



Activities During the Pesach Break

Spotlight on Negba's Head of Maintenance: When Caretaking is More Than Just About the Facilities



On the surface, Yoav Yifrach's workday at Negba may seem ordinary. As Maintenance Head, his daily schedule includes a familiar log of tasks and repairs; repaint a wall, purchase activities supplies, mend a fence. But Yoav's routine also includes another no less important mission: to include Negba's kids in his work, whenever possible.

"It's an excellent opportunity to advance them by integrating them into the maintenance work," said Yoav. "When the kids and youth help me, they learn skills and how to be responsible, and it builds their self-esteem. It speaks directly to the goals of Negba."

Teens help out with more demanding jobs such as plastering, awning construction, painting, furniture assembly and light electric work. The younger kids try their hand at simple -and safer- chores like fetching a tool from the tool box, using a level to make sure something is straight, and turning a screwdriver to sturdy table legs. They also help maintain bicycles used in Negba's teen empowerment biking program.

"I learned to inflate a tire with a pump, and how to fix a shaky chair," said Noa, 9. "Afterwards I was able to fix the flat tire of my sister's bike." Friend Tehilla, 8, gained exposure to the metric system: "I learned how to measure by helping Yoav cut aluminum profiles."

The fact that the kids assist Yoav during recess or free time underscores how much they value the opportunity. Sometimes it is offered as a reward for completing homework, and then competition becomes tough. "The kids constantly ask to assist Yoav on a project," remarked Neta Shelly, a Negba counselor. "It makes them feel important. They always want to work with him."

Yoav proudly sees the fruits of his manual labor with the kids. "The technical skills they learn with me are then applied at home. It's something they can get their hands on, something very practical. It gives them skills for life."

