

Shalom,

I have some exciting news to share! Hadassah Neurim Youth Aliyah students qualified to attend an international robotics competition in Houston! The team has 15 students, aged 15 – 18. They are ranked 11th internationally! They are in Houston for a full week.

There are 10 other teams from Israel. Those 10 teams come from excellent schools in nicer neighborhoods with parents who are well off.

Our team is unique. While the students come from our excellent school at Hadassah Neurim Youth Aliyah Village, they are all lone immigrants with no family support. They came to Israel from the FSU and Ukraine without their families. They don't have parents who can afford to pay for a trip to the US or even give them some spending money.

The kids competed against the most distinguished and excellent schools in Israel and won! Our Youth Aliyah Villages give youth-at-risk opportunities they would not get if they weren't under our care. The kids have been given the chance to excel and they succeeded in the field of robotics. It's a "game changer" for them and the rest of our village and this will continue to contribute to their future. They will do well on their matriculation exams and will likely test better when they enter the army – and that will lead to better positions.

Hadassah Neurim Youth Aliyah Village, co-owned by the Jewish Agency for Israel, serves 450 students each year and is a boarding school for 360 of them. When enrolling in the program, Neurim staff, teachers and mentors had one goal: to inspire the students and motivate them to become a part of the program and advance their knowledge of science and technology. The students gave their teachers so much more and excelled in the local competition in Israel. This led to them having been invited to take place in the international competition.

The coordinators of the trip had to work fast to make this trip happen. They bought 19 airline tickets, booked seven hotel rooms for seven nights, bought visas, and budgeted for food and ground transportation. Not an easy feat, but they did it! They found donors to cover most of the expenses.

Hadassah Greater Southwest Region board members and members from around the region donated to help with expenses and provide some spending money for the students. Friends are also hosting Shabbat dinner, a hot dog cookout, some other meals and sending them to NASA.

If you would like to help cover expenses for this trip and/or contribute to the robotics program, please mail your check to Hadassah, 24 Braeswood Square, Houston, TX 77096.

Many thanks and best wishes for a Shabbat shalom,

Linda