



TZEDEK AMERICA PROGRAMS

Our Mission: Tzedek America transforms lives, strengthens Jewish identity, and changes the world through immersive social impact-oriented experiences.

*pictured above - Harmonizing History: Students immersed in the soulful rhythms of a Memphis blues band, discovering the powerful connection between the heartrending melodies of blues music and the resilience of the civil rights movement. Students visit the border in Nogales, AZ. Pit stop for a fun photo at LA Lights, a Los Angeles icon.

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Tzedek America is an organization guided by the Jewish principles of Tzedek (justice), Chesed (compassion), and Tikun Olam (the act of repairing the world). We are dedicated to providing immersive and customizable social-impact educational experiences for teenagers and adults.



Multi-Day Social Justice Journeys p4

Our carefully curated itineraries ensure the perfect balance of adventure, education, and service, allowing you to broaden your horizons, deepen your connection to Jewish values and identity, and positively impact the world.



Single-Day Experiences p20

Choose your own socially conscious adventure, where you will explore the intersection of activism, culture, and compassion. From thought-provoking conversations with grassroots organizers to immersive experiences shedding light on societal challenges, these single-day trips will inspire learners to be a catalyst for change in your community.



Mitzvah Project Central p25

Tzedek America's Mitzvah Project Central elevates the mitzvah project component of the B'nai Mitzvah experience by supporting students in finding a meaningful mitzvah project, and inspiring them to become involved in an organization and/or cause that they will feel connected to for many years to come.



Confronting Antisemitism Workshops p26

Tzedek America's "Bridges of Understanding: Confronting Antisemitism" workshops take a relationship-centered approach to combating antisemitism by facilitating dialogues and interactions among diverse student groups, emphasizing commonalities over differences.



A.R.C.H. Fellowship for Jewish Teens of Color p27

Monthly hybrid meetups, expertly facilitated by Tzedek America's inspiring JOC educators, will explore the unique experiences and challenges faced by Jewish Teens of Color. Meaningful discussions, workshops, and cultural activities will build relationships between JOC teens and influential community leaders.



IMPACT Fellowship & Professional Development p 28

The Rabbi Emily Feigenson Impact Fellowship is hybrid program for new and experienced Jewish Youth Professionals. Fellows participate in three zoom sessions with Tzedek America educators sharing our philosophies and methods regarding experiential social justice education and curriculum development through a Jewish lens and concludes with a "behind the scenes" look at our immersive 4 day LA Social Justice Journey.



Welcome to Tzedek America!

Tzedek America is an organization guided by the Jewish principles of Tzedek (justice), Chesed (compassion), and Tikun Olam (the act of repairing the world). We are dedicated to providing immersive and customizable social-impact educational experiences for teenagers and adults.

Each of our programs is uniquely curated to meet the needs of our partnering institutions and crafted through the lens of radical empathy, which encourages deep understanding and connection by imagining the world from another's perspective. Our dedication to a non-partisan inclusive approach creates a safe space for sharing different points of view and a brave space for inquiry.

Our team of experiential educators collaborates with local experts, activists, individuals directly involved in or affected by the issues, and government officials from both sides of the aisle. Through our network, we grant the participants access to primary sources as we visit significant locations. This ensures memorable learning opportunities that nurture curiosity and understanding while modeling conversations that honor diverse perspectives and backgrounds while ensuring that Jewish texts and values are at the core of every experience.

Participants of our transformative experiences share that they feel inspired, more knowledgeable, stronger in their own Jewish identity and in the connection between social justice and Judaism, and motivated to take meaningful and compassionate action.



AVRAM MANDELL



RABBI ADRIANNE



RANDALL FRIED



GAVRIELLE DONES



ELANA BEAME



ZIGGY VALDEZ

EDUCATORS IN RESIDENCE

EDDIE CHAVEZ
CALDERON

PASTOR RONDELL

Multi-Day Social Justice Journeys

Social justice-themed travel has the power to create a profound and lasting impact on both the travelers and the communities they visit. By immersing oneself in the realities and experiences of marginalized communities, participants gain a deeper understanding of the social, economic, and cultural challenges they face. Our trips go beyond a tourist experience; they foster radical empathy, compassion and a heightened sense of global citizenship. Our fully customizable experiences allow participants to witness the resilience, strength and determination of those working for positive change, Inspiring participants to become advocates and agents of change, leveraging their newfound knowledge and experiences to challenge systemic inequalities, promote inclusivity, and create a more just society.

Every Multi-Day Journey Includes

Setting the Tone

Morning meetings are essential to our itinerary as they create a space for everyone to gather their thoughts, connect with one another, and ground themselves in the purpose of the trip. This is especially important given the weight and gravity of the experiences we will be exploring. Our morning meetings establish a respectful and open-minded environment for the day ahead, enable us to approach each site with sensitivity and a desire to learn.



Debriefing

Debriefing allows participants to process and learn from each other in a safe and structured space. The Tzedek America team will provide resources and tools to enable your staff to facilitate reflection on what was learned and how it can be applied to daily life, deepening participants' appreciation and understanding of their experience.



Balance

While educational and impactful experiences are the focus of our programming, it's equally important to provide an opportunity for participants to relax and decompress from the emotional intensity of the trip. This is the time for friendships to be forged, conversations to continue, and memories to be made. Participants experience the local culture by tasting delicious local cuisine, trying new activities, or exploring a new city together. These experiences help create a sense of community and camaraderie that will last long after the trip has ended.



Tzedek America Will

- Design and deliver an all-inclusive social impact-themed group program for a minimum of twenty five participants (including students and staff.)
- Provide a description of the program and send an itinerary in advance of the program.
- Implement the itinerary, including all meals (unless otherwise negotiated), housing, snacks, and recreational activities while participants are under Tzedek America's guidance.
- Embrace the diversity of our learners, ensuring an inclusive experience for all participants by catering to 'participants' individual food, educational, and emotional needs
- Provide shared accommodations for each participant and staff member.
- Provide transportation for each participant and staff member during their time with Tzedek America, including airport pickup and drop-off.
- Serve as tour guide educators for each site visit.
- Create a customized field guide for each participant, including Jewish texts, statistics, and a reflection piece.
- *Please note: flights are not included

Content and Materials

Field Guides

Our carefully curated field guides provide participants with the scaffolding needed to elevate each experience by intertwining historical context, relevant terminology, and Jewish texts. These guides serve as an educational resource, a tool with prompts for debriefing, journal space to record thoughts and feelings, QR codes for further research on the places and topics we explore, and a way to keep in touch with the people and organizations we meet on our journey.



