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# Jewish Educational Programming at Magen Avraham

END OF YEAR ISSUE 2014-2015

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## YULA Receives a New Curriculum

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Based upon the TaL-AM model, curriculum designer and Rabbinic Intern, Raanan Mallek brought a systematic way of bringing age appropriate material based on the Weekly Torah Portion to YULA students in grades 1-3. Next year, Rabbinic interns will have prepared material to work with each week.

The Jewish Enrichment class on Thursdays is broken up into two components: Torah learning and Aleph-Bet Yoga based upon Steven Rapp's famous book. The picture below shows how each day we would learn a new letter and then at the end of the day have relay races to see what the groups learned!

Magen Avraham hopes to deepen its relationship with TaL-AM in the future and include other components of their award winning curriculum.



1. <i>Tadasana</i> , the mountain pose—see page 33 for technique		א	7. <i>Pawanmuktasana</i> , the wind-releasing series for the hands and wrists—see page 41 for technique		ז
2. <i>Tadasana</i> variation, the rooster pose—see page 35 for technique		ב	8. <i>Vrikshasana</i> , the tree pose—see page 55 for technique		ו
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5. <i>Urdhva dhanurasana</i> variation, the standing back-bend with hands on buttocks—see page 63 for technique		ה	11. <i>Urdhva trikonasana</i> , the triangle pose—see page 23 for technique		ט
6. <i>Tadasana</i> variation, the mountain pose variation with arms extended—see page 45 for technique		ק	12. <i>Arduha chandrasana</i> , the half moon pose—see page 37 for technique		ח



**Congregants  
learning Torah  
along the Path  
of Abraham  
Path.**

**See the article  
on page 3**

## **Bnai Mitzvah Group Celebrates in Jerusalem**



This June, our Bnai Mitzvah students gathered in Jerusalem to put on Tefillin & Talit while praying at Robinson's Arch (also known as Ezrat Israel). In addition, we waded in knee high water as we explored the ancient King Hezekiah's tunnels in David's City. When the city was defending itself from the approaching Assyrian army in the 8th century B.C.E., King Hezekiah decided to protect the water by diverting its flow deep into the city with an impressive tunnel system.

"Hezekiah also plugged the upper watercourse of the Gihon waters and brought it straight down to the west side of the City of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works." (Chronicles II, 32:30)



## The Abraham Path by Amirit Rosen



Kehilat Magen Avraham is situated in Omer, in the Negev region, near the city Beer Sheva. Within the framework of the community's environmental committee, the Abraham Path Initiative was proposed as a platform for environmental and social change rooted within our tradition and with the traditions of the region. The initiative became a springboard for interfaith dialogue and for reestablishing connections with different religious communities and leaders in the Negev, in the hope of working for social change and environmental rehabilitation of the Negev.

The Abraham Path Initiative is a long-distance walking trail across the Middle East. The path retraces the cultural memory of the journey of Abraham, the legendary ancestor of over half of humanity, who is known for his hospitality and kindness toward strangers, i.e. seeing the Divine in every human being. *Avraham Avinu* dwelled in the Negev region and specifically in the ancient city of Beer Sheva where he entered into a covenant with the residents of Beer Sheva and planted a Tamarisk tree. As a result, The Abraham path crosses the Negev, putting Omer on the trail of the Abraham Path. In Israel, the path runs partially on existing trails such as "Shvil Israel" and continues on new "connecting" trails that the Abraham Path Initiative is working on, in order to create paths between different communities and sites relating to Abraham.

We have had the opportunity to walk on the trail, as a community, from Omer to Lakiya. Lakiya is a Bedouin community adjacent to Omer which is also involved with the Abraham Path. We also walked from Har Amasa, where we met with residents from the Jewish village who make organic grape juice with Palestinians from the nearby town. From the top of Har Amasa we walked down, on the ancient Roman road to the Arab village Derijat which resides at the bottom of the Har Amasa Mountain. In Derijat we had a tour of the village and its caves. The tour was led by one of the women of the village and we had an opportunity to ask questions about the village and women's status in the community. On Lag Baomer, we walked around the area of Har Hiran, we learned about the upcoming evacuation of "Um Hiran" a Bedouin village in the area. Between the sheaves of wheat, we studied the meanings of "The counting of the Omer" between Pesach and Shavuot, learning about the value of a process rather than an outcome. The Abraham Path does not only connect us regionally but connects us internationally with people round the world, who come to experience the Abraham Path. We hope in the future, that International travelers will discover Kehilat Magen Avraham as part of the beauty of the human, cultural and religious tapestry related to the Abraham Path in the Negev region.

The Abraham Path <http://www.abrahampath.org/>

**Amirit Rosen** who has just finished studying at The Schechter institute has been part of The Rabbinical student trainees program at Kehilat Magen Avraham. Amirit studied at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies and has studied at Ben Gurion University Middle Eastern studies and Jewish Philosophy. Amirit has been involved with the Abraham Path and in interfaith dialogue and is currently a facilitator at Kids for Peace, an interfaith youth organization.

