

Dear Prospective JFI parents,

In 2011 our son Jordan participated in the Journey for Identity program. As he went through the application process, was accepted, and then participated in all the introductory workshops/seminars/activities, we kept focusing on what an incredible time he was going to have in Poland and Israel. What we failed to think about was the impact that the Israeli students' visit here would have on our entire family. We were so lucky that Jordan was matched up with Matan, who proved to be his twin personality. The guys hit it off instantly and Matan seamlessly became part of our family and we learned so much about Israeli culture just from the few days we had with him and the other Israelis. Due to the wonders of modern technology, we also got to know Matan's family via skype, email and facebook. It is our dream to take the whole family to Israel some day and we know we will have "family" waiting for us when we get there.

And then there was Jordan's experience when he did go to Poland and Israel! "Life changing" sounds so clichéd and yet it is so true. Holocaust lessons were brought to life in a somber, poignant but oh so important manner. And Israel became "real", a place and a people Jordan fell in love with and can't wait to return to. Though a year has passed since Jordan's trip, the bonds amongst the Israelis and the Americans remains strong. The extra bonus of the trip were the friendships Jordan also made here in Rochester with Jewish teens outside of his own temple. This group still gets together and even camped together this summer!

We can't recommend JFI highly enough to Jewish teens who want to experience their heritage in a unique and highly personal manner. They will laugh, they will cry, they will bond, they will grow and they will have the time of their lives!

Sincerely,  
Lorri and John Diggory  
Parents of a JFI 2011 participant