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Tekoa Yeshiva-2014-2015

Name of program

Tekoa Yeshiva

Year of activity

2014-2015

Name of the report's writer

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Function of the report's writer

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Status of program

The Tekoa Hesder Yeshiva, affiliated with the Mekor Chaim network, was established in 1999 by Rabbi Adin Even Israel Steinsaltz, in Tekoa, a settlement in the Etzion Block, south of Jerusalem.

Yeshivat Tekoa, currently home to 100 students, boasts a family atmosphere, and an open and warm rapport between the students and the Rabbis, and among the students themselves. Each student is encouraged to develop his own path, according to his individual talents and abilities, and is assisted by unique tools offered him at the Yeshiva.

President of the yeshiva, Rabbi Adin Even Israel Steinsaltz, is highly involved in the daily life at the Yeshiva, and nurtures a personal and close relationship with the students. Rabbi Steinsaltz teaches classes in Talmud, Jewish thought and Chassidut twice a week.

Classes at the Tekoa Yeshiva are held in small groups, or chavrutot (pairs, as common in Talmudic studies), with an emphasis on independent learning. Students learn how to deal with various areas of Jewish study - Mishna, Tosefta, and Yerushalmi and Babylonian Talmud, and acquire high-level learning skills. Students are also engaged in the study of Halacha, Midrash,

Hassidut, the teachings of Rabbi Kook, the Zohar, and others. This is supplemented by an unusually wide array of courses and programs, including history, philosophy, music, and community service.

Understanding of the importance of the security of the State of Israel, army service is considered an integral part of life at the Tekoa Yeshiva. All students enlist in the Israel Defense Force as combat soldiers and officers, and during their military service maintain regular contact with the educational staff and their friends at the Yeshiva.

In addition to the "hesder" (active army service combined with studies in the Yeshiva) program, the Tekoa Yeshiva offers study programs for kollels (higher yeshiva learning), Jewish law and teacher training.

It is possible to enroll in the Herzog College to earn a B.Ed in Education.

Main achievements during the last year of activity

The main program in the yeshiva is the actual learning which is been done by three main ways:

Cchavrutot (pairs, as common in Talmudic studies), with an emphasis on independent learning.

Small groups – where open discussions about the topic is encouraged.

Classic frontal classes – where the topics were learned in pairs, are given new insights and ne points of view.

Tekoa yeshiva believes in "giving back" and sees the army service as something that goes along with Torah studies, hence yeshiva students goes to the IDF for meaningful service, where many of them prolonging their service being commanders and officers.

The Ambassadors Program

After their Hesder program many students of Yeshivat Tekoa go to North America on The Mekor Chaim-Steinsaltz Ambassadors Program. The program was founded in 2005 as an experimental program in Central New Jersey and has since expanded to include the Jewish communities of the Greater Washington, DC area and Scottsdale, Arizona. The program provides a powerful means for any Jew to "own" their Jewish identity in a meaningful way.

Mission

The mission of the Mekor Chaim-Steinsaltz Ambassadors Program is to facilitate and model how to love being Jewish in a deep, natural, joyous and un-apologetic way. Our Ambassadors promote and exemplify a living brand of Judaism, one that exudes passion, pride, the daily relevance of God, Torah and the land of Israel, and is rooted in knowledge and personal experience.

The Ambassadors expose people, particularly our future Jewish leaders, to an integrated Jewish experience, an immediacy of God and Torah in daily life, and encourage taking ownership of one's own Jewish journey.

Two Ambassadors, 23-25 years old, arrive at each community at the end of August and work throughout the school year until mid-June. The Ambassadors are trained in a diversity of learning methods and philosophies and are imbued with an appreciation that every Jew has a unique contribution to make and has dreams to achieve. The Ambassadors are extraordinary role models for all age groups.

The ambassadors working in various institutions of the Jewish communities:

Synagogues & Community Centers

The Ambassadors establish learning sessions with community members, and develop and participate in weekly, monthly and holiday programming for all ages. There is a special emphasis on programming for youth. In addition, the Ambassadors place high priority on establishing strong one-on-one relationships with community members, especially by visiting families on Shabbatot, as this facilitates the establishing of meaningful connections.

Day Schools

The Ambassadors join the staff at the schools as informal teachers, and act as role models, infusing classes with spirit and excitement for Torah learning. They organize special events for important dates in the Jewish calendar, develop special learning groups, and enhance the connection between the student body and Israel. The Ambassadors help cultivate programs that connect schools with their local Jewish communities. Special connections with parents are made, which then develop into ongoing study sessions as well.

High Schools

The role of a Madrich is very common in high school Yeshivot in Israel. A Madrich is an individual who acts as a confidante and role model for the high school student. It is usually one who is closer in age to the student than the teacher/Rabbi. The Ambassadors fill the role of Madrichim in the communities they serve. They will be available to students who feel the need to talk to someone; they will study one-on-one with students who are having difficulties with certain subjects; they will encourage and advance students in their respective fields of interest and will organize special events for important dates of the year.

Community-wide programming

The Ambassadors Program is inspiring communities with programs and special events at many different institutions, but we are most proud of our success in bringing communities together at the grassroots level.

Evaluation

This project evaluation methodology comes directly from Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz himself. Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz is involved in all aspects of the Yeshiva. Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz is in touch with all teachers and staff members of the yeshiva in the aspects of guiding, consulting and deciding in the places where decisions has to be made.

Moreover Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz nurtures personal and close relationship with the students. Rabbi Steinsaltz teaches classes in Talmud, Jewish thought and Chassidut twice a week.

Others

Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

The provisional guidelines for this year are; we hope to increase the number of students learning in the yeshiva, and enlarge the American Program.

We would like to increase the amount of the event that we do in order to keep in touch with

the graduated of the yeshiva.

We would like to expand the volume of the existing various programs running in the yeshiva.

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