## Interfaith Dialogue at Magen Avraham



This Chanukah, we had an interfaith gathering on the meaning of light in the three religions. Sheikh Khaleel Albaz from Tel Sheva, Catholic Father Piotr Zelazko from Beer Sheva and our Rabbi Yonatan Sadoff all spoke and sang about the meaning of light in their three religions. Rabbi Michael Graetz, founding Rabbi of Kehilat

Magen Avraham moderated the session. The Synagogue was packed with people in search of meaning and hope during these politically stressful times. One of the poignant questions that was asked was, how do these religious leaders view darkness in their tradition?

We are currently planning with Sheikh Jamal Al-Obra, who serves as the supervisor over the Imams in the entire Negev region, a communal study meeting with the Bedouin community in Hura. The focus of the meeting will be on the meaning of Fasting in the two religions. We hope this gathering will enable us to deepen our connection with the Bedouin community in Hura and deepen our understanding of the Month of Ramadan in Muslim tradition and the Jewish meaning of the three weeks of mourning between the seventeenth of Tamuz and Tisha B'Av.

We hope that forging these connections and deepening our understanding will enhance the presence of the Divine amongst us and will nurture the seeds of Ahavat Hinam within the communities. We also hope these activities will break down stereotypes and open opportunities for working together towards social and environmental change.

The array of interfaith activities, both in study and in trekking, has allowed our community to expand and involve people that the congregation had little connection with beforehand. Jewish people from Omer, Beer Sheva and the surrounding communities who desire to be part of initiatives where social and environmental change is bound up with their Jewish ethics and culture have been drawn to take part in such activities. We hope sharing these initiatives will inspire other communities to be part of such exciting platforms that deepen our understanding of our own tradition and of others, and give us hope in working together towards Tikkun Olam.

## Magen Avraham Celebrates Shavuot with the Torah

Integrating the different learning modalities is a foundation for excellent education. Our students hear the Torah (auditory learning) via the TaL-AM curriculum. But being able to see it (visual learning) and touch it (kinesthetic learning) brings a whole new dimension to the experience.

This year during Shavuot, our students saw what happens when the Torah is taken out and read. Some brave youngsters even took it upon themselves to read a couple of verses!



## Bibliodrama at Yula

Bibliodrama is the art of bringing alive the Torah in the form of acting. Each week, Rabbi Yonatan, Amirit and Raanan would find creative ways to play out the Biblical scenes in the weekly Torah portion. Costumes and funny accents brought many laughs this year from our young students some of whom participated on a weekly basis. We are hoping that the older students will be able to take this on next year.



## Integrating Art into Jewish Education

Yoram Raanan is a respected Israeli artist whose art was the focus of one of our Bnai Mitzvah classes. Bringing modern Israeli art into the classroom is an important way to show how our ancient tradition can be renewed using modern media.

More of Yoram Raanan's art can be seen at the link below:

<http://www.yoramraanan.com/>





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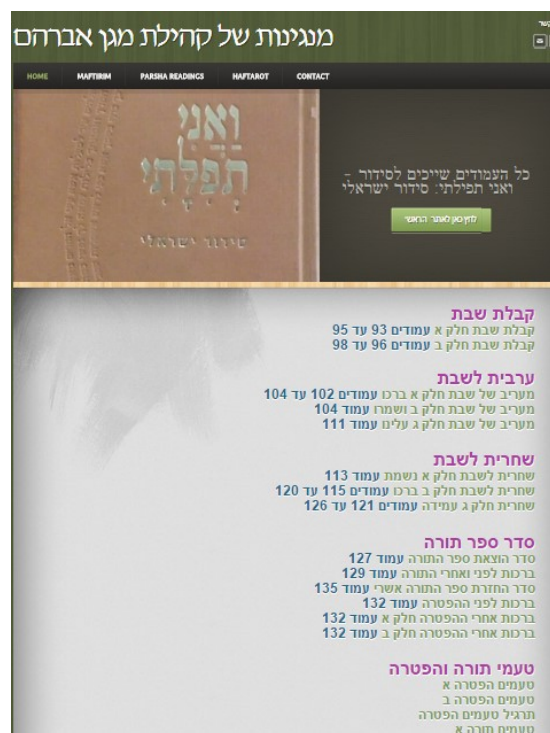
**“Magen Avraham is a Conservative Jewish congregation affiliated with the Masorti Movement. Our congregation believes in pluralistic and egalitarian Judaism open to all people whoever they are. Our goal is to uphold the great Jewish traditions and at the same time to question, revive and modernize . In the contemporary world spirituality can be expressed in prayer, education and giving, as well as through community involvement. We believe that inclusive, respectful and modern Judaism can unite Jews in Israel and around the world.”**

## Magen Avraham Receives a New Website for its Bnai Mitzvah Class

With the help of Amirit Rosen and Dr. Ed Spitz who recorded the prayers from the new Masorti Siddur “V’Ani Tefilati”, Raanan Mallek designed a new website for the Bnai Mitzvah students.

This resource replaces the CDs and the old recordings so that students can have instant access even from their smart phones.

The website includes Haftarah readings, a link to a site where you can create your own Tikkun (a side-by-side Torah reading tool), and much more. Take a look at the website today!



Check out the website at:

<http://magenavraham.weebly.com/>