

The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), in collaboration with The iCenter, is thrilled to welcome a cohort of talented 18-year-old Israelis to Chicago for the 2021-2022 academic year:

**INTRODUCING  
CHICAGO'S  
SHINSHINIM!**



**IDO AVITAN**



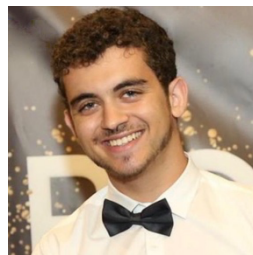
**NAOR AVITAN**



**NIR HOREV**



**BEN LADANY**



**IDO MEGIDISH**



**NITZAN ORNAN**



**NETA RUSHINEK**



**NOA TAL**



**TAMAR TALYOSEF**



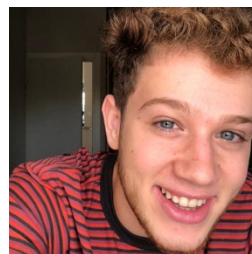
**ROMAN USIM**



**SHAI YISRAEL**



**ORI ZIGMAN**



**ROY ZOLTY**

[CLICK HERE FOR HOST FAMILY APPLICATION](#)

## WHO ARE THE SHINSHINIM?

**Shinshinim** are charismatic 18-year-old Israelis who engage and enrich the lives of children, their peers, and the broader community. *Shinshin* is an acronym for *shnat sherut* (a year of service). This group of Israelis has graduated high school and delayed their army service in order to serve as volunteer educators in communities around the world. Chicago's thirteen *shinshinim* are highly motivated and dedicated individuals representing the best of their generation in Israel.

**Shinshinim** participated in a rigorous year-long process implemented by JAFI, which included psychological screenings, interviews, intensive workshops, and conversations with Chicago representatives. Acceptance was based on previous experiences in group work, leadership skills, English fluency, and more.

**Shinshinim** take on active roles throughout the Jewish community including schools, synagogues, summer camps, youth organizations, and more. They facilitate fun and engaging activities related to contemporary Israeli culture, holidays, and Hebrew language. They also excel in the subjects of math, science, technology, and the arts! Many of the *shinshinim* have already spent time abroad.

## WHO ARE THE HOST FAMILIES?

Hosting a young Israeli in your home is an exciting and enriching opportunity for the entire family. Host families everywhere regard this as a deeply meaningful experience. Hosting a *shinshin* may only last several months, but the relationships last a lifetime. We're looking for **thirteen wonderful host families** in the Jewish community to be a part of this exciting experience.

We ask that host families:

- Offer a warm and loving environment
- Provide a private bedroom for the *shinshin*
- Have school-aged children at home
- Enjoy developing lifelong bonds with a new Israeli family member

## SHINSHINIM @ HOME

As the year progresses, parents, siblings, and even grandparents, aunts, and uncles come to see *shinshinim* as extended family members. There are also opportunities throughout the year to connect with your *shinshin's* family back in Israel for holidays, birthdays, and virtual multi-family gatherings!

**The year at a glance.** *Shinshinim* live with their host family for four months, and then return to Israel for two weeks in order to renew their visas. When they return to Chicago, there is an opportunity to join new host families for the remainder of the school year. They will spend their summer as counselors at various Jewish overnight summer camps.

**Communication is key.** Families are encouraged to consider the *shinshin* as part of their family. As such, the *shinshin* is expected to follow family rules and etiquette. It is vital to keep communication open and honest. Just remember that English is their second language, and although fluent, there may be nuances and phrases with which they may be unfamiliar. Establishing trust and open communication are key factors to building a strong relationship.

**Food is particularly important in the hosting relationship.** As with all members of your family, please be sure they are included in all family meal times and understand the “rules of food” in your home. Traditionally in Israeli culture, the biggest meal is in the middle of the day. It may take some time for them to adjust to American dinners. Be patient and thoughtful in your planning. They may be too shy at first to speak up about their needs, so you may need to approach them.