Jewish Texts and Values

Jewish texts serve as guideposts in shaping each of our social justice experiences. Drawing inspiration from ancient and modern teachings, Jewish values, and Mussar (spiritual development through Jewish virtues and ethics), these texts inspire participants to reflect on the interconnectedness of humanity and our imperative to strive for a more equitable society.



Special Requests

We believe in creating personalized and memorable experiences for our participants. Whether it's dietary preferences, accessibility needs, or any other special requests, our commitment is to go the extra mile to accommodate and ensure everyone feels valued and comfortable. Your journey with us is not just a tour; it's an opportunity for us to tailor the experience to your individual preferences, making it uniquely yours. Let us know your requests, and we'll do our utmost to turn them into reality, ensuring your experience with us is as exceptional and enjoyable as possible.



CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNEY IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Journey through the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. Explore the poignant history and immerse in pivotal sites echoing the resilience of activists who challenged systemic oppression.

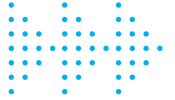
Essential Questions

How did the Civil Rights Movement inspire other marginalized groups?

How did the Civil Rights Movement help us move forward as a country?

What were some of the major successes of the Civil Rights Movement?

What is the Jewish obligation to further the work of the Civil Rights Movement?



Judaic Context

Judaism teaches respect for the fundamental rights of others as each person's duty to God: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor" (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 31a).

The Torah teaches, that equality is based on the concept that all of God's children are "created in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27).

The Talmud teaches that "the very purpose of the Torah is to promote peace and justice in the world" (Talmud, Berakhot 5a). Similarly, the Civil Rights Movement focused on advocating for civil rights and equality for African Americans.

"From the standpoint of the Torah, there can be no distinction between one human being and another based on race or color. Any discrimination shown to a human being on account of the color of his or her skin constitutes loathsome barbarity." (R. Ahron Soloveichik's Logic of the Heart, Logic of the Mind)

SAMPLE 5-DAY ITINERARY*



Day 1: Memphis, TN

Trace the footsteps of the civil rights movement at historic sites like the Lorraine Motel and the National Civil Rights Museum as we walk the historic streets of Memphis and visit the sites that once bore witness to pivotal moments in the civil rights movement. From the haunting beauty of the Slave Haven Underground Railroad Museum to the vibrant sites and sounds of Beale Street, this experience is a powerful reminder of the progress made and the work that remains on the path toward a more inclusive and just society.



Days 2 & 3: Birmingham, AL

History and culture combine as we explore Birmingham's rich civil rights history and landmarks, including a visit to the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, the 16th St. Baptist Church, and Kelly Ingram Park. Before heading to Historic Bethel Church, participants will have free time to explore the vibrant 5 Points South neighborhood, unwind at Vulcan Park, or explore Sloss Furnaces. Participants will learn about the Jewish experience during the civil rights movement at one of Birmingham's historic synagogues. A pit stop at the iconic Piggly Wiggly for some shopping before heading to Montgomery, where we'll rest up for another exciting day ahead.



Days 3 & 4: Montgomery & Selma, AL

Embark on a journey through history and human rights in Montgomery, Alabama. We will visit the EJI Legacy Museum, where participants will explore the museum's exhibits and learn about the legacy of slavery, racial injustice, and its ongoing impact on American society. Participants will have the chance to debrief and process their learnings before heading off to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, where they'll witness the sobering reality of America's history of racial violence and lynchings.

After this intense and thought-provoking experience, take a break and enjoy lunch at the National Memorial before walking to the EJI Auditorium, where you'll be inspired and motivated by the words of an influential speaker who will shed light on the current and ongoing struggle for civil rights and social justice in America.

In addition to visiting the National Memorial, which highlights the hundreds of racially motivated murders that took place in the South, we will personalize and concretize this experience by also visiting a specific lynching memorial in a smaller town. This allows participants to connect with one individual who was lynched and learn about their life, their family, and their community.

Next, we will head to the heart of Alabama's civil rights history, Selma, where you'll experience a personalized guided tour that will provide a unique perspective on the historic events that took place here. In Selma, you'll gain a deeper understanding of the sacrifices made by those who fought for their right to vote and how their efforts continue to shape our society today. We will make our way to the Edmund Pettus Bridge, where you'll have the opportunity to walk across the span that played a pivotal role in the struggle for civil rights. This unique experience will be followed by a delicious dinner and fun nighttime activity, where you can decompress and process after a powerful and meaningful day.



Alternative Day 1 or 5: Atlanta, GA

Atlanta is the perfect place to begin or conclude our civil rights journey, as it was at the forefront of the movement for racial equality. Home to many influential civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr., it was also the site of significant protests and demonstrations. Additionally, Atlanta is home to several critical civil rights landmarks, such as the Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King Jr. served as a pastor, and the Center for Civil and Human Rights.

Fees & More

Fee per participant: varies (4 night/5 day all-inclusive landed cost - flights not included)

Minimum Participation: 25

3 & 4 day options available - sample itineraries available upon request

We are fully equipped to accommodate all forms of Shabbat and Kashrut observance

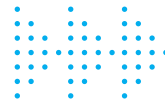
Our trips are designed to embrace and celebrate diversity, ensuring an inclusive experience for all participants.

***Every itinerary is individually curated for each group. No two are the same. Your itinerary will depend on your interests, arrival and departure times and locations, specific food, religious, and accessibility needs, and the availability of our speakers and locations on your chosen dates.**

IMMIGRATION JUSTICE JOURNEY

PHOENIX, TUSCON, & NOGALES, AZ

Engage directly with organizations and individuals deeply involved in both the impact and regulation of migrant flows from the United States to Mexico.



Essential Questions

In what ways do the perspectives and roles of activists, homeland security agents, border patrol, humanitarians, and state officials contribute to the complexity of the immigration issue, and how do they intersect or conflict with each other?

What is the Jewish obligation to welcome and care for the stranger?

Judaic Context

God said to Abraham, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you." (Genesis 12:1). We are a fugitive people. From the very beginning of our origin story, we were immigrants, moving from our native land to have a better life.

"This land you shall divide for yourselves among the tribes of Israel. You shall allot it as a heritage for yourselves and the gerim (strangers) who reside among you and have begotten children among you. You shall treat them as Israelite citizens; they shall receive allotments along with you among the tribes of Israel. You shall give the ger (stranger) an allotment within the tribe where he resides – declares the Lord God" (Ezekial 47:21-23). The Hebrew word ger (stranger) can also be translated as foreigner. Even the most foreign amongst you in your country have legal rights and the right to prosper and become part of the society by owning land.

