

# CAMP TEL YEHUDAH

The national teen leadership camp of Young Judaea

## Friendship, Leadership and Everything In Between

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Written by Molly Stein, Hadracha Merakezet (unit head), and Talia Niederman, Yachad Merakezet, at Tel Yehudah this summer.

In the winter of 2004 our parents decided to send us to Camp Sprout Lake that upcoming summer. Come July we headed up to camp with no idea of the impact that summer would have on our lives. Within days we had made incredibly close friendships that we would retain for years. We found ourselves back at Sprout Lake for two more summers and then on to Tel Yehudah. At TY it wasn't just about staying up late sharing secrets in the bunk or making up silly songs in the chadar ochel, it was about exploring our own ideas of what it means to be a Zionist, to be a Jew, and to be a leader. It was through the experiences at camp, both planned and spontaneous, that we were introduced to ideas that challenged our conceptions of ourselves and the world. As *chanichot* (campers) in Hadracha, the oldest age group, each of us had an opportunity to be a Maccabia (color war) captain.

Still when thinking back to all of our camp memories this is one that stands out. Cheering with your team at the end of a long exhausting day, looking around to your friends and *madrichim* (counselors) and knowing that you're a part of this community, that your years of camp have helped you become a leader in this community is a moment that neither of us will ever forget. After TY it was only natural that we went on Machon and Year Course. Growing up in Young Judaea we had heard all about these programs from our *madrichim* and could not wait to experience Israel ourselves. After Year Course we came back to camp and worked *asmadrichot* for three summers. Now we're here as *merekzot* (unit heads) and could not be more excited to pass on this experience to another generation. TY has shaped us in so many ways over these past years, but the real reason that we keep coming back is because of the lasting friendships that were built in Barryville.

