



Hillel

ISRAEL FELLOWS: Strengthening Israel's Voice On Campus



HILLEL'S POSITION ON ISRAEL:

Hillel is steadfastly committed to the support of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state with secure and recognized borders and as a member of the family of free nations.

HILLEL'S VISION FOR ISRAEL:

Israel is both an end in itself, a core value of Jewish life, and a means to engage students in a conversation about themselves as individual Jews and as members of the Jewish people. Israel education is both an obligation stemming from Hillel's commitment to strengthening Jewish life and an opportunity to create meaningful Jewish experiences for students. (For more details, visit www.hillel.org/Israel)

Hillel's Vision

HILLEL SEEKS TO INSPIRE EVERY JEWISH STUDENT
TO MAKE AN ENDURING COMMITMENT TO JEWISH LIFE.

Hillel's Mission

HILLEL'S MISSION IS TO ENRICH THE LIVES OF JEWISH UNDERGRADUATE
AND GRADUATE STUDENTS SO THAT THEY MAY ENRICH
THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THE WORLD.



ISRAEL FELLOWS: Strengthening Israel's Voice on Campus

Israel has a unique role on college campuses.

Israel can provide a singular opportunity for Jewish students to explore and celebrate their Jewish identity through on-campus programs or by traveling to Israel on short- or long-term trips.

At the same time, anti-Israel groups use the college campus as a medium to advance their agenda through “divestment” campaigns or through high-profile events such as “Israel Apartheid Week.”

Faculty members often fall on either side of the pro- or anti-Israel divide, giving students confusing perspectives on the Middle East.

And the news media, which often portray Israel in a negative light, further muddy Israel's image on campus.

College students need help in sorting out these conflicting messages and educating their campuses about Israel.

That's where Israel Fellows come in.

In the aftermath of the Second Intifada in 2003, the Jewish Agency for Israel and Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life created a strategic partnership - the Israel Fellows program - to strengthen the standing of Israel on university campuses throughout North America.

Hillel has invested heavily in social, peer-directed engagement, believing that students are most likely to connect with Israel and to develop a sense of pride and passion surrounding their Jewish identity if they are exposed to the vitality and appeal of their young Israeli peers - individuals just like themselves.

“Our Israel Fellow has made sure there is always someone to represent Israel in a positive manner on campus.”

*- Miranda Bogen,
University of Los Angeles '10*

Israel Fellows Basic Facts

A partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Started: 2003

Number in 2009-2010: 19

Total Number Since 2003: 000

Hillels:

- Baruch College Hillel
- Berkeley Hillel
- Brown-RISD Hillel
- Hillel at Davis and Sacramento
- Hillel Foundation of Orange County
- The Tanger Hillel at Brooklyn College
- Hillel of Greater Philadelphia
- Hillel of San Diego at UCSD
- Hillel of Silicon Valley
- Michigan State University Hillel
- Ohio State University Hillel
- Santa Cruz Hillel
- Hillel at Stanford
- Texas Hillel Foundation
- UCLA Hillel
- University of Florida Hillel
- University of Illinois Urbana Champaign Hillel
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst Hillel
- University of Wisconsin Madison Hillel

"Our Israel Fellow isn't what our students typically think of when stereotyping Israelis. Due to the bonds that form out of their similarities, he has been able to gain access to their friends and student organizations for co-sponsorships and support, widening our reach on campus."

- Heather Erez,
San Francisco State Hillel
Assistant Director

Chaya Gilboa

Hillel: University of California, Berkeley

Born / Raised In: Jerusalem, Israel

Army Experience: Trip Guide in the North Galilee, working with other soldiers in unrecognized villages in the North

Education: B.A. in Jewish Philosophy and European History, Ben Gurion University

Professional / Volunteer Experience: Traveled to Russia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan; activist at Hillel at Ben Gurion University

Personal Interests: Enjoys riding her bike and hosting dinner parties

Areas of Expertise: Israel Advocacy and Balancing the Anti-Israel Discourse; Group Dynamics and Theatre Workshops; Bringing Jewish Text and Context into the Israel Discussion



ISRAEL FELLOWS:

Coordinating, Empowering and Engaging

The Israel Fellows initiative places young graduates of Israeli universities and the Israel Defense Force on campuses across the country, supported and supervised by local Hillel professionals and a Jewish Agency for Israel national shaliach/project manager based in Hillel's Schusterman International Center in Washington, DC, who together create a robust and multi-faceted Israel engagement and education strategy for the entire Hillel system.

