

THE MILLER HIGH SCHOOL HONORS PROGRAM

By Ruth Friedman

The word is out and enrollment in the Miller High School Honors Program at HUC-JIR/NY increased by 500% last year to a record high of 50 students. Students are telling their friends about the program, which provides leadership training, in depth Jewish studies, and the opportunity to meet teenagers from other Reform communities.

Rabbis, cantors, and educators select students from their congregations to participate in this two-year Sunday seminar program for 11th and 12th graders from Reform synagogues in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Seymour and Claire Glass Miller, founders of the program, noted, "It says something for the quality of this program that it can draw on the precious weekends of high school students from the far reaches of the metropolitan area. The probability of their becoming future Jewish leaders is immensely gratifying to us."

HUC-JIR rabbinical, cantorial, and education students teach and tailor the curriculum based on the interests of their students. Subjects cover Torah study, Jewish history, Israeli current events, Hebrew, and *midrash*, among others. Teacher Joshua Burrows, a 4th year HUC-JIR rabbinical student,

"I keep talking about the program and all that I learned. I want my friends to join the program."

remarked that the program is "a wonderful opportunity for teenagers who want to expand their Jewish learning in ways that they haven't in other places."

Each Sunday session includes 3 academic topics, lunch, and services.

"I believe that everything I have learned will eventually come out in my life, and all the information that we have learned will be applied."

Students study Jewish texts as a foundation to evaluate critical issues facing American and world Jewry. Activities include discussion groups, *midrash* workshops, research projects, guest speakers, and field trips. Teachers encourage the students to share their ideas in group study sessions and help prepare them to lead similar sessions in their home synagogues. Students also learn to lead services and many lead services during the course of the program. The students' enthusiasm for the program is apparent. Cantor Gabi Arad (NY '03), seen teaching her students in this



photo, said, "This program is a teacher's dream because students want to be here and learn."

Jo Kay, Director of the New York School of Education and of the Miller High School, remarked, "The Miller High School Honors Program provides an opportunity for young leaders to hone their

"I liked our in-depth discussions best. Everyone was always able to voice their opinions."

"The program enabled me to develop good leadership skills and discuss ideas I might not have otherwise raised."

skills and interact with leaders in the Jewish community, scholars, and peers in the hope that they will choose to become Jewish professionals or lay leaders in their communities."

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