

Shinshinim - Impacting Ottawa's Jewish Community through Israel Engagement



Interim Report
January 2018



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Over 450 youth in our community interact with our Shinshinim monthly, through Israel-based activities, at more than 8 different schools and institutions.

SUMMARY

Shinshinim is a play on the Hebrew words, Shnat Sheirut, meaning “year of service”. Shinshinim are talented high school graduates from Israel who are placed in Jewish communities abroad. This program builds a bridge between Israeli youth and Jewish communities in order to strengthen our Jewish family ties and build the foundation for a secure Jewish future. The Shinshinim program works by developing a direct link between Israeli youth and their counterparts worldwide, thereby bringing communities closer together, and personalizing Israel so that Jewish youth develop an authentic relationship with Israel. This moves youth from a simple love to a more complex understanding of and pride in Israel.¹

IMPACT

ShinShinim have an impact which is beyond the influence of other curriculum-based engagement programs which various institutions are offering. This impact includes elevating the levels of knowledge, emotional connection and commitment to Israel.²

A recent study finds “Interactions with shlichim (emissaries) from Israel are associated with higher levels of engagement with Israel because Jews who spent years in Jewish schools might have knowledge about Israel, but not necessarily a connection to it. The Shinshinim program can help make that connection.”

This study also finds that while relationships with Shinshinim may not be ‘transformative’ in the way that trips to Israel are experienced, but that they constitute a more intimate and a more continuous part of people’s lives.³

¹ Pomson, Wertheimer, & Hacoheh-Wolf, Study for the Avi Chai Foundation in 2014

² Several studies corroborate this – Hameiri and Shugar study of Toronto Shinshinim in 2014, and Pomson, Wertheimer, & Hacoheh-Wolf, Study for the Avi Chai Foundation in 2014

³ Toronto study on Israel engagement by Rosov Consulting, 2015



LOCALLY...

Ottawa's Shinshinim, last year Noga and Canaf and this year Idan and Noa, continue to create meaningful connections with members of our community, especially the next generation (with a focus on ages 6 - 14), bringing their Israeli language, culture and traditions to Ottawa. They have developed personal relationships with students at OJCS and supplementary schools, with families at synagogues and with their host families that cement the bond between Jews in Ottawa and Israel.

"The biggest contribution that Idan has made is the connection he has made with our students and staff." (OMJS) "Both Idan and Noa were very helpful and full of energy at the Chanukah party!" (Kehillat Beth Israel) "Idan helps some of our students that are reluctant to get going on a Sunday morning." (Ottawa Talmud Torah)

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

In fall 2017, the Shinshinim participated in the following:

- Working with the 185 OJCS students, 4 days a week,
- Working twice a week with 4 supplementary schools (Ottawa Modern Jewish School (41 students), Ottawa Talmud Torah (54 students), Temple Israel School (77 students) and Chabad Hebrew School (94 students).
- Special activities with Torah Day School of Ottawa and Or Hanesamah's Machaneh Shabbat
- Leading youth programming, celebrating holidays and delivering D'var Yisrael (Israel updates) in synagogues including Temple Israel, Machzikei Hadas, Kehillat Beth Israel and Ottawa Torah Centre.
- Hosting special activities with the SJCC After School Program
- Other community activities:
 - Presentation about life in Israel to AJA 50+ Creative Connections (25 seniors)
 - Engaging university students on Israel during holiday events with Hillel Ottawa (30+ university students)
 - Presentation at Federation's December Member's Meeting (30 adults)
 - Leading Friday Oneg Shabbat at Hillel Lodge with OJCS students

Upcoming activities include:

- Leading a team building session for youth during Limmud Ottawa
- Presentation about Israel Defense Forces for Federation's JWRP Women's Trip to Israel (36 women)
- Planning events to mark Israel's 70th year of independence
- Leadership development with over 70 FROSTY members from across Canada
- Integration into two more synagogues: Beith Tikvah and Adath Shalom
- Teen engagement through hosting a seminar with Torah High

INTERESTING STATS

Number of youth who have engaged with the Shinshinim to date since September

580

Number, on average, of organizations that Shinshinim engage with weekly

7

Number of host families since the inception of the program in Ottawa

9

