

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: Tzahali Academy

Year: 2018-19 5779

Please present your activity report according to the following lines. The whole report will not exceed 2 or 3 pages (as word document).

Name of the Program: Tzahali Academy

Year of activity: 2018-19 (5779)

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Number of active participants in the program: 67 young women graduates of religious high schools

Estimated number of impacted participants: Over 1000 people when include the families of the participants, the residents of Kibbutz Ein Tzurim, the families that the young volunteered with during the year, participants of other Mechinot that Tzahali met with, Tzahali alumni and potential participants, and their peers in the army, sherut leumi, and other walks of life..

Give the actually state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):

Tzahali as a program is now on break. The thirteenth year ended at the end of June and year 14 will begin at the beginning of September. The 67 participants are getting ready to join the Israeli army, better prepared, with greater motivation, and a better understanding of whom they are and their mission. The staff is spending this season (July and August) reviewing and evaluating the year, planning for the upcoming year based on what they learned from the review and evaluation, and training new staff. They are also taking some vacation time after finishing an intense and successful year. There will be about 72 young women starting the 14th year of the Mechina on September 2. In addition, there will be about 15 participants in the initial year of Project Elul, a new Tzahali six week learning program for army alumni.

The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.):

As in every year since Tzahali was founded thirteen years ago, the year was extremely busy; complete with all types of activities, experiences, and leadership opportunities as well as personal, social, group, and educational challenges.

The 67 participants opened the year in Elul with an evening of spiritual and emotionally rich Slichot. On Hashanah Raba night Tzahali participants and alumni

attended an evening of learning together at Masu'ot Yitzchak in memory of Tamar Ariel Z"L. During the year, the regular learning included Torah, Halacha, Midrash, Chasidut, Talmud, Prayer, and Jewish Philosophy.

Once a week the young women volunteered in the area. This year the focus was in Kiryat Gat where the students worked with families who have children with special needs and on Kibbutz Ein Tzurim where they worked with senior citizens. In addition to weekly volunteering, they participated in special volunteer activities including; International Cleaning Day, Good Deeds Day, and a year-end special initiative.

Tzahali students learned about Israeli society and its challenges both in the classroom and through meeting a wide variety of people during the four educational experiential excursions (סדרות). During these three-day trips, the students travelled to and experienced different area in Israel. They learned about the area, the people living there, and its history. Additionally, they discussed its Zionist connection, how social activists there are striving to make life better, their successes and challenges. The four trips were to the Negev, Tel-Aviv, Judea and Samaria, and Jerusalem.

At the end of November, there was a special evening of intergenerational learning of parents and their daughters. The students informed their parents about how their year at Tzahali was going followed by learning in Chevruta with their parents. The evening finished with a sheur given by a Tzahali teacher. Prior to each Chag they learned about the Holiday and organized a special program. Prior to Chanuka and Purim the students organized an activities fair for the children of the kibbutz.

In advance of the Knesset elections in April, Tzahali participants heard lectures and held discussions with a variety of people representing different political views. This helped them develop an opinion of which party they most agreed with as they voted in national elections for the first time. The Mechinat Council organized a special daylong program where Tzahali participants and students from many other mechinot heard a panel of representatives from the wide spectrum of the political parties.

In preparation for the army, the students had a number of special workshops including one about suicide prevention and choosing life and another about sexual harassment. In addition, they heard lectures about battle legacy (מורשת קרב) and had discussions with army officers about the importance of army service and different army roles and assignments. The students also received spiritual and Halachic preparation for army service from the teachers at Tzahali.

As a memorial to the tragedy at one of the Mechinot last year, where 10 high school seniors drowned on a hike (אסון בנהל צפית), Tzahali and all the Mechinot participated in a daylong program in their memory. It was very dignified, painful, and important.

During the year, the young women spent ten Shabbatot at the Mechina including Shabbat Shuva before Yom Kippur and Shabbat Zachor before Purim. On Purim there was a megillah reading; a number of the students read a Chapter (פרק) from the Megillah for their peers followed by joyous dancing. On Shavuot, a group of students stayed at Tzahali along with their teachers. They teachers taught Sheurim and the young women told over "Chaborot" (thoughts) all night long. Another group travelled to the Yamin Orde youth village to celebrate Shavuot with the youth there, gave classes (sheurim) in small groups, had meals with them, and enjoyed the Chag together.

An important and unique educational feature of Tzahali is the emphasis on "group living". Each participant is part of a group, which sustains independent group life. They live in their own dormitory; have their own kitchen and dining hall, educational staff, and classrooms. Each student is active within her group and together (taking turns and in teams) they are responsible for running the kitchen, buying the food, preparing the meals, cleaning, planning and implementing social activities for themselves and the kibbutz, as well as Shabbat and special activities.

Much thought and time is spent teaching skills of conversation (sensitive talking and empathetic listening) and the skills needed for successful group living. These skills and experiences are very important for today's high school graduates to learn, especially as preparation for army service.

The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...):

Please refer to the separate Evaluation Report

Provisional guidelines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

There will be about 72 young women starting the 14th year of the Mechina on September 2. In addition, there will be about 15 participants in the initial year of Project Elul, a new Tzahali six week learning.

During this upcoming year, Tzahali Academy will continue to be an intensive experience. The participants will be involved in multiple areas of study and immersion including:

- In-depth, existential and relevant Jewish Studies
- Preparing the women emotionally, mentally, and physically for meaningful army service.
- Understanding Israeli society through meaningful dialogue with its different groups including four multiple day educational excursions to different areas in Israel
- Volunteer community social action activity

The participants are responsible for their daily schedule and prepare special programming including the "excursion/trips."

Project Elul's, our new initiative, goals are to:

- Reflect on and process the army service in a tranquil yet challenging environment
- Renewal towards Rosh Hashanah and the Days of Awe
- Preparation for life after the army
- Connecting to a learning community

The six-week dormitory program (from noon on Sunday to Thursday afternoon each week) will be coordinated by Racheli Weinstock and taught by many of Tzahali's teachers. The curriculum includes learning Torah, Talmud, Jewish Philosophy, Belief, and Chasidut. There will also be workshops on learning to choose correctly, developing healthy relationships with a spouse, self-understanding through creativity and art, and a Slichot tour of Jerusalem.