



Israel Center for Excellence
through Education
המרכז הישראלי למצוינות בחינוך

Weinberg Science Summer Program
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Israel Center for Excellence through Education
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A Summer "Sense-sation"! Weinberg Science Summer Program

Exploration, research, discovery – and fun was the agenda for nine summer days for the talented group of students who arrived at the Schusterman Campus of the Israel Arts and Science Academy (IASA) campus in Jerusalem. Following a new format, this year's camp was even more selective than in years past – accepting just 38 gifted students into the science track, and joining with the larger Exploration Camp for social activities. Excitement permeated the campus on June 27th, as youngsters prepared to encounter amazing new science, challenging math and logic puzzles, and diverse new friends!



Making friends, making connections.

The highly competitive program generated more than 100 applicants; all having graduated 7th grade in the Mitchell Excellence 2000 program – the junior high school mathematics and science enrichment program of the Israel Center for Excellence through Education. Successful applicants are highly motivated and have impressive achievements in their classes, and have been carefully and enthusiastically recommended by their teachers. The outcome of the selection process produces an amazing concentration of the brightest young, scientific minds from around the country. As always, the group was



Relaxing at the pool after classes.

quite heterogeneous. Participants came from every size city, town and village, *kibbutzim*, and *moshavim*, religious and secular Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, native-born Israelis and new immigrants. The camaraderie, especially for many living away from home for the first time, with youngsters they might never have encountered in their daily lives, was a wonderful and inspiring surprise for them.

The Weinberg Summer Science Program places special emphasis on encouraging students from marginal or disadvantaged communities, who accounted for a large percentage of the participants. Many of these youngsters receive full or partial scholarships. For these young people, the program is a unique opportunity to experience a state-of-the-art educational facility, away from any stresses of home life.

Not a moment to waste!

The Weinberg Program maintains a jam-packed schedule of classes and activities. Waking up in the IASA dormitories, participants breakfast in the dining hall, attend 'morning meeting' and head off to classes focusing on ingenious and challenging scientific and mathematical topics.

Participants chose one of two main science tracks:

- ◆ **Biology** – Campers explored the biology of the human body, focusing on the 5 senses. With the use of computer aids and by conducting experiments, participants investigated how eye color is determined and discovered how depth in vision is achieved.
- ◆ **Chemistry** – The chemistry of energy and motion was explored through stimulating experiments and hands-on activities.



Testing our senses in the computer lab.



Sparking an interest in chemistry.

The science program is integrated with classes about mathematical thinking; this year the subjects included pre-algebra, elementary combinatorics, and numerical palindromes. All of the programs introduce exciting new topics to explore - not traditionally included in regular school classes.

Afternoons are reserved for elective workshops in which students can choose from many inventive options, including volley ball, drama, computer games, theatrical make-up, "survivor", 3-D memory and more. Discovering new worlds, broadening an outlook, sharing adventures from an interdisciplinary focus; these are the heart of the Weinberg Summer Experience.



Exercising our minds... and bodies!

The schedule includes time to lounge and play at a near-by swimming pool, and fit in wonderful outings and trips. All the campers joined together for social activities in the evenings, including a movie-night, inflatable moonwalk event, and a talent show. "This was

the best summer of my life!" enthused Almog, a camper from the south of Israel.



Sharing our talents.

The dedicated and experienced staff is the catalyst that ensures the success of the Weinberg Summer Science Program. The team of enthusiastic, experienced and accessible counselors, teachers, and curriculum specialists understands the academic and social needs of this group of highly able and motivated students, and assures that they are met. Participants are

divided into smaller groups so that they can develop a relationship with specific staff members responsible for their well-being and to assure they get the maximum benefit from the experience. *"The program makes a huge difference for the participants"*, remarked one counselor. *"They always leave saying – 'We have so many new friends!' and 'We'll never look at science in the same way!' I feel lucky to be a part of Weinberg"*.

With lots to do and a relatively short schedule, it felt as though activities were just getting under way when the time arrived to begin preparations for the closing day exhibition.

Achievements on Exhibit

Students inject creativity to the knowledge they acquire during the program; deciding on a unique topic to present at the exhibition. On the last day, parents and family members arrived to marvel at what had been accomplished in such a short time. Exhibits were inspired by the stimulating topics explored during the week, and from each of the study groups. The students proudly and enthusiastically explained their projects and experiments to visiting family and friends with PowerPoint presentations and displays.



Presenting what we've learned.

For students from disadvantaged or marginal communities, this serves as an invaluable opportunity to begin to envision a brighter future for themselves. Program Director, Ofer Zaguri, explained *"Parents call me to say how their child has been inspired. They can't get over how their child has gained so many new friends from all over the country and how many new interests were sparked, by just one summer program!"*

Once home, students are able to share the rich and robust benefits they experienced. The Weinberg Science Summer Program provides a unique opportunity to experience the cutting edge of science and technology studies. Many of the students will be motivated to apply for admission to the Israel Arts and Science Academy; they find the “living experience” a wonderful introduction to the joys of school life.