The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love them as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Leviticus 19:34) There are three most vulnerable categories of people in the Torah, the orphan, widow, and stranger. The book of priestly rules (Leviticus) says the most vulnerable among us are treated as citizens and are to be loved as we love ourselves.

SAMPLE ITINERARY*



Days 1 & 2: Phoenix, AZ

Our immersive experience will take you to the forefront of immigration justice, where you'll engage with local experts, visit immigration centers, and partake in meaningful discussions that shed light on the complexities of this critical issue. You'll have the unique opportunity to hear firsthand accounts, share perspectives, and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges immigrants and refugees face in this region. Amidst exploring these pressing matters, you'll also have the chance to enjoy the city's rich cultural diversity, savor delicious local cuisine, and forge lasting connections with fellow travelers who share your passion for positive change. Be a part of this transformative adventure as we uncover the stories, cultures, and struggles that shape the immigration landscape in Phoenix, ultimately inspiring change and empathy for a more just world.



Days 3 & 4: Tuscon and Nogales, AZ

Visit Nogales to experience the realities of the U.S.-Mexico border firsthand. Gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by migrants and the efforts of those working on both sides of the border. Hear from a border patrol agent and listen to personal stories from individuals who have crossed the border, all while standing in the heart of this unique region where immigration issues are vividly brought to light.

In Tucson, you'll engage with local advocates deeply committed to immigration justice. You'll have the opportunity to visit and volunteer at humanitarian aid centers, providing a firsthand understanding of the critical work being done to support vulnerable populations. Additionally, you'll participate in a migrant desert walk, gaining a deeper appreciation for the challenges those seeking a better life face. Throughout it all, you'll explore the dynamic cultural tapestry that thrives in this border city, making for an educational and emotionally impactful experience that will stay with you long after our journey ends.



Fees & More

Fee per participant: varies* (3 night/4 day all-inclusive landed cost - flights not included)

Minimum Participation: 25

Longer trips are available - sample itineraries available upon request

We are fully equipped to accommodate all forms of Shabbat and Kashrut observance

Our trips are designed to embrace and celebrate diversity, ensuring an inclusive experience for all participants.

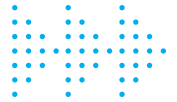
*fee subject to change based on season

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A JOURNEY OF UNSEEN STORIES

GUATEMALA

Witness the unseen stories shaping this vibrant country's heart and soul. Feel the motivation to take action in global issues, having put faces to challenges and built connections that transcend borders. Join us in embracing the unseen narratives that continue to shape Guatemala's destiny as we visit Antigua, Lake Atitlan, Guatemala City and Panajachel.



Essential Questions

Do we have a unique responsibility to our neighboring countries merely because of our proximity?
What does fair trade mean and why should we care?
How does the Jewish Value of Ahavat Yisrael (love for the people of Israel) link us to the Jewish people in our broader community?

Jewish Values Highlighted on This Experience

Tzedek (Justice): Emphasizing social justice aligns with the Jewish value of Tzedek.

Chesed (Compassion): Showing compassion towards the children in the orphanage and empowering the people reflects the Jewish value of Chesed.

Tikun Olam (Repairing the World): Commitment to social change, education, and resource access resonates with the Jewish principle of Tikun Olam, the act of repairing and improving the world.

Gemilut Chasadim (Acts of Loving Kindness): Engagement with the orphanage and efforts to shed light on untold stories exemplify the Jewish value of performing acts of loving kindness.

Ahavat Yisrael (Love for Israel): The focus on the cultural and social aspects of Guatemala can be linked to the broader Jewish value of Ahavat Yisrael, encompassing love and concern for the Jewish people and the broader community.

Kehillah (Community): Exploring the local community, its challenges, and efforts to empower it align with the Jewish value of fostering a strong sense of community (Kehillah).

SAMPLE ITINERARY*



City Life & Chicken Buses

Experience the charm of Guatemala City through the lens of "Chicken Buses" – colorful, repurposed American school buses. Marvel at their neon paint jobs, religious slogans, and the unique journey that brings them from the United States to the winding roads of Guatemala. As we traverse the city, we glimpse into the lives of the local people on crowded buses and refurbished pickup trucks. Witness the daily commute of women and children, contemplating the stories and experiences that accompany each traveler. Uncover the value of individual stories as you peer into the lives of those who share your journey.



Untold Narratives

Meet our knowledgeable guides whose stories are deeply rooted in Mayan villages. Learn about their experiences, from leaving for America during a civil war to returning to their homeland. Explore the rich history of Santa Cruz and discover the unseen social change occurring in isolated rural towns.



Bearing Witness

Emotionally moving experiences unveil the untold stories of the people of Guatemala, whose tales often go unnoticed. Witness the impact of fair trade coffee plantations, women's weaving cooperatives, and more as we shed light on the unheard stories, bringing attention to the challenges faced by these remarkable people.



Empowering Change

Delve into the unseen acts of justice as we connect with a board member of Amigos de Santa Cruz, a nonprofit empowering the people of Santa Cruz. Explore the demand for change among Guatemalans, especially the youth advocating for education and resources. Uncover the positive transformations silently shaping the future of Guatemala.



Additional Excursions Include

Celebrating Shabbat with the Reform Jewish Community * Learning how coffee is made * Kayaking in a volcanic lake * Roasting marshmallows on Pacaya volcano * Participating in a Mayan Fire Ceremony * Visiting a women's weaving collective * Hiking through the hills surrounding a lake * Meeting change makers * Exploring Mayan ruins * Experiencing Guatemalan culture * Visiting sacred caves * Chocolate making class * Cliff jumping

Fees & More

Fee per participant: varies (5 night/6 day all-inclusive landed cost - flights not included)

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ECHOES OF RESILIENCE:

JEWISH IMMIGRATION JOURNEY NYC

Journey through the heart of New York City as we walk in the footsteps of Jewish Immigrants, celebrating their cultural contributions and finding inspiration for the ongoing fight for social justice. As we engage with immigrants' stories of perseverance and advocacy, we will draw connections to today's movements for equality and human rights. Enjoy activities such as catching a Broadway show, eating delicious food and visiting iconic sites throughout Manhattan ensuring a well-rounded and unforgettable New York experience. Join us in exploring how the past continues to inspire and inform the present, making this a journey of both discovery and reflection.

Essential Questions

How did Jewish immigrants shape the cultural, social, and economic landscape of New York City during the late 19th and early 20th centuries?

What challenges and opportunities did Jewish immigrants face as they navigated their identity between maintaining religious and cultural traditions and adapting to American society?

How have Jewish immigrant experiences in New York contributed to broader movements for social justice and civil rights, both historically and today?