As key members of the local Hillel staff, Fellows play a pivotal role each and every day on campus:

Empowering and supporting Jewish students who are already engaged with Israel, enhancing their knowledge base, and providing them with tools to initiate Israel activities on campus.

Engaging uninvolved Jewish students through meaningful informal interactions, personal story-telling and formal programs that help them explore their relationship with Israel in a safe and welcoming environment.

Educating the broader campus community about the importance of Israel and the unique role it plays in the geo-political arena.

Encouraging participation in Israel travel experiences and educational programs, thereby expanding the number of Jewish students visiting Israel each year.

Israel Fellows are dynamic young Israelis who bring their first-hand perspectives on Israel directly to tens of thousands Jewish students each year through peer relationships, organized trips, cultural events, education and advocacy.

They serve as Israel's unofficial peer ambassadors in the local community, providing opportunities for students to discuss and experience every aspect of Israeli life, bridging the gap between Israel fact and fiction, and inspiring students to forge enduring commitments to Israel.

ISRAEL FELLOWS: Making a Lasting Impact

Over the last seven years, over 100 outstanding young Israelis have played a pivotal role in enhancing Hillel's critical work in strengthening the relationship between North American Jewish students and Israel. Through their work with over 32 different local Hillels, on more than [200] campuses, Fellows have created direct relationships with Israelis and Israel for hundreds of thousands of North American students.

Their presence enables Hillel to engage students with the full vitality and diversity of life in Israel and to continue forging new partnerships and relationships within the University community to strengthen the pro-Israel movement on campus.

Jewish Agency Chairman, Natan Sharansky has made the expansion of the Campus Israel Fellows initiative a major priority in his global agenda for 2010.

ISRAEL FELLOWS ARE INTEGRAL TO PRO-ISRAEL CAMPUS EFFORTS.

Since 2003, Israeli Fellows have effectively engaged hundreds of thousands of young students, helping them connect to Israel and their Jewish identity, and strengthening student leadership to pro-actively improve Israel's standing on campus.

For many Jewish students, the Israel Fellow is the first and only Israeli with whom they have a personal relationship. They establish a presence throughout the campus: in residence halls, coffee shops, student unions, and wherever students gather, to maximize their reach, and make Israel a vibrant and relevant entity for students.

The Fellows personalize the Israeli-Jewish experience for their peers, engage them in Israel advocacy in a meaningful way, and offer a perspective not commonly found on North American college campuses. As a result of these interactions, more Jewish students are applying for Taglit-Birthright Israel trips than ever before, inquiring about study abroad programs in Israel and expressing an interest in deepening their connection to Israel.

"Our Israel Fellow dramatically increased the breadth and depth of our Israel outreach, and has been pivotal in deepening the understanding of complicated political and social issues facing Israel. By sharing his unique experiences with students, he has brought a heightened level of Israel awareness to our campus."

- Arlene Miller,
UCLA Hillel Associate Director

Uri Fishelson

Hillel: University of California, Davis and Sacramento

Born / Raised In: Born in Ramat Gan, Israel and raised in Rehovot, Oxford, Ramat Gan, Rockville and Tel Aviv

Army Experience: Served as a Staff Sergeant on board an Israeli missile ship as a tactical operator

Education: B.A. in Biology and M.A. in Diplomacy Studies from Tel-Aviv University

Professional / Volunteer Experience: Senior Youth Leader in the OneVoice Movement, which addresses the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by approaching the moderate majority; Took part in the Amit Project, which trains future Israel Fellows, at Tel Aviv University Hillel.

Personal Interests: Rollerblading, Scuba Diving and Mac computers

Areas of Expertise: Israeli Palestinian conflict, environmental issues in Israel, Student Leadership, Education



"Our Israel Fellow has helped us double the number of students who come to our weekly events, improved the quality of our programs, and recruited many students to participate in trips to Israel. With her enthusiasm and excitement, she is loved by the students, staff, and the Baruch College administration."

- Gail Phillips,
Hillel at Baruch College

Boyanna Grubeshich

Hillel: Baruch College

Born / Raised In: Croatia and Bosnia/Herzegovina; moved to Israel in 1992

Army Experience: Community Volunteer Work in Kiryat Moshe

Education: B.A. in Jewish Philosophy and Multidisciplinary Arts from Tel Aviv University

Professional / Volunteer Experience: Volunteered at Tel Aviv University Hillel working with at risk youth and teaching through text how to improve their situations; one of the founding members and a current board member for the Jewish Salon Network, a cultural approach to Judaism.

