

### Testimonies from the participants - MECHINAT HA'EMEK 2020-2021

“The Mechina year was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me. During the year, I encountered worlds I had never known before. I come from a completely secular home, and thanks being exposed to various Jewish texts, I was privileged to become acquainted with a new world, adding another level to my personality and identity.

I warmly recommend that each student in 12<sup>th</sup> grade take part in the Mechina year, especially HaEmek Mechina.” (Gaia Melamed)

“During Mechina, I volunteered as a personal tutor. The weekly meetings with the wide-eyed child anticipating our get-togethers made me understand the importance of giving and working for the common good.

During our meetings, we learned, played, and got to know each other. I have to admit that not only the child I taught blossomed from our meetings, but so did I.” (Noam Mizrachi)

“Self-management at the Mechina allows each participant to develop their personal skills and to perfect their abilities. Over the course of the year, I was on the culture committee and was responsible for arranging many events for all Mechina members and external entities. These events, in addition to being beneficial to all who attended (I hope), contributed to improving my self-confidence and my inherent abilities, and thanks to the year spent on Mechina, I realized their full power.” (Romi Katzav)

“Throughout the year, the Mechina staff warmly and lovingly related to me on a personal level in a way that made demands, but also accepted mistakes. The meeting with the leaders, who aren’t much older than me, but are accommodating and have special souls, invoked in me the desire to learn and improve and maximize my abilities to levels I did not know I was capable of.” (Ofri Shaysh)

“I come from a religious home, but I can say that my life is divided into two parts: religious before the Mechina and religious after the Mechina. The religious world as I knew it constituted “See and sanctify.” In other words, you do things because others did them before you. The in-depth learning I gained at the Mechina gave me insight into the depth of Jewish content and I can say that today I believe more and am also more exposed to all parts of Israeli society, its diversity, and the viewpoints that make it up. This could not have happened in any other way but through my learning at the Mechina which is not focused on grades or matriculation exams.” (Nir Didi)