



# HEADING EAST

## THE BIRTH OF NCSY ISRAEL

*Pictured above, regional directors Rabbi Yosef Ginsberg (L) and Rabbi Michael Kahn (R).*

The teenage years are challenging at the best of times. Add being a recent immigrant to the mix, and the challenge can be even greater. Thrust an Anglo-teen into the wave of Israeli culture, and well, the results can be jarring to say the least. Teenagers are often confronting questions of self-identity, asking how they can best impact their surroundings, but when those surroundings are unfamiliar, when there are cultural differences and social limitations, when the language of the people is inaccessible – the framework for growth and maturation is gone.

Olim themselves, Rabbis Michael Kahn and Yosef Ginsberg recognized this struggle and were inspired to make a change. With the help of NCSY's International Director Rabbi Micah Greenland, as well as Rabbi Avi Berman, Executive Director of OU Israel, NCSY's newest region – NCSY Israel – was born. The region obtained a significant grant

from the Samis Foundation to help kick start their efforts. Teaming with Yonaton and Aviyah Atkin, NCSY Israel's Directors of Staff Development, they began to assemble a staff of advisors made up of both former teen-olim and now Israeli NCSY Alumni. With a strong staff and exciting programming, the region is making significant strides in the Anglo-teenage circles.

In just three months since its inauguration, NCSY Israel has over 100 teens registered for regularly scheduled programming. With an opening laser tag event drawing more than 55 teens and 17 advisors, followed by Chanukah gatherings, assorted Latte & Learnings, a bowling event and a Game Show Night, the region has launched its 'Planting Seeds Campaign' in hopes of raising the necessary funding to expand its operations to other cities throughout the state of Israel.

"NCSY Israel is crucial for the absorption of emotionally healthy and proud Israeli teens," noted Rabbi Michael Kahn, co-director of the region. "It is providing a framework in which they can be proud of being Anglo immigrants while at the same time learn how to integrate into Israeli society."

As the only Israeli youth movement designed specifically for teenage olim,

NCSY Israel will provide immigrant teens with the leadership skills and confidence to positively impact the State of Israel through army service, National Service, involvement in chess and eventually, in building their families and careers in Israel. "We want them to stay here instead of moving back to the countries that they came from," said co-director Rabbi Yosef Ginsberg. "Hanging out with like minded teens, teens that are going through the same struggles they are, as well as talking and learning from staff and advisors who have faced similar challenges, really creates a positive environment for all our participants and we hope that we can continue to have an even greater impact on this segment of Klal Yisrael as we continue to grow."



*Teens gather at NCSY Israel's, "The Q", a night of interactive competition and trivia.*

To learn more about NCSY Israel visit [israel.ncsy.org](http://israel.ncsy.org) or email [ginsberg@ncsy.org](mailto:ginsberg@ncsy.org) or [kahn@ncsy.org](mailto:kahn@ncsy.org).



*NCSY Israel teens come together for a Master Chef latke making competition, this past Chanukah in Jerusalem.*