

New Jersey NCSY in Omaha

by **MARY SUE GROSSMAN**

Publicity Chair, Beth Israel Synagogue

A group of 11th and 12th grade young women from New Jersey NCSY and Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls will travel to Omaha, **Feb. 12-16**. The young women will be volunteering as part of a Leadership Chesed Mission. "The purpose of this Leadership Mission is to teach our teens the value of Chesed, Achdut and Tikkun Olam while exposing them to the beauty of smaller Jewish communities around the country" explains Regional Director, Rabbi Ethan Katz. "While in Omaha, the group will be volunteering with the Jewish preschool and day school plus the senior center to better connect and bond with the Jewish community as a whole." The teens will also be given the opportunity to work with Habitat for Humanity, working to construct and repair homes as well as the lives of their inhabitants. Gavi Lankin, Director of Operations, New Jersey NCSY, added "Our goal is to create a sense of unity among the greater community and the beautiful bond that exists between all Jewish communities around the world."

NCSY is a world-recognized organization that has played a pivotal role in the lives of Jewish teens across the globe. The organization's mission is to connect, inspire and empower Jewish teens and encourage passionate Judaism through Torah and tradition. NCSY connects with Jewish teens through innovative, cutting-edge social and recreational programs to develop a positive Jewish identity. Programming inspires Jewish teens through informal Jewish education, retreats and summer programs and develops leaders to become passionately committed leaders of the Jewish community and instruments for positive change and renewal.

The teens will have a full schedule while in Omaha after their arrival the evening of the 11th. Their volunteer activities at Habitat for Humanity will take place on the 12th. Friday events will include programs at Friedel Jewish Academy, the Pennie Z. Davis Child Development Center and the Rose Blumkin Jewish Home. The group will be hosted by Beth Israel for Shabbat and enjoy a special family Shabbat dinner as the kickoff for their Shabbaton at Beth Israel. Shabbat dinner is \$12 for adults, \$6 for children ages 4-18 and free for those 3 and under. An alternative family rate of \$30 is also an option. The dinner will consist of challah, chicken soup, roasted chicken sides and dessert. The dinner is open to all members of the community.

Rabbi Yaakov Weiss explained, "Having a group of teenagers join us for Shabbat gives everyone a unique opportunity to unite. It's especially important for our teens to understand that they are part of the greater Jewish family that expands well beyond the confines of Omaha, Nebraska."



Following the dinner, the NCSY group will be leading a special Shabbat Oneg.

On Shabbat morning, February 4th, the group will lead classes for Beth Israel youth. In the late afternoon, classes will be available for children, teens and adults. Saturday night will feature a scavenger hunt at Westroads Mall in which Omaha's Jewish teens are invited to participate. The young women will participate in more volunteering on Sunday with Omaha's chapter of Y.CHAD, Beth Israel, the Humane Society, and RESPECT before returning to New Jersey on Monday.

For more information on any of the events, please contact Rabbi Weiss at 402.556.6288 or rabiweiss@orthodoxomaha.org. The mission of Beth Israel Synagogue is to perpetuate the legacy of Torah Judaism in the modern world and provide a home for those who wish to learn about and observe halacha, Jewish law. Beth Israel Synagogue welcomes all persons of the Jewish faith to join, and accepts the diversity of practice and thought among its members. Beth Israel offers a variety of religious, cultural and social programs throughout the year.