

A Youthful Point of View:

Ori Israel Reflects on Seven Years (and Counting) at Negba



For half of his life, Ori Israel, 14, has been spending five hours a day of every week day at Negba. Much like his real home in Beersheva, Negba is an essential part of his being. It wasn't something forced upon him by his parents when he first walked into a Negba After-School Home in second grade, at the suggestion of a friend. He decided to stay. For seven years now, and counting.

"I arrived during lunchtime and they introduced me to all the kids," Ori recalled of his first encounter. "The activities were really fun and interesting to me. I haven't looked back since day one."

While the engaging programming may have been the initial attraction, the network of friends Ori made at Negba fostered his social growth, and it serves as a source of great pride to him and his Negba peers. "When I see my Negba friends around town, at the mall, or wherever, I get a warm feeling of camaraderie, of something special we share."

Over the years Ori benefitted- and continues to benefit- from the academic enrichment in subjects such as Hebrew, math and English through Negba's Learning Center. Yet without a doubt, the greatest benefit Ori gained from Negba was his personal growth, and his drive to contribute positively to society. "Negba is a framework that educates me how to be a good person, and how to do something of value with my life," he said. "When I eventually leave Negba I will leave as a decent human being." When that time does come, Ori intends to serve in the Israeli army and attain a high rank. For the long-term, Ori aspires to work as a lawyer or in law enforcement.



"Ori has gone through an incredible process of maturation as a member of the Teen Club these past two years," said Nadav Elhadad, Coordinator of the Teen Club. "He's learned to take responsibility and initiative in many projects, such as the cleanup and restoration of the Teen Club's courtyard, in volunteering at the senior residence home, and in the Negba Teen Band. Ori has become a leader and a role model for all in the club."

And Ori continues to grow each day at the Teen Club, where he feels "at home" at his second home.

"I love to be here. I'm here almost all the time. I love being involved in all kinds of projects that help people. It's important that we work and do something productive. Negba gives me so much, why shouldn't I give something back?"