Personal Interests: Music and the arts, social justice issues.

Areas of Expertise: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Central European Jewry; Jewish Identity in the post-Modern World; Israel and Its True History as seen through the Eyes of Israeli Artists



ISRAEL FELLOWS: Training and Support

The partnership between the Jewish Agency for Israel and Hillel, involving close cooperation with the Israel on Campus Coalition's more than 30 national organizations working on campus, provides the organizational framework and support structure for each Israel Fellow.

As Hillel staff, the Israel Fellows are integrated within a professional environment in order to fulfill a dual role on campus:

They are one of Hillel's most effective resources in bringing the diversity, vitality and challenges of modern Israel into the campus environment, and they enable national organizations like Taglit-Birthright Israel, MASA, the Jewish Agency and Hillel to effectively reach their leading objectives.

They are in themselves a meaningful Jewish/Israeli experience for the thousands of university-age students with whom they establish relationships, adding dynamism, energy and, most importantly, an authentic Israeli touch to the ongoing campus work of engaging young adults with Israel.

Before leaving Israel, the Fellows participate in a comprehensive 12-day training and orientation conducted by the Jewish Agency. While in the United States, Hillel hosts an intensive week-long student engagement training institute that further prepares Fellows for the challenges they will face on campus.

Hillel further plays the critical role of supporting individual Fellows and the entire program throughout the year, with office space, technical and programmatic support, community contacts and networking, additional training opportunities, and ongoing local and national supervision.

ISRAEL FELLOWS: Leading, Relating and Educating

Israel Fellows lead with authenticity and integrity, directly impacting students through an impressive mix of educational, cultural and social initiatives, and personal relationships made possible only through their ongoing campus presence.

Israel Fellows make Israel accessible by sharing their personal stories and interests.

At Ohio State University, Shira Eshato shared with students her Ethiopian heritage and the story of her family's journey to Israel.

In Cleveland, Anat Fishman used her background as an environmental lawyer in Israel to reach legal students and focus on shared ecological concerns.

At Brooklyn College, Daniel Fishman connected with students interested in the environment through Tu B'Shvat programming and Israeli-style hiking.

TAKING A STAND.

Israel Fellows are strong advocates and active voices for Israel on campus, bringing guest speakers, facilitating educational programming, breaking down study abroad barriers, and responding to anti-Israel propaganda.

At UC Davis, Yonatan Barkan worked tirelessly with student leaders, state politicians and the University officials across California to influence the UC Board of Regents to reinstate study abroad programs in Israel across all ten UC campuses.

In Baltimore, Sivan Pardo effectively combined education and advocacy by focusing on the human side of terror through the X-Ray Program, an exhibit composed of medical x-rays showing bolts, screws and other debris embedded in the bodies of terror victims caused by home-made bombs.

At Ohio State University, Kasa Bayisin addressed more than 400 people at a Hillel-organized rally in support of Israel, telling participants about her two-year-old cousin who was killed in Sderot by a Kasam rocket from Gaza.

"Working with four campuses and the graduate student community, our Israel Fellow has taken students to Israel and brought speakers, movies, passion, excitement, and attention to each campus."

*- Rachel Heinman,
Hillel of Greater Baltimore
Assistant Director*

Leehe Ralph

Hillel: Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design

Born / Raised In: Ra'anana, Israel

Army Experience: IDF Intelligence Corps

Education: B.A. in Political Science with a specialization in Army, Strategy and National Security from Bar Ilan University; M.A. in Security Studies from Tel Aviv University

Professional / Volunteer Experience: Active in the Zionist Youth Movement; Took part in the Amit Project at Tel Aviv University Hillel.

Personal Interests: Traveling, Movies, Reading, Politics and Sports

Areas of Expertise: Political Science, Security and Diplomacy, Modern History of the Middle East, and Israel PR (Hasbara)



"Our Israel Fellow taught me that I could love everything about where I've come from and still be able to learn about and embrace other cultures ... she made me think about actually going Israel!"

