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As Shabbat winds down team USA will enjoy a team BBQ. Yesterday was a day of fun and reflection. After touring Tel Aviv, the team, over 900 athletes enjoyed beach time in Herzilya; watching all the athletes enjoying themselves on the beach was quite a treat. Fun times changed into a wonderful night of service, dinner and “Stand With Us” group discussions on Israeli-American relations. Both Rabbi Dan and Rabbi Sobo ran marvelous services for our delegation at K’far Maccabiah and Shefayim. Our athletes and staff had a chance to discuss their thoughts and feelings on the topic of A/I relations. It was quite a night.

All this has followed a great training camp where 19 teams and over 320 team members trained in Israel. On June 27th the athletes saw the film “On the Map” and had the opportunity to meet got to meet Michael Oren, Former Israeli Ambassador to the U.S., and Tal Brody - an American-Israeli former basketball player, and current Goodwill Ambassador to Israel. It was a fantastic night, listening the these two very special people talk to the team and staff. On June 28th ISRAEL CONNECT (IC) opened with our team orientation. After practice every morning 24 buses went touring through Israel, seeing sites and exploring parts of Israel. There was dinner in Abu gosh, prayers at the western wall, and walking the incredible Jewish capital of Jerusalem. The feeling was incredible.

With 2 days left of our IC program, Team USA is bonding together to get ready for the Games. We await the arrival of our Master’s athletes to join us and fill team USA to over 1,100 members. Next up is Opening ceremonies and competition. We hope to bring home lots of medals and show everyone sportsmanship and talent.