

# World BBYO leaders unite in L.A.

By Ashley Zeldin, Contributing Writer | PUBLISHED Feb 23, 2011 | Community

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Los Angeles played host not only to NBA All-Stars last weekend, but also to all-stars in the Jewish community, as more than 750 delegates from across the United States and around the world participated in BBYO's 85th annual International Convention (IC) at the Hilton Los Angeles Airport hotel, Feb. 17-21.

Themed "Our Movement, Our Moment," the convention united rising leaders of Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA) and B'nai B'rith Girls (BBG) from 35 states and eight countries to "discuss strategies and set the organization's priorities and initiatives for the coming year," said Shayna Kreisler, program director for IC 2011.

Jane Sadetsky, 15, of Walnut Creek, Calif., was immediately overwhelmed by the feeling of unity.

"You're doing the same cheers and singing the same songs as 750 other Jewish teens from Serbia, Argentina, the U.K., all over the country," said Sadetsky, president of L'Hadash Ahava BBG in the Bay Area. "It's the most mind-blowing feeling to think we're all Jewish and we're all coming together like this."

Highlights of the weekend included elections of the 2011-2012 international board, a day of service and advocacy, a Harry Potter-themed Shabbat service and Sunday night's rally announcing the launch of a campaign to end teen bullying and promote inclusion. Representatives from the Anti-Defamation League and The Miracle Project spoke on such topics as cyber-bullying and treating those who are different with kindness and respect.

The teens participated in service projects throughout Los Angeles at 12 sites on Friday, including Beit T'Shuvah, Camp JCA's Shalom Institute, the Los Angeles Jewish Home, National Council of Jewish Women/Los Angeles and TreePeople.

"[IC] was a huge success, with teens becoming directly involved in issues they care about most while making memories for a lifetime with their AZA and BBG friends from around the world," Kreisler said.

Orrin Kabaker of Los Angeles, international AZA president in 1949, spoke to the teens about taking action and standing up for one's beliefs. Kabaker drafted a motion in early 1948 recognizing the State of Israel by the organization before the state's official founding.

The teens also heard a poignant speech from Judea Pearl, father of murdered Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl.

"You will all continue to travel the world with a pen and pad, just as my son did. And you will share your knowledge with [the world]," Pearl said.

Steven Windmueller, who holds the Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk Chair in Jewish Communal Service at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles, and Abigail Michelson Porth, associate director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Bay Area, were recognized as Sam Beber Distinguished AZA Alumnus of the Year and Anita Perlman Distinguished Alumna of BBG, respectively, for their contributions to the Jewish community.

"BBYO showed me that it is possible to dedicate a career to one's personal values, working on behalf of the Jewish community in pursuit of a just society and secure Jewish future," Porth said.

"It's been an incredible experience to join with Jewish teenagers and celebrate the success of our movement," said Ohio Northern Region President Adam Nelson, 18, of Akron. "I'm very interested in developing and expanding the future

of the organization, so I'm getting the most out of the programs and will take it back to strengthen my region.”

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