



Benji Fages



Ben Sterlin, Rachel Goldberg, Amanda Freedman and Josh Moscoe

TanenbaumCHAT students hone Leadership Skills at **BBYO**

At TanenbaumCHAT, *tikkun olam* – making the world a better place – teaches our students to give back to the community. A number of students recently discovered that joining BBYO, a world-wide, pluralistic organization that brings together Jewish teens from all backgrounds, is complementary to their education.

B'nai B'rith Youth Organization

enables teens to create their own meaningful experiences

TCW Grade 10 students Ben Sterlin, Josh Moscoe, Amanda Freedman and Rachel Goldberg have all been a part of BBYO since 2010 and see it as a great atmosphere to meet kids from other schools and make their own mark. Rachel points out that BBYO is not what people think of a Jewish youth organization. "Some people envision that we are all sitting in a circle, reciting prayers, but it brings Jewish kids together through fun and engaging activities," she says.

The teens meet once a week with their chapters and were recently elected to chapter leadership positions. "You can choose your level of involvement, and even though it's not expected, you want to do more," explains Ben. He is Chapter Godol (president) and Josh is Chapter Mazkir (secretary) of Magen, Amanda is Chapter S'ganit (vice-president) L'Chaim Chapter, and Rachel is Regional Morah (new members) of BBYO Lake Ontario Region. Ben, Josh and Rachel recently attended the Chapter Leadership Training Conference (CLTC) at Beber Camp in Mukwonago, WI which primes them to be chapter leaders.

First organized in 1924 as B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, BBYO's programming enables teens to create their own meaningful experiences, whether they are interested in discovering their Jewish roots, playing sports, making new friends, honing their leadership skills, traveling or changing the world through activism.

J-Serve, the Global Day of Jewish Youth Service, is a BBYO-led endeavour which brought together 500 Toronto-area Jewish teens last April. Along with 10,000 other youths across North America, the teens volunteered for a wide spectrum of organizations and causes – such as Passover cleaning at local synagogues, visiting patients at Baycrest or selling pins for the Canadian Cancer Society. "In addition to coming together and helping out in the community, BBYO also helps you become more independent, manage your life and grow as a person," says Amanda.

The four agree their friendship with each other has strengthened because of BBYO, and all of them have met teens from across the world. "We are extremely lucky that we have the freedom to be Jews in Canada. We

know teens in other countries who say they are going to a soccer tournament when they are really going to a BBYO convention because they can't openly admit who they are," explains Josh.

Benji Fages, a Grade 11 student at TCK and a former student council representative is also a member of BBYO, and was recently one of three Canadian teenagers who took part in BBYO/Panim (a division of BBYO which provides community service) *One For All: A Jewish Teen Issue Summit on Equality* in Boston. The summit addressed equality issues surrounding race, religion, ability, class, gender and sexuality.

His involvement in BBYO and other interests led him to co-chair of the Coalition of Jewish Teens (CJT), a new national group that brings together diverse members of North American youth groups. "We'd like to create a coalition of the leadership from different groups, so we can connect Jewish youth regardless of where they are on the spectrum," he says.

Interested in joining BBYO? Visit bbyo.ca

I Am
Involved