

Ellen C. Alexander
Development Director
URJ Henry S. Jacobs Camp
3863 Morrison Road
Utica, MS 39175
(601) 885-6042
ealexander@urj.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

8/23/10

Jacob Camp boasts the largest camper numbers in its history: 459. The 41st summer of Jacobs Camp has proven to be its best summer to date. Jacobs Campers came from around the world: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Israel.

The theme of this summer was *Teva* (Nature) particularly focusing on *Kesher Ben Adam v'Adamah* (the relationship between man and earth). The campers learned how to better take care of the environment through special programming including: reducing waste at meal time, water conservation and helping to raise chickens for eggs.

Jacobs encouraged campers to be thankful for the many blessings in their young lives. Jacobs celebrated Thanksgiving in July - complete with a turkey dinner. The campers were invited to share with each other what about camp they were thankful for and were then asked campers to write home with their words of thanks. Here are a few favorite quotes:

- I am thankful for the lifelong Jewish connections I make with people all over the United States. Thank you for providing the opportunity for me to come to camp.
- I'm so grateful that you gave me the privilege of coming to camp this year. It's life-changing! Thank you so much for all that you do for me.
- Today is our July Thanksgiving, so I would like to tell you I'm thankful for the wonderful experience of spending every summer at my second home with my extended family.
- I am thankful for all of my friends and counselors at camp. Also, without camp in general, I would be a completely different person.

Jacobs also hosted five campers from Israel through The Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) The IMPJ is Israel's liberal Jewish religious movement and a constituent member of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

The program is a joint partnership of the IMPJ and the URJ Camps. The goal is to bring Reform Jewish young people from Israel to Reform Movement Camps in the United States. For the American campers, it is an opportunity to develop friendships and learn about Israel from young people their own age. For the Israeli young people it is an opportunity to have an incredible American camp experience, and to give them an understanding of what it means to be a Jew in

the Diaspora – and an understanding that they can bring home to enhance their congregations and communities in Israel. Here are a few quotes from our Israeli Campers:

- I love the lake and the green trees, it is so pretty here.
- My favorite evening program is messy night. It fun just getting dirty with paint and whipped cream, and not thinking about it. Just having fun with your friends, is the best.
- My favorite camp song is *Hallelujah*. We sing that a lot, it has a message of peace. I like that we are working to change the world.
- Shabbat was special because everyone wears white and there is something very pure about that.
- If I had to tell my best friend one thing about Jacobs, I would say this is home, it just feels like home.

Before the Israeli Campers boarded their plane for home, they were excited to go on a shopping trip to Wal-Mart! Jacobs was honored to have these campers this summer.

The staff is already busy getting ready to recruit campers and raise money to improve facilities for summer 2011.