Judaic Context

Pirkei Avot (Teachings of our Ancestors) emphasizes community building and ethical responsibility, which Jewish immigrants brought with them as they contributed to the social fabric of NYC through philanthropy, labor movements, and cultural institutions.

Emma Lazarus' poetry reflects the Jewish immigrant perspective and contributed to the American ethos of welcoming refugees and immigrants, embodied in the inscription at the Statue of Liberty.

The story of Ruth, a Moabite woman who becomes part of the Jewish people, reflects themes of adaptation, belonging, and the negotiation of dual identities, paralleling the Jewish immigrant experience.

The Exodus story, told every Passover, is a central narrative of migration, resilience, and the search for freedom, mirroring the Jewish immigrant journey from oppression in Europe to new opportunities in America.

Deuteronomy 16:20 – "Justice, justice you shall pursue" (Tzedek, tzedek tirdof)

This verse has been a foundation for Jewish involvement in social justice movements, including labor rights and civil rights, which were significant concerns for Jewish immigrants in New York.

Obligation to Care for the Poor: Mishnah Pe'ah 8:7 outlines the Jewish laws of tzedakah (charity), underscoring the communal responsibility toward the poor and vulnerable, a principle that drove Jewish involvement in social welfare and immigrant aid.

SAMPLE ITINERARY*



Setting the Tone

The day begins with a welcome session, including introductions and an overview of the objectives and itinerary. After lunch, the group will visit Ellis Island and view the Statue of Liberty, followed by a tour of the World Trade Center Museum. Dinner will be enjoyed together, and the day concludes with an evening sightseeing activity before saying goodnight.



Lower East Side and Welcoming Shabbat

Our Lower East Side walking tour includes visits to the Eldridge Street and Bialystoker Synagogues. After lunch, explore the Tenement Museum, then experience Kabbalat Shabbat and enjoy dinner at a local synagogue before ending the day with a peaceful goodnight.



Historical and Religious Exploration

Participate in a Jewish Harlem walking tour and lunch in Hell's Kitchen. After enjoying a Broadway show and experiencing the energy of Times Square, the evening concludes with Havdallah and a stunning view from "The Edge."



Cultural Contributions and Advocacy

The day begins with a social justice-guided tour at the Jewish Museum, followed by insightful meetings with activists, advocates, and change-makers. Afterward, enjoy a scenic walk along the Highline to Chelsea Market for lunch before heading to the airport to conclude the experience.



Fees & More

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Minimum Participation: 25

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ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE JOURNEY

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Essential Questions

How do Jewish teachings on environmental stewardship, such as bal tashchit (do not waste), align with and support indigenous principles of living in harmony with the land?

In what ways can Jewish communities contribute to addressing contemporary environmental challenges such as water management, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience, particularly in partnership with indigenous communities?

What role does the Jewish concept of shmita (sabbatical year) play in promoting sustainable land use, and how can it inform our relationship with the earth and indigenous land rights in modern-day environmental movements?

How can acknowledging and honoring the ancestral lands of indigenous tribes deepen our understanding of tzedek (justice) and tikkun olam (repairing the world) in the context of environmental and social justice?

Judaic Context

Teachings on environmental stewardship and indigenous principles include the law of Baal Taschit (do not waste) found in Deuteronomy 20:19–20.

Genesis 2:15 reminds us of humanity's responsibility to guard and tend the earth.

Leviticus 25:1–7 Shmita (Sabbatical Year) and The story of Honi the Circle Maker in Taanit 23a illuminate themes of collaborating on water management, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience.

The Jewish concepts of rest and indigenous land rights are discussed in Leviticus 25:23 “The Land is Mine; You are but Strangers and Sojourners with Me.”

Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5 teaches the value of every life.

Acknowledging ancestral lands and pursuing justice are taught in Isaiah 58:6–7 which describes the true meaning of fasting.

Deuteronomy 16:20 “Justice, justice you shall pursue” (Tzedek, tzedek tirdof)



SAMPLE ITINERARY*



Day 1: Arrival and Introduction

We begin with an interactive workshop focused on understanding environmental justice issues in Northern California, with discussions on indigenous rights, land conservation, and sustainable practices. The group will then visit a local environmental organization for a guided tour and hands-on activities. Afterward, a group discussion explores the intersection of environmental justice, indigenous rights, and Jewish values. Dinner will be enjoyed at a sustainable restaurant with locally sourced ingredients, followed by an evening reflection session where participants share personal insights from the day's experiences.



Day 2: Exploring Nature & Indigenous Perspectives

Start the day with a guided hike through a redwood forest, led by an indigenous guide who will share the cultural significance of the redwoods and the importance of preserving these ancient ecosystems. A picnic lunch will be enjoyed in a scenic outdoor setting, followed by an interactive storytelling session where indigenous elders share traditional stories and legends, highlighting their deep connection to the land. After dinner and free time, the evening concludes with a gathering featuring indigenous cultural activities and music.



Day 3: Sustainable Agriculture and Community Engagement

visit a local organic farm, participating in hands-on experiences in sustainable agriculture through activities like planting, harvesting, caring for animals and composting as we learn about food sovereignty and the importance of access to healthy food in marginalized communities. Lunch will feature farm-to-table cuisine made with ingredients from the local farm. In the afternoon, visit Point Reyes Station, home to over 1500 plant and animal species as well as many different indigenous cultures over thousands of years. Here, we will focus on the connections between sustainable agriculture, community empowerment, and environmental justice. The day ends with dinner and evening entertainment featuring local performers or cultural presentations.



Day 4: Action Planning and Departure

Our journey concludes with a final group discussion, where participants reflect on key takeaways from the tour and identify actionable steps to promote environmental justice within their own communities. This is followed by a farewell lunch and a closing ceremony, marking the end of the experience.

Fees & More

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Minimum Participation: 25

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SOCIAL JUSTICE JOURNEY

LOS ANGELES, CA

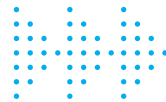
Journey through the heart of Los Angeles on this socially conscious adventure, where you will explore the intersection of activism, culture, and compassion. From thought-provoking conversations with grassroots organizers to immersive experiences shedding light on societal challenges, this trip invites you to uncover the stories that shape the city's quest for equity. You will be inspired to be a catalyst for change in your community.

Essential Questions

What assumptions do we make about those who hold a different identity from us?

What are some of the root causes of the social justice issues we face today?

What is the Jewish obligation to welcome and care for the "other"?



Judaic Context

Do not judge your fellow until you have reached their place. Do not say something that cannot be heard, for in the end it will be heard. (Perkei Avot 2:4) We can't know anyone else's story except our own. So we cannot judge a person whom we don't have shared experiences with.

