

My trip to Philadelphia with J-Teen was a great one. I learned about helping others, doing good deeds and actually performing some mitzvot. During this short three day trip, I got a lot of perspective in terms of social needs and how I can help the world out.

When I first heard about this trip, I asked around to see if anyone wanted to join me in this wonderful opportunity. I got a mixed response as some said yes while others said no. I came to the first meeting with great enthusiasm as I really wanted to know what the trip I had signed up for was all about. I soon discovered how lucky I was to have the chance to go on such a wonderful program with other enthusiastic kids my age. When we arrived in Philly on Friday night, we immediately went to the Hillel at Penn to pray. We had the choice of praying in a orthodox, conservative, reformed or sephardic quakers prayer group. I chose the reformed group and had an excellent time observing how they went about praying compared to what I have done my whole life. After, we ate dinner and then began bonding by playing icebreakers and hearing from Penn alumni who had once been a part of J-Teen themselves. It was a very enjoyable experience. The next day was very relaxing. We were able to learn some prayers and discussed the most important values a society must have. With this study session, I was able to hear differing views about what the most vital morals are which gave me a new perspective on the topic. Later, we were able to walk around the city and be tourists. When Shabbat ended that night, we were then able to perform the first community service project. We began organizing clothing in a warehouse for people of all ages who are in need of it. We sorted the clothing for a few hours and when we were done I got a feeling of accomplishment. Knowing that I contributed to helping out those who could not get clothes the way I can was extremely pleasing. The next day was very busy. We started off by going to another warehouse that stores food that had been donated. Our job was to go around with a box and make sure we received each item that was a part of the package. I was so happy to see how many other organizations were there to help package food for the less fortunate. After a while, we got back on the bus with many of these packages and actually got to deliver them. Actually being able to hand people the packages was an incredible experience. The people who I gave the packages to were so kind and thankful. I talked to each person and had a meaningful conversation which allowed me to really connect

with them. After saying our goodbyes, we traveled to the first Boys and Girls Club to ever exist. During the introduction, we learned what the purpose of having a Boys and Girls Club is and how they function. We were put into groups and got assigned a specific job. I helped clean a room where the kids play. This was a very powerful project since the kids who come to the club are underprivileged and go to learn and have fun. Being able to contribute for these kids benefit was such a great mitzvah. Our trip ended on this high note and we made our way back to New York.

This service trip was an experience I will never forget. Whether it was being able to connect with new peers or take part in a project, every moment was special. It was such a privilege to help out others and take part in multiple community service activities. I learned a lot of new values that can help me become a better person and made some new friends while doing so. I always love the feeling of being able to help out others, especially those who are less fortunate than I am. Overall, that weekend will be a guide for me in the future as I look to continue to develop into a person with great values and morals.