

Your Campaign Dollars at Work

Exhilarating and Life-Changing

by Hannah Slotin

Birthright. An experience that is made available (and constantly mentioned by their Bubbies) to young Jews aged 18-26. Jewish young adults are given the free opportunity to change their life in a very meaningful and spiritual way through Taglit Birthright. Little did I know, but the trip that I applied for and was placed on was about to change my life for the better.

I had the privilege to attend an Israel Outdoors national trip with Jewish students aged 18-22. I went with the perfect mix of some of my best friends from the University of Georgia, as well as new best friends from all over the country. Our group, Bus 132, instantly clicked and we were so fortunate to have the most incredible staff, tour guide, and Israeli soldiers around. The trip was amazing to say the least. It didn't matter how long and hot the hikes or days were, I knew that I was growing and becoming a more knowledgeable and passionate Jewish individual.

Our group ended each day with personal reflections and endless moments of enhancing our Jewish identities. We, as Jews, owe so much to Taglit Birthright. Although I feel that I started my Birthright experience with a strong Jewish foundation and identity, this trip greatly impacted my Jewish pride and connection to my heritage. My favorite part of the trip was watching Birthright connect so many Jewish teens to Judaism and Israel who had little to no Jewish identity prior to this trip. For example, getting to watch some of my new friends become Bar or Bat Mitzvah and being given Hebrew names were memories that I will cherish forever.

I am still in constant contact with my group—Israeli soldiers included—thanks to social media. I also had the amazing opportunity to extend my trip a few extra days with



Hannah Slotin (far right) with her old and new best friends in the Golan Heights.

friends that easily became family in such a short period of time. This trip pushed me so far out of my comfort zone, in the best possible way. I am now adding "staff a Birthright trip" to my bucket list.

We are very fortunate to have the Savannah Jewish Federation helping fund Birthright trips for thousands of Jewish teens around the world. I will never be able to repay or thank Taglit Birthright enough for the most exhausting, dehydrating, exhilarating, and life-changing ten days of my life.

Hannah Slotin, 20, is a junior at the University of Georgia, double majoring in Communication Studies and Spanish. She is the daughter of Susan and Frank Slotin. (Her 'bubbies' are Harriet Ullman and Vivian Slotin.) Hannah went on a Birthright Israel trip during the current summer session. Taglit-Birthright Israel, a beneficiary of the Savannah Jewish Federation Annual Campaign, provides free, peer group, educational trips to Israel for Jewish young adults ages 18 to 26 with the belief that a trip to Israel strengthens Jewish identity and is the best way to build a lasting bond between young Jewish people around the world and their peers in Israel. For more information, contact Jamie Cahn at (912) 355-8111 or see www.birthrightisrael.com.

LASTING LEGACIES

"She was just a beautiful soul," Arlene Richman Ratner said of her cousin Ceceile Richman, who died in 2014 at the age of 99. "She was quiet, unassuming and always had a smile on her face," Arlene continued.

Upon her death, Ceceile Richman left a generous bequest to the Jewish Educational Alliance that was used to establish the **Ceceile Richman JEA Fund** at the Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah. With advice from Arlene and her cousin David Cohen (Ceceile's nephew from Charleston), it was determined that annual income from the Fund would be used to support The PJ Library in Savannah and the Health & Wellness Center at the JEA.

'Ceil,' as she was called, was a professional librarian for all of her career, first in Baltimore and then in Savannah, where she retired. "Books were her major love," said Arlene. She also had a deep concern for the connection between the mind and the body as relates to overall wellness. Because The PJ Library provides a free book (or sometimes CD) each month to Jewish children ages 6 months to 8 years old, it was a natural choice to help share Ceil's enthusiasm for reading and learning. Arlene said that she and David felt that it and the Health & Wellness Center reflect both of Ceil's passions.

Speaking of his aunt, David said:

"When I think of her, I am always reminded of a passage in Ethics of Our Fathers [Pirkei Avot] that basically says 'we all should



Ceceile Richman

be pleased and happy with our lot in life,' and she was. That personified Aunt Ceil and that's why I always loved her so much."

Arlene notes that "Ceil was such a quiet person; she never wanted recognition for anything and she probably would have a hissy fit if this was known about while she was alive."

Ceceile Richman's generosity to the community will be felt and her name will be remembered for generations to come.

Create a Fund

A designated fund can benefit a specific purpose dear to your family or the community at large. Funds can be created and activated now or established with a bequest or other financial instrument. To discuss establishing a Lasting Legacy for your family with a fund at the Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah, contact Adam Solender at (912) 355-8111 or adam@savj.org.

SAVE THE DATE



Savannah Jewish Federation

2015 Annual Meeting

Wednesday, September 9th 7pm at the JEA

Investiture of new Executive Board
and Board of Governors

Awards and Honors

Updates on the Federation

Please plan to be there!

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