*-Somdatta Das,
University of Massachusetts '09*

Michal Baruch

Hillel: University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Born / Raised In: Jerusalem and Mexico

Army Experience: Prime Minister's Office

Education: Graduated in 2009 from Ben Gurion University of the Negev with degrees in Economics and Management; studied for 3 years at Green Gates International School in Mexico

Professional / Volunteer Experience:

Continued to work for Prime Minister's office for one year post-Army service; Took part in the Amit Project at Ben Gurion University Hillel.

Personal Interests: Dancing, Sports and spending time with friends; fluent in Hebrew, English and Spanish

Areas of Expertise: Economics of Israel; Faces of Israel—Israel as a multi-cultural society; World Cultures



ISRAEL FELLOWS: Bringing Israeli Popular Culture to Campus

Israel Fellows bring popular Israeli music and bands, arts and dance that draw crowds as large as 5,000 students and expose them to the diversity and complexity of Israeli society.

At U.C. Santa Cruz, Moshe Alfisher coordinated a live performance by three Israeli stars of Israeli American Idol. The event included a live performance of Israeli songs, and a discussion with the singers about their personal stories: one singer came from Ethiopia to Israel, one from the former Soviet Union, and one grew up in a small town under the constant threat of Hezbollah's rockets.

In Philadelphia, Hila Lahar sparked an interest in Israeli-themed events on campus through a variety of cultural events including an Israeli Shabbat dinner that featured Krav Maga (Israeli martial arts). Students were so intrigued by the event that they requested additional Israel programming, including an Israel Art Night and similar cultural events.

At Baruch College, Veronika Lacktman engaged hundreds of students from 11 New York campuses with an Israeli style BBQ with a Jewish student DJ, belly dancer and Drum/Darbuka circle, held in a Manhattan loft. Veronika used the opportunity to promote MASA programs and collect personal information from the students, allowing her to conduct individualized follow-up and outreach. The event drew major publicity from Yediot Achronot, Mofayim, and Thrillist and recruited new active Hillel members and leaders.

ISRAEL FELLOWS: Recruiting for Israel Experiences

Israel Fellows recruit for Taglit-Birthright Israel and various other travel, study abroad and long-term programs in Israel. In addition to Israel program fairs, one-on-one counseling and targeted recruitment efforts, Fellows also facilitate personal and communal follow-up activities for students upon their return from Israel.

At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dikla Cohen worked hard to reinstate the study abroad program at Hebrew University, which was cancelled after the Lebanon war. Following her extensive marketing efforts, including palm cards, a web site, advertising on public transportation and promotion nights, long-term Israel program participation doubled the following year.

At U.C. Irvine, Tzvi Raviv led a group of students and faculty members on The Olive Tree Initiative: a 14-day trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories to meet with residents to learn more about peace and conflict in the region. The group included Jewish, Muslim, Druze, Buddhist and Christian students. The trip helped participants understand the complexity of the conflict, broadening their understanding of the issues, and exposing them to new perspectives.

At Virginia Tech, Tamar Cohen recruited the largest number of Birthright applicants ever at the university, and engaged participants to sign up for Talkspace Israel - an Israel discussion forum that encourages participants to think deeply about Israel and its relationship to Jewish identity.

At Michigan State University, Yuval ben Hai recruited dozens of students for Hillel's Taglit Birthright Israel trip, following a year of inactivity. Of those who attended, 90% were unaffiliated with Hillel, and remained engaged in Hillel programming upon their return to campus, including Yuval's signature Israeli Iron Chef program where students competed to prepare the best-tasting Israeli dishes.

"After participating in Taglit-Birthright Israel, I was interested in going back. When I inquired about programs at Hillel, our Israel Fellow was really encouraging. He even volunteered to give me weekly Hebrew lessons."

*-Adam Molner,
Michigan State University '07*

Amir Sela

Hillel: Michigan State University

Born / Raised In: Eilat, Israel

Army Experience: Directorate of Military Intelligence along the northern border of Israel with Syria and Lebanon

Education: Bachelor's Degree, Middle Eastern and Israeli Studies from Ben Gurion University of the Negev

Professional / Volunteer Experience:

Volunteered with Youth Leadership Organization and served as a youth counselor at the after school youth center "ELEM"; Took part in the Amit Project at Ben Gurion University Hillel.

Personal Interests: Film, backpacking, diving

Areas of Expertise: Modern Middle East History; the connection between sports and Nationalism; Israeli Culture and Journalism



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