

Schechter students get a lesson in 'green'

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NJIN Bureau Chief/Middlesex

A class of sixth-graders from the Solomon Schechter Day School of Raritan Valley in East Brunswick got a four-day autumn "green" lesson in Judaism and the environment.

The students in Andrea Barnett's science class spent Oct. 4-7 at the Teva Learning Center at the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Connecticut, which seeks to renew the ecological wisdom in Judaism by immersing program participants in the natural world and providing activities to develop a more meaningful relationship with nature and Jewish practices.

"If we don't save the environment, bad things will happen to the Earth," said Yoni Wechsler, 11, of North Brunswick. "We should-

n't waste energy."

At the center, said Emma Weiss of East Brunswick, also 11, the students put on plays at night and conducted experiments. One that particularly struck her was learning how sunlight blends with carbon dioxide to create global warming.

The Schechter students went on hikes in the woods to study nature up close, checked the pond for living invertebrates, petted goats, and picked produce from the garden. Among the other activities they took part in were playing games that taught ecological concepts, making a campfire, writing and performing songs, meditating, and making lip gloss in "the spa."

Zoe Adams, 11, of East Brunswick said that on Tu B'Shevat — the Jewish New Year for Trees that will be celebrated this year on Jan. 20 — her class will

conduct lessons on the environment for younger students.

"It will be a Teva day," she said. ■

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Hiking through the woods during their stay at Teva are, from left Dayna Bier of East Brunswick, Jonah Rosen of Highland Park, Yoni Wechsler of North Brunswick, and, in rear, Aviva Kamens of Highland Park.

Photos courtesy Solomon Schechter Day School of Raritan Valley



Students Ben Albertson and Mikayla Talmud of East Brunswick study pond life with a staff member from Teva.

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"It's a gradual process but Jews were able to transfer their allegiance from the Muslims to Christians," said Gampel.

The scholar will go on to discuss the complicated relationship among Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Jerusalem, each thinking they have "the very exclusive notion of what is right and what is wrong."

"We always have the dream, whether it is in Andalusia or

Jerusalem, of everyone holding hands and dancing off into the sunset, but reality is a bit different," said Gampel.

The concluding program will focus on the 12th-13th-century Spanish scholar Nahmanides.

"Students and peers who have heard Gampel as a speaker told us the room lights up when he talks," said event cochair Gustine Matt. ■

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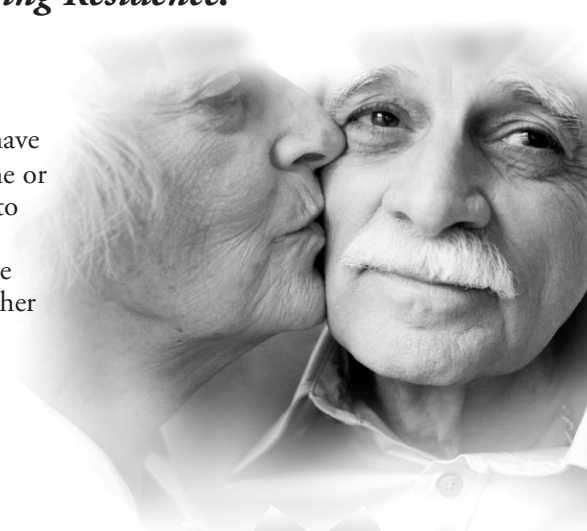
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