

“When I Want To I Can Achieve Everything”

“When I don’t want to do something, I say that I can’t. But when I want to, I can achieve anything.” These words, by Yoed, z”l, a former student, sum up the attitude of the young men at the AMIT Bienenfeld Hevruta Yeshiva on the campus of AMIT Kfar Batya in Ra’anana.

The Hevruta Yeshiva is very special, starting with its student population. The students share a history of academic failure that damaged their self-esteem and sense of self-worth. In the past students like these moved from school to school, opted out of studies, and gave up on the system. They were considered academic washouts and saw themselves as such. After enrolling in AMIT Bienenfeld Hevruta, these same students have grown secure, full of pride and self-confidence. They are immersed in their favorite areas of study: some perform music to audiences of excited youth and proud parents; others are accomplished athletes and sportsmen; yet others have become adept campers and guides.

Thanks to the unique educational environment of the yeshiva, students experience a marked increase in self-esteem. How is this accomplished? “We identify the type of intelligence each student has and emphasize those areas in which he is strong and has a chance to succeed and develop,” says principal Rabbi Yoram Shamir.

The educational philosophy behind this experimental yeshiva focuses on the student’s strengths and invests in empowering and enriching them. Thus the student’s self-confidence grows. With the newly gained confidence he achieves further accomplishments and enters a cycle of success. In practice, each and every student is strongly encouraged and provided with the resources to help discover and cultivate his unrealized talents. Whether through music, sports or environmental studies, the potential that was dormant in them is revealed, and the young men emerge self-assured and self-reliant.

How is this accomplished? “Our music majors receive forty hours of specialized instruction per week,” Rabbi Shamir clarifies. “Each student is assigned a private tutor who instructs him throughout the year,” he adds. A number of the music students have formed their own bands that perform regularly throughout Israel and produce home made CDs. Students majoring in sports receive instruction forty hours per week. “This year we introduced a course in American football taught to our sports majors by specialist instructors. Graduates of our sports program go on to become lifeguards, gym coaches and assistants to basketball coaches.” Students who major in environmental studies receive survival training and spend time hiking outdoors every single week of the school year. “They have access to a jeep and their own camping equipment. They sleep at the campsite; they cook and do laundry on their own. They learn real self-reliance and become excellent guides.”



The administrative system of the AMIT Bienenfeld Hevruta Yeshiva is also unconventional. Students and administration are engaged in a partnership that establishes the curriculum, decides which days are to be vacation days, and plans the school’s various social events. Together they also frame the disciplinary rules. The students even help decide who will be accepted into the next incoming class. “They actually have veto power,” Shamir explains. In this way, the students are true partners in their own growth and development. They experience the best non-conventional education offered in Israel. This guides them

towards becoming responsible members of Israeli society. Yoed, z”l, was right. When AMIT Hevruta Yeshiva students want to, they can achieve almost anything.

