



Arica Cykiert, 12, of Farmington Hills and Madeline Apple, 12, of Birmingham



Lauren Kominars, 16, of Commerce dances to Israeli music with Keith Mandell, 18, of Farmington Hills and some campers.



A participant sports many stickers supporting Israel.

Camp Maas Campers, Staff Celebrate Israeli Culture And Statehood

Stephanie Steinberg
T2T Intern

Ortonville

A sea of blue and white — clothing, face paint and Israeli flags — flooded the Pioneer Skills field at Camp Maas on Aug. 8 in celebration of Israel Day, a day of games, music, food and fun to honor Israel.

Israel Day occurs at the end of each camp session. Twenty Israeli counselors spent a myriad of hours organizing activities for the day.

After breakfast, the Israeli counselors showed a multimedia presentation of their time in the army. Video footage of their friends back home sending best wishes to the campers appeared often as did photos with the counselors in full uniform. Each Israeli had time in the spotlight.

These counselors worked together to design stations to teach the American and British staff and campers about Israeli culture.

One station was an Israeli army obstacle course. Campers jogged through a set of tires, climbed their way through ropes and shot a water gun at a target. Once they completed the course, a counselor rewarded them with a ticket that could be redeemed for a prize.

Other activities included a soccer game, fishing for Jewish stars, mini-golf on the map of Israel with cities as the holes and more.

Counselor Andrew Young, 20, of New Castle, England, ran the mini-golf station. "I don't know much about Israel so it's quite informative," he said.

Other counselors cooked pita over a fire pit for campers to enjoy as a snack with hummus while Israeli music blared through camp speakers to further immerse the campers in Israeli culture.

Itay Rotem, 22, of Tel Aviv is a counselor for Hermelin village. He helped create a comical play that taught campers about Israel and sent a positive message encouraging campers to support the country.

Fellow Israeli Arbel Sabag, 21, is a coun-
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Israel at



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Staff photos by Angie Eban

Mickey Levy, 21, of Jerusalem, Vlad Kovalskiy, 13, of Wixom and Nadar Yampolsky, 14, of Miqdal HaEmek cook their own pitas over a campfire.



Or Atlay, 14, of Tel-Aviv and Valeriya Parkhomenko, 13, of Royal Oak

selor for Ruach village and helped plan the day's events. "The kids really had fun," Sabag said. "They learned a lot about our games, music and food."

American counselors, teen service staff and counselors in training also took part in the day and helped run games and activities.

"It's a day all about fun, and it lets the Israeli counselors show the campers how they celebrate their culture," said TSS Sara Nathanson, 16, of Farmington Hills.

Land Sports Specialist Jared Berman, 18, of West Bloomfield agreed with Nathanson. "I think Israel Day is absolutely fantastic because it gives kids the opportunity to have tons of fun while celebrating Israel's birthday."

Camper Helen Weinberg, 12, of Berman village loved Israel Day. "It's fun to learn about Israel while doing hands-on activities instead of sitting in a classroom."

Near the end of the celebration, seven torches were lit in honor of Israel's 60th birthday. Each candle represented 10 years, the last one added for good luck. It was a grand display; a great way to pay tribute to the Jewish homeland. □

Gabriella Ring, T2T intern, contributed to this report.



Jacob Tukul, 13, of West Bloomfield, Itamar Wilf, 14, of Bethlem Haglilit