

Ohav Youth Programming 2021 Report

While the ongoing pandemic has limited the ability to hold in-person social events, youth programming at Ohav has found ways to move forward and keep this population connected—both to Ohav and to each other. Leaders continue to work hard to engage our tween/teens with a mix of in-person and remote activities. Some of those events include the following:

KULANU: monthly programs focusing on informal Jewish learning/conversation

Holiday-Based

- Rosh Hashanah brought conversations based on the curriculum from Areyvut—an organization whose mission is to infuse the lives of Jewish youth and teens with the core Jewish values of chesed (kindness), tzedakah (charity) and tikkun olam (social action).
- Shavuot was celebrated with a few rounds of Torah Trivia, followed by a deeper conversation about Ruth as a Jew-by-choice. Prompts included the meaning behind actively choosing Judaism, as well as the choices we all make in our personal observances.
- Purim led to an engaging discussion led by a local psychologist about the meaning of masks in a program entitled, "The Different Masks We Wear in Our Lives: How it can be complicated, how to stay true to ourselves, and how to nourish the person we want to be."

Social-Emotional

- Shelley Goldman Black (Ohav member) and guest Geoff Miller led a thoughtful and insightful program about what it means to be anti-racist. The discussion on systemic racism and white privilege explored several critical issues: how to acknowledge our own biases, and how to become more aware of racism in society—including ways to spot overt acts of racism as well as microaggressions.
- Dr Amy Anneling (Ohav member) led an open and honest conversation to help participants better understand the Capitol insurrection on January 6, 2021.
- Jewish Disabilities and Inclusion Month welcomed guest speaker and Ohav member Melanie Hecker, who shared her experiences living with autism.

- Efrat Levy led a discussion about the political atmosphere in the U.S., with a focus on the characteristics/skills it takes to be a successful leader. Participants were encouraged to think about the impact of politics on their lives, both today and in the future.
- Additional programming included personal and inspiring stories shared by various Ohav members. These discussions were designed to engage teens in exploring weighty issues, including: gratitude, miracles, and the emigration of Ethiopian Jewry.

USY/OHAV YOUTH

Ongoing discussions have been taking place to build back the local USY chapter. At Ohav, more parents have begun to step up to assist with programming and planning which is helpful going forward. Program coordination between regions—both virtual and in-person—is another positive addition to the efforts of all USY chapters as they look toward a more successful future. Ohav is fortunate to have one of its own—USY engagement associate Jason Kay—spearhead that initiative.

The following events/activities took place in 2021:

- **Into The Woods:** Teens and chaperones enjoyed a hike at Five Rivers, complete with ice-breakers and a newfound appreciation for time spent outdoors with friends after so many months inside.
- **Sukkot Movie Night:** Ohav teens participated in this joint evening program with the chapter from Agudat Achim.
- **Purim Night At The Improv:** Local theater group MopCo led a fun-filled evening as kids tried their hand at Purim-themed improv. This event was held over Zoom.
- **Friday Night Lights:** This well-attended evening program featured team building activities, games, and a full Shabbat dinner provided by Ohav Shalom. Teens from Temple Israel were also in attendance.

Upcoming 2022 events:

- **Trivia Night 1/29/22:** Teens are invited to test their brain power with an evening of trivia! Members of the ECRUSY, HaNer, and Tzafon chapters are all participating. Beginning with Havdallah, this virtual event will feature the NYC Trivia League, a professional trivia organization. If you have a teen, contact the Ohav administrative office to register and get the Zoom link.
- **Snow Tubing:** A trip to the Catamount Mountain Ski Resort for an afternoon of outdoor fun is planned for mid-February. This event will bring teens together from the ECRUSY, HaNer, and Tzafon chapters. Program details will be shared soon.

COLLEGE OUTREACH

When a local student graduates high school, their connection to Judaism—and Ohav—lives on! Our college outreach program features care packages carefully crafted for Shabbat, holidays, and special remembrances. These taste-of-home bundles are delivered right to their dorm or apartment. This program is still growing, and new families are encouraged to sign up their college-bound teens before they've left the nest—though registrations are accepted at any time during the college years. Share this information with friends—non-members are also welcome! Families can register for this program through the Ohav administrative office; the cost per student is \$65 for members and \$75 for non-members.