

Makom High School Programs: Where Every Teen Can Find Their Place

By Sharon Katz Solomon

Here at Makom High School, we pride ourselves on developing fresh, innovative and community-oriented programming for our teens. While our four main programs differ in focus, each is designed to heighten valuable skill-sets and advance the lives of our young Jewish adults. We want to empower students to be active, vocal citizens who not only study Judaism and the Torah, but enact these core teachings in order to become leaders of tomorrow and to better serve our community at large.

Madrichim: Our Madrichim program inspires students to take unique leadership positions within our Religious School. Each teen is given the opportunity to shadow and assist teachers with the goal of enhancing student learning and overall classroom productivity. This special program encourages students to learn by teaching, providing each teen with applicable career skills and valuable public speaking experience. Students in the Madrichim program are trained twice a month before Religious School hours on subjects such as pedagogical theory, child development and psychology, and practical tools to aid both teachers and learners.

Limud: Led by Rabbi Rosenthal and Moreh Chaim Moskowitz, students in our Limud program apply Torah lessons and Jewish philosophy to modern day scenarios and their everyday lives. Limud Torah study discussions focus, above all, on Jewish values. Each lesson encourages students to put theory into practice, applying sacred and timeless teachings to modern issues facing our world today from poverty to antisemitism to protecting the environment. Limud students gather in one another's homes to connect and study on a bimonthly basis, while our Torah study group gathers two to three Mondays per month to read, discuss, and dissect Jewish philosophy, ethics and values.

ACTIV8!: Activ8! is a social action program with the founding goal of spreading love and kindness through action. Members of Activ8! are committed to making the world a better place via monthly service-learning projects and hands-on voluntarism. Community service, tikkun olam and social justice are all core Jewish values and a powerful tool in connecting with Jewish communities both locally and around the world. In the past, ACTIV8! has worked with reputable organizations such as Lend a Hand, Homebound, NOSH, and the Mid-Island Y JCC Food Pantry to support those in need within our greater Long Island community. This vital and action-packed program, led by Silvia Kogan, is sure to inspire your teens to "be the change" they wish to see in the world.

J-Teen: A recent offshoot of our Activ8! program, J-Teen is a community created for teens by teens. Each session focuses on educating peers about health and wellness through a uniquely Jewish lens. This program bloomed out of the physical and social restrictions brought upon by COVID-19, as our teens realized how many of their peers

struggled with issues such as pandemic-induced anxiety, the pitfalls of social media,

and future unknowns. What began as a desire to create a tight-knit community and a safe space for teens has evolved to encompass the overall student experience. (A few specific events or programs they put on?) Student leaders created an executive board based on the Activ8! model, including Co-Presidents, a Media Specialist, and Treasurer to share student feedback and create exciting and important new programming.

As you see, education can be more than classrooms and studying; it can become a total and an immersive experience. Here at TBS Religious School, we understand that while in-

class learning is an essential piece of your teen's Jewish education, it is only part of the larger mosaic. All four programs meet mostly outside of school to create a greater level of connectivity and community, and we are constantly looking for ways to improve, adapt and retool the programs we offer. If we truly want our teens to be tomorrow's leaders, we need to supply them with the proper tools and mentors, inspire them by bringing in the best guest educators and professionals in the field, then empower them to take the wheel on their own Jewish educational journeys!

Sharon Solomon
Educational Director - Community Engagement & Development
Temple Beth Sholom
401 Roslyn Road
Roslyn Heights NY 11577