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WITH

• ALEXANDER MUSS HIGH SCHOOL IN ISRAEL •

WORDS BY Daniel Peri



**I**

T'S NO SECRET that colleges look for that certain quality, that "edge" when sifting through the thousands of applications that cross their desks. We spoke to three Alexander Muss High School in Israel (AMHSI-JNF) alumni to learn how studying abroad in Israel during high school helped them get accepted to their college of choice, prepare for life on campus, and

excel in their studies. From college-style Core Studies to learning how to live and think independently, AMHSI-JNF is the only college prep, high school study abroad program that connects students to their Jewish identity while providing them with the tools needed to succeed and stand out from the crowd.

## RUTH DAVIS



AGE • 18

Yale University

Class of 2023

MAJOR • Jewish Studies

FROM • Bala Cynwyd, PA

### **What led you to attend Alexander Muss High School in Israel (AMHSI-JNF)?**

My high school, Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy, offers juniors the opportunity to attend AMHSI-JNF. My older sister had gone and really loved it, so I knew it was an opportunity I had to take advantage of it. So, I spent three months in Israel!

### **How did AMHSI-JNF prepare you for college and adult life?**

AMHSI-JNF prepared me in many ways. It was the most rigorous intellectual environment I'd been in. The curriculum has you constantly thinking about deep questions and teaches you to communicate your thoughts effectively. It also gave me a stronger sense of self and Jewish identity. Those are extremely important going into college, where you are supposed to explore and find yourself, and it's easy to lose your sense of self in a group. AMHSI-JNF also prepared me in a practical sense for the experience of living on a campus. I learned how to keep track of my money, how to live with roommates, and how to use my parents as a resource without being entirely reliant on them (because it's really hard to rely on your parents

when they're not only thousands of miles away, but also in a different time zone).

### **What was your favorite, and most surprising, part of your experience?**

Core class—known as Israel Studies—was what made my experience what it was. From the very first *tiyul* (trip), I was overwhelmed by the experience of learning Jewish history in the place it occurred to the point that I cried when we learned that a gate we were sitting on was built by King Solomon. That feeling of awe and connection to Jewish history and Israel continued and only grew stronger throughout my time there. Each day came with a new appreciation for the traditions and history I'd been familiar with my whole life.

### **What about you changed as a result of your AMHSI-JNF experience?**

AMHSI-JNF gave me a stronger Jewish identity and connection to the Jewish people. Before, I regarded my Judaism as a personal thing—this is my practice, my studies, my history, and the foundation for how I live

my life as an Orthodox Jew. But AMHSI-JNF transformed my picture of Judaism to a broader, more communal one, and led me to double-down on my involvement in Jewish leadership and communal activities. AMHSI-JNF is a major reason why I am interested in majoring in Jewish Studies and going into Jewish education.

### **Did you use your AMHSI-JNF experience in your college application essay? What part do you think stood out most on your college applications?**

My experience at AMHSI-JNF was a critical part of my college application! I wrote my Common Application essay about my Core teacher, Reuven Spero, and the influence his class had on me. I think that the thoughtfulness and balanced approach to complex issues and the people I learned from showed through in my application.

### **Will you be involved in pro-Israel extracurriculars on campus as a result?**

Definitely. It has given me a stronger education and basis for any future Israel advocacy, and has inspired me to be more engaged in Jewish leadership.