Humanity began with one person, Adam, so that no one could say to another, "My ancestors are greater than yours. (Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5)

Becoming a resident of a city—becoming a "citizen"—is defined by assuming the obligations of the city. These are varied: "At 30 days [one is assessed for] the soup-kitchen, at three months—the welfare fund, at six months—the clothing fund, at nine—the burial fund, at twelve—the city's infrastructure. (Babylonian Talmud, Bava Batra 8a)

The test of faith is whether I can make space for difference. Can I recognize God's image in someone who is not in my image, whose language, faith, and ideals, are different from mine? If I cannot, then I have made God in my image instead of allowing him to remake me in his. (Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks)

THEMES

Sanctuary

"Sukkat Shalom" is a Hebrew phrase that translates to "Shelter of Peace." The spirit of Sukkat Shalom emphasizes the significance of creating spaces of peace, both physically and spiritually. For individuals navigating the harsh realities of life on the streets, battling the complexities of addiction, bravely seeking a second chance, refugees escaping conflict, survivors of trauma, or anyone grappling with the isolating shadows of loneliness, a sanctuary embodies more than just physical shelter—it embodies hope, empathy, and the chance for renewal. Sanctuary is a theme that weaves its way through our LA Experience as we delve into the heart of a variety of social justice issues, engage in impactful service work, connect with influential community leaders, converse with those with lived experience, and immerse ourselves in LA's vibrant and diverse neighborhoods to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamic efforts shaping the landscape of social justice in Los Angeles.





Understanding Homelessness

Join us for a unique and eye-opening experience in downtown Los Angeles. Our gentrification walking tour of DTLA and visit to Skid Row will give you a firsthand understanding of the issues facing the city's homeless population. You'll have the opportunity to meet with individuals experiencing homelessness and learn about several non-profits and social enterprises making a positive impact on their lives. This immersive experience will shed light on the complex challenges facing this community and inspire you to take action in your own way.



Exploring Food & Environmental Justice

Participants engage with the concepts of food deserts and food injustice in Los Angeles through the experience of getting our hands dirty in a community garden, eating at a restaurant whose mission is to provide healthy food at a low cost to under-resourced neighborhoods, and learning about sustainable living by making our own pickles. A hike led by a naturalist helps participants understand the importance of caring for the land and learning to appreciate all the land has to offer us.



T'shuvah – Second Chances

Visit a park that was once marred by gang-related violence but is now a peaceful haven with a new basketball court, soccer field, and playgrounds where we will meet with folks who share their journeys from incarceration and gangs to owning businesses and giving back to the community. Eat at a restaurant run by Homeboy Industries, an organization that supports gang members' reintegration into the workforce, and meet a chaplain in the California prison system who will impart invaluable insights into the human spirit and the power of redemption. At Beit T'Shuvah, a rehabilitation center rooted in the spiritual principles of Judaism, we meet with residents to discuss pressing topics such as loneliness, isolation, addiction, loss, and connection following a pandemic.



LGBTQIA+

Participants will gain an understanding of the work being done in LA to become more understanding and inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community as we visit the first Gay and Lesbian synagogue, the first AIDS Memorial in Los Angeles, and relevant nonprofits and businesses supporting the rights and needs of LGBTQIA+ communities.



Jewish Los Angeles

Explore LA's vibrant "Kosher Corridor" through a scavenger hunt, unveiling the tastes, sights, and rich history of this neighborhood that serves the 5th largest Jewish community in the world. Enjoy lunch from your choice of a variety of kosher eateries.



Immigration Justice

Participants will learn from immigrants and refugees, meet immigration attorneys and leaders who run non-profits to assist immigrants and refugees, attend a portrait drawing workshop, and dine at a restaurant owned by refugees.



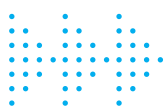
Exploring Racial Justice

We will delve deeply into the forgotten history of Santa Monica as we meet a historian and activist who is black and has grown up in Santa Monica. She will share with us her memories of spending her childhood on segregated beaches and enlighten us about the changes that have taken place in her once black-owned neighborhood. As we follow in her footsteps, we will learn about red lining and the loss of this community's generational wealth as well as her leading role in working with the city of Santa Monica to compensate the black community for the loss of black-owned homes and businesses.



Thrift Shopping with a Purpose

Participants will study Jewish forms of giving and learn that the highest form of giving is enabling someone to be self-sufficient. This concept comes to life as we learn about the difference between a social enterprise and a traditional non-profit by shopping at thrift stores, visiting restaurants with a purpose, and meeting the people who work at the organizations these businesses support. We create a fun contest for the participants that connects them with the concepts presented in this experience.



Choose your adventure: Our LA trip is curated specifically for your group based on the issues (above) that you wish to explore. Of course, **recreational activities, visits to iconic LA locations, and lots of fun are included in every trip!**

Fees & More

Fee per participant: varies (3 night/4 day all-inclusive landed cost - flights not included)

Minimum Participation: 25

Longer trips are available - sample itineraries available upon request

We are fully equipped to accommodate all forms of Shabbat and Kashrut observance

Our trips are designed to embrace and celebrate diversity, ensuring an inclusive experience for all participants.

***Every itinerary is individually curated for each group. No two are the same. Your itinerary will depend on your interests, arrival and departure times and locations, specific food, religious, and accessibility needs, and the availability of our speakers and locations on your chosen dates.**

TESTIMONIALS

“This trip was so impactful because it turned all of the history that I usually learn from a text book into reality by being able to see the historic landmarks and listen to stories of oppression. It added a completely different perspective that I couldn't have learned in a classroom.
-Student, de Toledo High School”

“This is the very best teen trip we've ever done. The Tzedek America team thought of everything from snacks to the arc of the trip from an educational prospective.
-Rabbi Educator, Central Synagogue”

“We were allowed to use the different perspectives presented to form our own opinions and biases. I felt like I learned more because I was treated as an adult. There was no obvious sugarcoating of the very prominent and very serious issues in our world. I think the whole trip was meaningful and impactful and I'm really excited to start volunteering in my own community.
- Student”

“Thank you, Tzedek America, for an extremely powerful and impactful trip for the students and faculty alike. We came back transformed and committed to making changes to better impact the world.
-11th Grade Dean, de Toledo High School”

“When my son emerged this morning & entered the kitchen. I noticed that he immediately went over to look at the newspaper. I figured he was looking to see if the Astros cheating scandal made it into the sports section. But no...he was looking at the photos of the DACA protests. I was really moved by his connection to the story/topic. What you've been able to accomplish through the trips is unparalleled. I'm so grateful to you.
-Parent, Temple Israel of Hollywood”

