



Jewish college students need Hillel!

It is Tuesday morning and we are loading our cars with all the supplies we need to table on campus. Tables, brochures, handouts, banners, and of course snacks to attract students to our table. Our student leadership is eager and excited to promote Hillel and the many upcoming events their clubs have planned. Many students come to the table to see what we are all about, and several of them sign up

to receive information. Later in the week, we welcome several of them at our Hillel for Shabbat dinner. Often times, this is how the relationship begins.

Hillel of Silicon Valley plays an important role as a Jewish home away from home for the Jewish students at San Jose State University, Santa Clara University, Foothill College, De Anza College, and West Valley College. We guide our students through their Jewish journey in ways that are meaningful to them. We expose them to the joy of Shabbat and the rich traditions of the Jewish holidays. Our offerings help students gain insight about Jewish wisdom and they develop appreciation for the value, central to Jewish existence, of making the world a better place. And we connect them to Israel by providing them with opportunities to discover the Jewish state first-hand. We create an environment of exciting and meaningful programs that compel students to join in Jewish life at a time when they are making important decisions that will impact the rest of their lives. Students often tell us that they attribute their engagement in Jewish life to their experiences at Hillel SV.

Hillel of Silicon Valley has a demonstrated track record in being able to inspire and connect students that come from diverse Jewish backgrounds, including the majority of students for which Hillel is their first connection with the organized Jewish community. Thousands of students have found a community at Hillel, have found personal meaning in Judaism through their Hillel experiences and explorations, and have developed an appreciation and love for Israel. We know that many of our students have continued their connection upon graduation in the greater Jewish community.

Israel is a major piece of Hillel of Silicon Valley's puzzle. The organization prides itself on playing a constructive role in fostering ongoing respectful dialogue on campus about Israel-related issues. Students are provided information, training, and support so that they not only understand Israel's situation but feel confident in presenting it clearly to their peers, classmates, and teachers. Bottom line: if students are not able to respond effectively in situations where Israel is being attacked, biased information against the Jewish State will go unchallenged.

The fast rise in anti-Semitism is driving many young people to withdraw from their Jewish selves. But it is precisely because of the increase in anti-Semitism that it is crucial for young people, to have the courage and confidence to stand up and speak out, to defend their beliefs and values. Our task to inspire them to be proud of their heritage, to be a proud Jew, has never been more important or more challenging. Jewish students are looking to us, their community, to guide them through difficult times.

We are proud of each and every student we reach, each life we touch and each student we inspire and engage in Jewish life. Jewish college students need Hillel!

We recently previewed an eight-minute video at our annual community event and we are

excited to share it with our community. The link to view the video is

<https://vimeo.com/394290722>. A password is required to view the video and is: **Israel48**.