

Growing Size, Impact

"More Jewish Teens, More Meaningful Jewish Experiences."

This is the mission of BBYO, the leading international Jewish youth movement, which has been providing Jewish teens with a safe space to engage with their peers for over 90 years.

Atlanta Council BBYO, in partnership with the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta, has been active in the community for 88 years, and this past year of 5776 saw some of our most memorable programmatic experiences, moments of growth and collaborative partnerships to date:

- In November, BBYO partnered with the Breman Museum to bring four Holocaust survivors to a weekend-long convention with 245 teens from Georgia and South Carolina. As part of BBYO's Global Shabbat to Remember, teens

had an opportunity to hear survivors' stories firsthand, ask questions in a panel format, and share their enthusiasm for Judaism and BBYO with their guests, making an impactful experience for the teens and our guests.

- In the spring, Atlanta was selected as one of six BBYO communities to pilot a Boys Engagement Initiative, which included staff training, programmatic resources and a multiyear grant that allowed us to onboard a new full-time staff position. This development and the installation of a new teen board position focused on eighth-grade recruitment were two of the many factors that helped us reach the milestone of 900 members in Atlanta for the first time in over 13 years.

- One of BBYO's most impactful programs for teens is the wide array of international immersive experiences we offer each year. This year Atlanta was home to 119 participants in BBYO's summer programs. Our teens traveled to Italy, Bulgaria, Costa Rica and all over America; participated in social action journeys to Chicago, Washington, Nicaragua and South Africa; learned leadership skills at the Chapter Leadership Training Conference; and were the largest delegation at both BBYO's International Leadership Seminar in Israel and BBYO's flagship camp experience, Perlman Summer, which included the International Leadership Training Conference and International Kallah. Atlanta also sent over 120 teens to BBYO's International Convention, a delegation second in size only to the host community.

- Over our five local conventions during the year, Atlanta Council BBYO partnered with 22 community organizations and guest educators, including Emory's Institute for the Study of Modern Israel and Center for Israel Education, American Jewish Committee, Alpha Epsilon Pi, Friendship Circle, SOJOURN, Jewish Family & Career Services, and American Hebrew Academy.

- Atlanta Council BBYO also expanded its relationships with partners outside the Jewish community, facilitating an interfaith panel that included two pastors, a representative from the Islamic Speakers Bureau,



Guest Column
By David Hoffman
BBYO

Rabbi Brian Glusman and one of BBYO's directors of Jewish enrichment at a convention with teens from Louisiana, Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia and South Carolina. We also brought guest presenters from Cox Enterprises and ProForm U to a convention to train teen leaders on event planning and promoting the BBYO experience.

BBYO's positive impact on Atlanta teens is best told through their words.

Senior Katie Friedman said BBYO has given her "a much-needed outlet to be myself and expand my horizons while participating in Jewish leadership. I learned to branch out and be more outgoing while simultaneously exploring my Jewish identity and involving myself in an experience (by which) I have grown personally."

This sentiment is reflected in parents who have seen their teens grow in our program. One parent told us: "BBYO is preparing these teens to be independent leaders in the Jewish community and beyond...I know (my daughter) will take these life lessons and all these personal connections with her as she moves forward in life!"

We look forward to this year as we strive to bring our meaningful programming to more Jewish teens, develop relationships with more partners in the Atlanta Jewish community, and represent Atlanta on an ever-growing scale at the international level.

L'shana tova u'metukah from our BBYO family to yours. ■

David Hoffman is the BBYO director at the Marcus JCC of Atlanta.

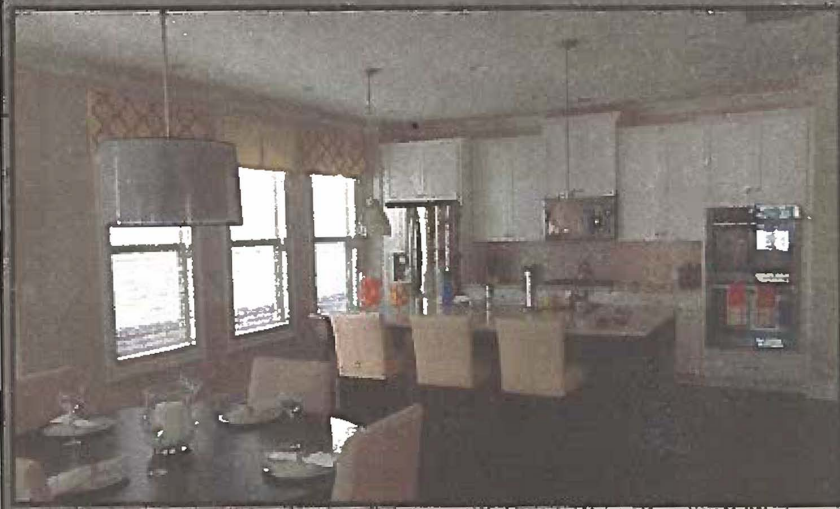
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