“This trip wasn't about fighting for or against immigration. It was a chance for us to experience freedom of opinion based on the information we learned. And this is the most powerful freedom of all.
-Student, Congregation Or Ami”

“Just want you to know that my daughter came back from yesterday's trip with a wealth of new knowledge and understanding. We talked extensively at dinner afterward about racial justice, reparations, and a few other related topics. Thank you for organizing this trip and, as always, for all the work you do.
-Parent, Temple Israel of Hollywood”

“I want to start a business when I get older, and now I think I might want to start a business that helps people.
Student
Valley Beth Shalom”

“Our kids were beyond engaged and I've never felt less stressed from a chaperoning perspective. We were able to be fully present with and for our teens because everything else was taken care of. And if that doesn't convince you, the pupusas and enchiladas were unreal.
-Educator, Central Synagogue”

“During the trip we talked about the difference between sympathy and empathy. After that experience, I don't think I'll look at houseless people in Portland with such prejudice. I'll do my best to look at things from their perspective and not to judge them.
-Student, Congregation Beth Israel”

Single Day Experiences

Tzedek America will provide your group powerful local social justice experiences throughout the school year. Each program is based on a specific theme of your choosing. A professional educator and Tzedek America-trained tour guide will lead each field trip. Each trip includes a complete lesson plan for your teacher to use in class the week before our trip, a personalized field guide for each student that includes Jewish and secular texts, resources for further exploration of our theme, space for reflection, and a parent newsletter with photos, sharing highlights of our time together.

Every Experience Includes

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are provided to the synagogue for each social justice topic to set the tone for the upcoming trip. The lesson is written by Tzedek America and sent to the synagogue educator for use in the classroom the week prior to the trip. The synagogue educator teaches the lesson. If you would like the lesson led by Tzedek America, there is an additional fee for each per lesson.



Debriefing

Debriefing allows participants to process and learn from each other in a safe and structured space. The Tzedek America team will provide resources and tools to enable your staff to facilitate reflection on what was learned and how it can be applied to daily life, deepening participants' appreciation and understanding of their experience.



Follow Up Newsletter

After each day trip, your Tzedek America trip leader will create a one-page newsletter that can be sent to the students and their families. The newsletter will summarize the day trip's events and activities, giving the whole family insight into the experience. The newsletter will also feature photos from our trip, highlighting the learning and fun that took place.



Field Guides

Our field guides provide participants with the scaffolding needed to elevate each experience by intertwining historical context, relevant terminology, and Jewish texts. These guides serve as an educational resource, a tool with prompts for debriefing, journal space to record thoughts and feelings, QR codes for further research on the places and topics we explore, and a way to keep in touch with the people and organizations we meet on our journey.



Jewish Texts and Values

Jewish texts serve as guideposts in shaping each of our social justice experiences. Drawing inspiration from ancient and modern teachings, Jewish values, and Mussar (spiritual development through Jewish virtues and ethics), these texts inspire participants to reflect on the interconnectedness of humanity and our imperative to strive for a more equitable society.



Special Requests

We believe in creating personalized and memorable experiences for our participants. Whether it's dietary preferences, accessibility needs, or any other special requests, our commitment is to go the extra mile to accommodate and ensure everyone feels valued and comfortable. Your journey with us is not just a tour; it's an opportunity for us to tailor the experience to your individual preferences, making it uniquely yours. Let us know your requests, and we'll do our utmost to turn them into reality, ensuring your experience with us is as exceptional and enjoyable as possible.



Fees & More

Each day trip costs \$3,000/trip

Price is inclusive for up to 30 participants (does not include meals or transportation)

We are fully equipped to accommodate all forms of observance

Our trips are designed to embrace and celebrate diversity, ensuring an inclusive experience for all participants.

Social Justice Experiences as a Year-Long Curriculum

- Commit to 5+ day trips throughout the school year and receive the opening lesson on your site led by Tzedek America - Intro to Social Justice (\$500 value)
- Each day trip is tailored to the social justice topic of your choice
- Day trips typically run from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM (times are flexible)

Choose from the following single-day trips...

or let us help you design your own personalized experience



Understanding Homelessness

Explore the complex dynamics shaping urban landscapes in Downtown LA. Witness the transformational journey through a gentrification tour, unveiling the intricate tapestry of the city's development. Venture into the heart of Skid Row, a neighborhood teeming with stories of resilience, where you'll connect with individuals impacted by homelessness and discover the tireless efforts of non-profits and social enterprises devoted to addressing this urgent issue. Gain profound insights, expand your perspective, and ignite your passion for advocacy as you navigate the soul of Los Angeles with us.



Environmental Justice

Delve into the multifaceted aspects of caring for our environment. Witness the breathtaking beauty of Los Angeles and its surrounding areas while discovering ways to safeguard the land and the diverse ecosystems it supports. Learn about *Bal Taschit* and how we are commanded not to destroy the land around us.



T'shuvah – Second Chances

Maimonides' four primary steps to t'shuvah come to life as participants witness true stories of reflection, repentance, and renewal. Experience the impact of this journey firsthand as we visit Beit T'shuvah, a Jewish addiction rehabilitation center, and Homeboy Industries, a beacon of hope for individuals seeking redemption after incarceration. Experience the power of forgiveness and second chances as we engage with these organizations dedicated to offering support and resources to those striving for a better life.



LGBTQIA+

Celebrate LA's vibrant diversity, paying homage to the trailblazers who have shaped our city's inclusive culture. Visit iconic sites such as the first Gay and Lesbian synagogue and the inaugural AIDS Memorial, and engage with relevant nonprofits and businesses dedicated to championing the rights and needs of LGBTQIA+ communities.



Food Justice

Embark on a journey of Food Justice, where we delve into the complexities of food deserts and injustices in Los Angeles through immersive experiences centered around growing, eating, and making food. Visit a restaurant dedicated to providing healthy, affordable options to underserved neighborhoods. Roll up your sleeves and dig into the soil at a community garden, discovering the power of sustainable agriculture firsthand. Channel your creativity as we explore sustainable living by crafting your own jar of pickles.



Honoring Older Adults

Engage in meaningful connections with seniors residing in long-term care facilities. Immerse yourself in the transformative power of creative art therapy as we forge bonds and share stories with older adults. Join us as we honor older adults' wisdom, experiences, and contributions, enriching their lives and fostering intergenerational connections through compassionate care and creative expression.



Diverse Abilities

Explore the inspiring work of non-profits and social enterprises supporting individuals with varying special needs. Engage in a diverse range of activities and visits, from attending theatrical productions featuring blind actors to participating in sensitivity training and basketball practice to promote inclusivity in sports. We will immerse ourselves in experiences that honor the unique talents and capabilities of individuals with diverse abilities, fostering empathy, understanding, and appreciation for the richness of human diversity.



