot is involved with the organizations Bina and Right Now which raise awareness and work towards a more just way for people to obtain asylum in Israel based on Zionism and Jewish values. At first when I saw the item on our agenda: “The Global Refugee Crisis and Israel: What’s the Story and What Can We Learn?”, I couldn’t connect the dots between being Jewish and loving Israel, and refugees escaping their countries due to life-threatening conditions. In his presentation, Elliot explained that today we as Jews have the opportunity to help others, just as we needed aid as refugees after the Holocaust. That immediately got me thinking of my great grandparents and the rest of my



From Israel Advocacy, Leadership Training and College Prep for Jewish Students, to original Jewish Theater,

@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.



ARE YOU READY TO LEAD?

Limited spots remain for icnext’s 9th Cohort! This Israel/teen leadership program, is a unique opportunity to learn about the core issues impacting Israeli society today, to travel to Israel with your fellow Cleveland Jewish teens, and to gain skills as an advocate, thought leader, and community change agent. Participants will:

- Learn about Israel in 8 Sunday seminars beginning in Fall 2020.
- Travel to Israel for a 10-day experience in June 2021.
- Connect with Israeli teens.
- Lead Israel events in your community.

Applications now. Don’t miss your chance to become part of Cleveland’s premier leadership program! Reach out to Tina Keller at: tkeller@akivaCleveland.org

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