

YOUTH SUMMER PROGRAM IN ISRAEL

If there had been concern that Israel's "Peace for Galilee" operation would deter Jewish youth from visiting Israel this summer, the fears can now be laid to rest. It appears now that Israel's military thrust into Lebanon did not have the adverse effect on Jews visiting Israel as may have been speculated. Quite the opposite. Some 6,300 young people went to Israel this summer to provide a helping hand in any way they could.

More than half of those people who went to Israel came from the United States in programs coordinated by the American Zionist Youth Foundation's Israel Program Center. In fact the number of participants in the

program increased this summer. In trying to explain this positive reaction to the Lebanon incursion, Avraham Katz, head of the Youth and Hechalutz Department of the Jewish Agency, said that there were some critical factors that added to the success of this year's summer program.

First was that Israel's northern border was secure whereas in previous years, actions by the PLO had limited travel to the north. Factors that added to the overall success of the program also included, as Katz explained, the "rediscovery of the Negev and Judaeen Deserts." He said that while Sinai was occupied, program participants were sent into the Sinai to ex-

perience the growth and development of the territory; now the experience is intensified because they participate in the growth of Israel.

The most resounding declaration concerning this successful summer program made by Katz, who assessed the program to AZYF recently, was that the huge participation in programs in Israel "proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the spirit of the youth who immigrated and developed the state of Israel still burns in our young people all over the world."

*Happy
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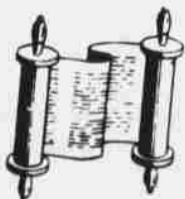
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