Jewish Los Angeles

From the iconic streets of Pico/Robertson to the bustling neighborhoods of Fairfax and Boyle Heights, each region tells its own compelling story. Immerse yourself in the diverse cultural influences of Jewish and Israeli traditions that have shaped the fabric of Los Angeles. Explore these vibrant neighborhoods while gaining insights into the resilience and contributions of Jewish communities. Along the way, we may visit poignant sites like the Museum of Tolerance or the Holocaust Museum, deepening our understanding of the enduring legacy of Jewish heritage and confronting the realities of antisemitism.



Immigration Justice

Participants will learn from immigrants and refugees, meet immigration attorneys and leaders who run non-profits to assist immigrants and refugees, attend a portrait drawing workshop, and dine at a restaurant owned by refugees.



Racial Justice

We will delve deeply into the forgotten history of Santa Monica as we meet a historian and activist who is black and has grown up in Santa Monica. She will share with us her memories of spending her childhood on segregated beaches and enlighten us about the changes that have taken place in her once black-owned neighborhood. As we follow in her footsteps, we will learn about red lining and the loss of this community's generational wealth as well as her leading role in working with the city of Santa Monica to compensate the black community for the loss of black-owned homes and businesses.



Social Enterprises

Participants will study Jewish forms of giving and learn that the highest form of giving is enabling someone to be self-sufficient. This concept comes to life as we learn about the difference between a social enterprise and a traditional non-profit by shopping at thrift stores, visiting restaurants with a purpose, and meeting the people who work at the organizations these businesses support. We create a fun contest for the participants that connects them with the concepts presented in this experience.



Students and teachers from Valley Beth Shalom make care packages with "Every Day Action" as part of a single-day experience with Tzedek America



TESTIMONIALS

“

This day trip was so impactful because it turned all of the history that I usually learned from a text book into reality by being able to see the historic landmarks and listen to stories of oppression. It added a completely different perspective that I couldn't have learned in a classroom.

-Student

”

“

There is so much about my own city and community that I don't know, and now I feel a responsibility to learn as much as I can and advocate for the rights/equality/safety of people within just a few miles of me who don't share my privileges.

-Student

”

“

"I thought that this was the best part of the whole year. It was most definitely worthwhile because I, growing up, have always been told about how terrible the situation is. [This] always made people experiencing homelessness feel like a disconnected group of our population. This experience was a really good way to educate people and show them that those are real people, too, who are going through a difficult time in their life."

-Student

”

“

Here's the good news: News about how incredible your programs are spreading!! Kids want to be there, and parents want their kids to participate. Who knew that we would have over 100 kids sign up!?!?!?

-Religious School Director

”

“

Tzedek worked closely with our faculty to tailor the program so that it pushed students to ask important questions and sit with discomfort while also creating a sense of fun and belonging. The community partners Tzedek works with are unique and wonderful people that we could not access on our own, and together they paint a complicated and beautiful picture of L.A.'s history and promise. The program design was purposeful down to each detail, but the Tzedek staff was also flexible and able to problem-solve in real time. I'm not sure any other educational travel organization is doing this kind of work at the crossroads of Jewish identity and social justice.

-Director of Experiential Education

”

“

Mackenzie's story [at Beit T'Shuvah] was so relatable to me and made me truly feel seen and comforted to know that I wasn't the only one.

-Student

”

“

it was nice to learn survival skills and about how much the natural earth has to offer

-Student

”



Tzedek America's Mitzvah Project Central elevates the mitzvah project component of the B'nai Mitzvah experience by supporting students in finding a meaningful mitzvah project, and inspiring them to become involved in an organization and/or cause that they will feel connected to for many years to come. We know your families will benefit from our valuable resources while you enjoy the ease that having us as your partners will provide including:



OFFICE HOURS & RESOURCES

- Twice weekly online (Zoom) office hours to help students plan and implement their project.
- A "Yelp-style" directory of local, pre-vetted, non-profit organizations excited to take 12-year olds as volunteers.
- Support as students are empowered to grow leadership skills and independence



GUIDANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Guidance as well as email templates and phone scripts, empowering students to take ownership of their mitzvah project.
- Monthly updates and check-ins with educators to keep you apprised of your students' progress



NEWSLETTERS & PROGRAMMING

- Monthly newsletters that include volunteer opportunities, highlight B'nai Mitzvah students doing great work, and offer family friendly Jewish text study to encourage conversation at home.
- In person programming and volunteer opportunities for students and families
- Webinars in which students can meet and learn from leaders of local non-profits



CONTEXT

- Opportunity for students to connect their mitzvah project to their B'nai Mitzvah studies through researching their Torah portion, Jewish Values, and other areas of Jewish interest.



Learn more:



<https://tzedekamerica.org/mitzvah-project-central/>



Get in touch:

mpc@tzedekamerica.org



"Working with Tzedek America has been a wonderful experience for Central Synagogue. Their staff has supported our students in shaping and executing their projects and has both encouraged and honored them along the way. It has been very helpful to us to work in partnership with Tzedek America to ensure that our students have meaningful B'nei Mitzvah projects, and their team is able to track and follow up with students regularly. Tzedek America has been a great addition to our B'nei Mitzvah program, and we look forward to continuing our partnership."

-Rabbi Rosenthal, Central Synagogue NY



"As I become a Bar Mitzvah, this special occasion marks an opportunity to begin the next chapter of my life making a difference in the world, through the Jewish values of being compassionate towards others and Tikkun Olam - repairing the world."

-Student



"Thanks for all of your help and support throughout this entire process - it was very helpful in the beginning to get some guidance!"

-Parent

"You are doing such great and necessary work. I wish there was something like this to inspire me as a young teen."

-Parent

"Thank you so much for your generosity and for your guidance during this process."

-Parent



Elana Beame, Mitzvah Project Central



Bridges of Understanding

CONFRONTING ANTISEMITISM WORKSHOPS

Interactive Workshops to Foster Empathy and Understanding

Tzedek America's dynamic educators lead interactive workshops for Jewish and non-Jewish teens in Los Angeles based public and independent schools. Through engaging activities and guided discussions, students from diverse backgrounds build relationships, explore commonalities, and gain a deeper understanding of Jewish culture. This relationship-building fosters empathy, helping to counter antisemitism at its roots.



Empowering Youth to Become Allies

At the core of this program is the empowerment of students to not only learn but also act as allies. Participants are encouraged to stand in solidarity with marginalized communities, promoting inclusivity and respect. By fostering this sense of responsibility, we equip young people with the tools to challenge bigotry and advocate for a more just society.