**We're in this together!** The *shinshinim* and the host families will have support from Elana Weiner-Kaplow, Chicago Hub Coordinator, and Shaylee Cioban, JAFI's representative to the Midwest. They will be available 24/7 for any questions or concerns that may arise.

We also hope to create a community among the host families, with opportunities to connect throughout the year.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Health Insurance:** Each *shinshin* has comprehensive medical coverage from JAFI. The *shinshin* and their parents participated in a complete briefing from JAFI about the coverage and the procedure for reimbursement. Should any health issues arise, Elana Weiner-Kaplow will be available to help navigate the situation.
- **Transportation:** JAFI provides cars to the *shinshinim* who have driver's licenses. The thirteen of them will arrange a carpool system among themselves for transport to and from the schools and synagogues in which they will be volunteering.
- **Finances:** JAFI provides each *shinshin* a stipend of \$250 per month for their personal incidentals. Aside from the monthly stipend, JAFI will provide an additional stipend for winter clothes, as well as a phone, computer, and credit card for gas.
- **Drugs and Alcohol:** There is a zero-tolerance policy.

## IN CONCLUSION

Thank you for your interest in hosting a *shinshin*! This truly is an opportunity that shouldn't be missed. Enjoying the company of your *shinshin* is an immersive Israeli experience from which you will all enjoy and grow. Your family will find themselves embracing the flavors of Israeli food, the sound of Israeli music, and the laughter of new friend.

Hosting a *shinshin* may only last 4 to 5 months, but the relationships endure.

If you are interested or have further questions, please contact Elana at [elana@theicenter.org](mailto:elana@theicenter.org).

SO YALLA!

[CLICK HERE FOR HOST FAMILY APPLICATION](#)

## COVID-19 INFORMATION

In addition to the Q&A below, we will be happy to answer any additional questions that you have. Please reach out to [elana@theicenter.org](mailto:elana@theicenter.org) for more information.

**Q:** *Are the shinshinim vaccinated?*

**A:** Yes. Every *shinshin* is fully vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine, and once eligible, will receive the booster shot as well.

**Q:** *Will the shinshinim be quarantined before they move into our home?*

**A:** Every *shinshin* will have received a negative COVID-19 result the day prior to their departure from Israel. Upon arrival to Chicago, *shinshinim* will spend a 3-day *shabbaton* together, and will be tested again before joining host families. We will be adhering to the most current CDC guidance throughout this experience.

**Q:** *Are host families responsible for caring for a shinshin if they contract COVID-19?*

**A:** Host families are not responsible for the *shinshin* if they contract COVID-19. *Shinshinim* are the responsibility of JAFI, who will step in to provide them with alternative housing, medical care, and will attend to all needs required.

**Q:** *What is the process of getting a shinshin medical attention if needed?*

**A:** If a *shinshin* needs medical attention (COVID -19 related or not), there is a phone tree in place to ensure they receive the medical treatment needed. The first line of communication is to contact Elana or Shaylee, who will establish a plan of action.

**Q:** *Will the shinshinim be working inside the schools in-person?*

**A:** *Shinshinim* will be teaching in-person and will comply with all health and safety directions from the CDC and school administration. If Illinois returns to Phase 2 or Phase 3, *shinshinim* may be instructed by the school to work from home.

**Q:** *If shinshinim are working from home, what do I need to provide?*

**A:** Your *shinshin* will need a private space to work and a reliable Wi-Fi connection. JAFI provides each *shinshin* with their own computer and phone.

**Q:** *What preventative measures will Shinshinim be taking while out in the community?*

**A:** In preparation for joining families and schools, *Shinshinim* will participate in extensive safety training. The iCenter and JAFI will instruct the *Shinshinim* not to participate in activities unless health regulations are strictly adhered to. *Shinshinim* will wear face masks, maintain social distance, and regularly wash their hands during all activities.