Matanel Scholarships: Experiencing Science – 2019
Activity Report

Name of Program
164

Year of Activity
2019

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Function of the Report’s Writer
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Give the actual state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):

The Matanel Foundation’s generous donation enabled 181 children in grades 1-11 to participate in the summer science programs at Israeli universities during 2019. The goals of these programs are: to expose students to scientific subjects, to improve confidence in themselves and their abilities, and to help them understand that higher education is accessible to them. It is our hope that positive experiences in the summer science programs will encourage participants to succeed and improve their academic achievements. Students participated in a variety of tracks, including: genetic engineering, microbiology, physics and astronomy, young doctors, robotics, computers, and mathematical thinking.

The main achievements during the last year of activity:

Allocation of places:
We received an allocation of places from some of the participating institutions while, in others, participation was on the basis of available space, as follows:

- Tel Aviv University – allocation of 20 places
- Hebrew University – registration according to available space
- Weizmann Institute of Science – allocation of 50 places for a single week
- Ben-Gurion University of the Negev – allocation of 100 places (71 students participated. We limited the registration as the price of the classes increased significantly)
- Technion – We approached schools in Haifa and the Krayot, however, there was no response from school staff.

**Participation (by institution):**
- Tel Aviv University – 6 participants
- Hebrew University of Jerusalem – 53 participants
- Hebrew University in Rehovot – 28 participants
- Garden of Science (Weizmann Institute) – 23 participants
- Ben-Gurion University – 71 participants

**Variety of sources for recruiting students:**
A number of bodies were contacted regarding recruiting students. These included: municipal education departments, schools, welfare departments and professionals working with the community of Ethiopian origin, and absorption centers. Some families were approached directly.

**Participant profile:**
We were pleased to receive extremely positive feedback from all the participating institutions (with the exception of the schools in Haifa and the Krayot, mentioned above). They recommended students with high motivation and academic ability who come from socio-economically weak backgrounds (children of immigrants, or from the geographic and/or social periphery).

**Funding for transportation:**
Transportation from the Rambam School in Lod and from the Guatemala School in Jerusalem was subsidized by the project. The Merhavim Regional Council and the Municipality of Ofakim funded transportation for their students.

**Discounts:**
We received discounts on registration costs from Tel Aviv University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the Weizmann Institute of Science.

**Contact with Noar Shocher Mada (Young Scientists Program):**
The collaboration between SAE and the Young Scientists Program was very positive and worked smoothly at all participating institutions.

**Evaluation and Challenges:**

**Evaluation:**
- The SAE’s program coordinator was in contact with program staff from the various institutions while the camps were in progress. Their feedback was
unanimously positive, and they reported full participation and interest on the part of the students.

**Challenges:**

- The participating institutions did not supply us with registration information until the registration date for the general public, at the beginning of May, and this caused a delay in the recruitment of participants. We attempted to begin registration early, but were unsuccessful. Some of the children registered at the very last minute.

- Allocation of places – Some of the institutions have reduced their summer-camp activity. In order to compensate for this, we need to strengthen recruitment of students in the areas where there is a larger allocation of places but a low response from students/community organizations (e.g., expanding our recruitment sources in the Tel Aviv and Haifa areas).

- Children from families of Ethiopian origin are flooded with available summer programs that offer more convenient conditions to the parents (close to home/ longer hours/ transportation). For this reason, professionals within the community were less willing to cooperate with the science camp program.

- Transportation – Given the demand and the problems with transportation in previous years, we assisted with full or partial funding of transportation in some locations this year.

**Personal Stories:**

We were very pleased to note the students’ satisfaction with all aspects of the camps, and the great gratitude expressed by parents.

We would like to share a number of examples:

**Tel Aviv University:**

We received a heartwarming message of gratitude at the end of the course from one of the mothers from Hadera. She proudly attached her children and their friends’ completion certificates. “Good morning! The children finished today and received certificates. Thank you for everything – it was excellent!”

A mother from Lod, who approached the program coordinator directly, expressed her gratitude for the financial assistance in registering her son, who studies in a program for excelling students. Without the assistance, he would not have been able to participate in the camp.
**Hebrew University of Jerusalem:**

A mother who works at the university as a security guard heard about the program from one of the lecturers, and approached the coordinator in order to register her son. She would like to express her gratitude for the “great gift” [her words] that her son received.

**Letter written by Yael Hendelsman, social worker at the Guatemala School in Jerusalem:**

“This past summer, fourth- and fifth-grade students went to a science camp at the Hebrew University. The camp, which was two weeks long, offered the children a high-quality, significant experience of enjoying interesting content that was relevant to them. They developed social relationships with children from other schools, and were enriched by the essential information they received.

It is difficult to measure the impact of the camps on the children’s lives, however, I believe that, in addition to enjoying the summer and having positive experiences, their motivation and academic abilities will improve.

I would like to express heartfelt gratitude, on behalf of the parents and the students as well, for the generous donation that enabled their participation in the camps.”

**Thanks**

On behalf of the students, their teachers and their parents, The Society for advancement of Education would like to thank the Matanel Foundation for its continuous support throughout the years for this important program, exposing participants to a wide range of topics and high-level learning, stimulating their curiosity and improving their motivation to learn.