Proactive and Preventative Approach

By addressing misconceptions early and creating opportunities for positive interactions, our program preemptively combats the rise of antisemitism. Tzedek America's approach emphasizes prevention over reaction, making it a cutting-edge strategy in promoting tolerance and cultural understanding.



BRING US TO YOUR INSTITUTION:

 650-539-8721
 www.tzedekamerica.org
 info@tzedekamerica.org



A.R.C.H. Fellowship

Amplifying Resilience through Culture and Heritage

Jewish Teens of Color in High School:

Ready to amplify your voice?

Ready to celebrate your heritage?

Ready to hang out with other Jewish teens of color?

Ready to eat great food?

Ready to explore Los Angeles?



Apply today!

The fellowship will include: Monthly Hybrid Meetups. Join meaningful discussions, workshops, and cultural activities throughout the school year, led by two inspiring Jews of Color, Randy and Ziggy.

Real Conversations: Explore the unique experiences and challenges faced within the Jewish community, fostering real and deep dialogue.

Community Engagement: Build relationships with JOC teens and influential community leaders across Los Angeles.

Contact Us:

Ziggy Valdez at ziggy@tzedekamerica.org
Text Us: 650-539-8721

Applications Due: October 21

Fellowship Runs From: November to May



The Rabbi Emily Feigenson Impact Fellowship

An immersive education program for Jewish Youth Professionals



Tzedek America aims to equip Jewish educators with the tools and knowledge to guide middle and high school students through educational social justice experiences.

What You'll Gain:

Expert Training: Tzedek America's master educators will teach our tried-and-true methods for integrating Jewish teachings and social justice themes and guide you through the logistics of planning impactful educational experiences.

Mentorship & Peer Support: Receive guidance from experienced experiential educators and collaborate with your cohort.

Certificate of Completion: Upon completion, you will join a network of visionary educators who are using the power of Jewish values and experiential learning to shape a more just world.



Fellowship Includes:

3 Zoom Sessions: Three, two-hour zoom sessions (12/16/24, 2/10/25 and 4/28/25) with Tzedek America educators sharing our philosophies and methods regarding experiential social justice education and curriculum development through a Jewish lens.

Los Angeles Trip (4 days): June 8-11, 2025 participate in a fully-funded* Tzedek America Social Justice Journey in Los Angeles, CA, where you'll engage in Tzedek America's programming, including a "behind the scenes look" at why and how TA develops their programs.

*Fellows are responsible for transportation to Los Angeles. Once in LA, the trip is all-inclusive. Complete details can be found by using the "More Information" QR Code below.



Apply Now!

This fellowship is open to both new and experienced educators working with Jewish middle and high school students who are passionate about social justice, eager to enhance their skills, and committed to making a lasting impact in their learning communities. Participation is limited and selective. The program fee is \$500, with need-based scholarships available on a first-come, first-served basis.



More Information

Fellowship Sponsors:



Reconstructionist
Educators of
North
America



Apply Now





Our son Charlie traveled to Guatemala with Tzedek America in the winter of 8th grade. If I said it was a life-changing experience that would be an understatement. He experienced everything we hoped for and more. Traveling with friends abroad, independent of us, while spending time with people in another culture, building bunk beds for underprivileged children, shopping in the local markets, and seeing the Jewish community in another country - - where they spoke different languages at the door but a shared common language in prayer - - was revelatory for him, and helped him develop more keenly a sense of himself and his place in the world for sure. And the cliff-diving and chocolate-making were just a couple of exceedingly creative activities Tzedek America programmed for them, always balancing the immersive experiences with the fun.

As things would turn out, this was a year before the pandemic. We couldn't have foreseen the circumstances that would play out in the coming months, but in hindsight, this trip was instrumental in his ability to navigate the lockdown. When he came home from the trip he seemed to have grown, not just physically, **but he had a greater sense of who he was**, and this helped keep him grounded as things shifted beneath his feet. He kept in touch with a number of his friends from the trip online. His experience with Tzedek America also **informed his desire to help others** who were struggling with the isolation - - and his understanding, during the challenges presented by online classes, that there was a world outside his shoes, and outside of his bedroom.

Now that he is back in school in-person, he still talks about the trip as **one of the most eye-opening experiences** he's had. We were grateful for the opportunity to be able to send him on the trip at the time. Looking back, we are even more grateful now that we did.

Parent of Participant



I have never really thought about Alabama, Tennessee, or Georgia. Never considered the culture, the history, and the intersection of the two, in these places that I have felt so essentially disconnected from. I can't say my experiences in these new places have fulfilled some expectations or aligned with my imagination. Because I never really imagined. I never pictured the hotel room where Dr. King spent his final moments. Never imagined the bridge in Selma, where Bloody Sunday took place. Never envisioned the lynching memorial in Montgomery and was never able to feel the gravity of the thousands who were lynched, seeing their names, hearing their stories. But most importantly, I never considered how these things would impact me.

On this trip, we did not just hear stories, see images, or discuss places where historically significant events occurred. **We felt them. We experienced them. And to me, that is powerful.**

We have seen that history is written on the walls of the south. And obviously when I say that, I mean it literally and figuratively. When I think of those words, I think of the EJI museum we went to yesterday in Montgomery- where in one of the exhibits, there was a section of a brick wall from the 1800s, which was made by slave labor. I think of the plaques scattered around museums, memorials, and sidewalks, acknowledging and honoring this history, showing an effort to never forget it. But I also think of how within every southerner, there is a truth. If they are white, it's a truth that they, though perhaps not directly, have been complicit in a society which facilitated exploitation, violence, and discrimination. If they are black, it's a truth that the places they call home were built on a foundation of their own people's oppression. And on this trip I realized that this truth can never be erased, only addressed.

Though this experience wasn't designed to be fun- it was meant to be heavy and impactful- sharing this trip with my class, and having some fun times, has made learning about painful history a bit less painful. Ending our day with friends in our hotel and even teachers has enriched this experience.

Though in the end, I think I leave understanding. I understand that I will never know the fear an African American must endure when doing many of the things we do everyday. **I understand that history must be addressed, in order to heal, and progress.** And I understand the importance of facing truths which may be unpleasant.

And I think in our participation, in our willingness to confront what we have learned head-on, we have shown that we all want to understand. And in that strive to know, to learn, and ultimately, to understand, to me, something essential happens. The desire to take action, and make a change, is born.

Student, de Toledo High School



WE LOOK FORWARD TO LEARNING WITH YOU!



650-539-8721



www.tzedekamerica.org



info@tzedekamerica.org

