



This past weekend, 13 students gathered for the **Mizrachi Campus Shabbaton in Chicago**, beginning Friday afternoon at the **Mizrachi - Religious Zionists of Chicago** building, affectionately known as **the Lishka**. While transportation issues kept three fellows from participating and three staff from joining us from Israel, the Shabbaton was an amazing success. It began with a lively pizza party where everyone had the opportunity to meet and connect.

After preparing for Shabbat at their host homes, students returned for an icebreaker activity run by **Alicia Post, RZA Executive Director** and an inspiring Framing of Shabbat by **Rabbi Jerry Isenberg, RZC Executive Director**.



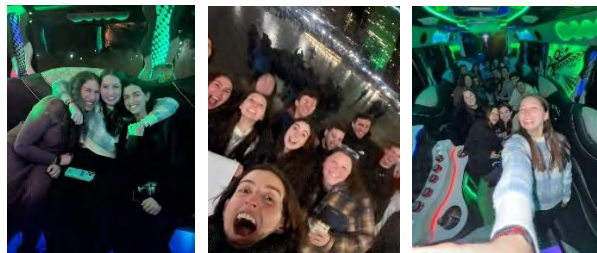
A beautiful Kabbalat Shabbat/Maariv flowed into a spirited dinner filled with heartfelt zemirot and Divrei Torah shared by Fellows **Coby Pollack (YU)** and **Aliza Gardin (Hartman – Touro at HTC)**, the evening continued with a meaningful Oneg hosted by **Dr. Shlomo and Tami Drapkin** in their home, where students engaged in thoughtful discussion about Mizrachi's core values — Am Yisrael, Torat Yisrael, and Eretz Yisrael. We were honored to be joined by **Rabbi Ariel and Maayan Lavi, Mizrachi Leadership program graduates**, who serve as the **JLIC campus couple at the University of Chicago**, who shared personal stories that deepened the experience.

Shabbat day began with davening at **Cong. Or Torah West**, followed by an engaging and inspiring shiur with **Rabbi Leonard Matanky of KINS and ICJA**. Back at the Lishka, students participated in an engaging session, led by Danielle Pasternak, Mizrachi Campus USA Coordinator exploring what happens when one of the core Mizrachi values comes into tension in real-life situations. Lunch featured Divrei Torah from fellows **Michal Mari (Hunter)** and **Mordechai Weiss (Washington U. in St. Louis)** and was enriched by the participation of the **Chicago Bnei Akiva Shlichah Shira Jacobs** and her husband, **Rabbi Itai of the YU Torah MiTzion Kollel**. After menucha, Mincha was followed by a motivating discussion with **Rabbi Zvi Engel of Cong. Or Torah**. The final session highlighted current student-led campus Religious Zionists projects, such as an intercampus student produced newsletter "Campus Connections," a campus-based guest speaker event, a learning partnership with Chabad, and a Hebrew Language Club. Seudah Shlisheet was shared with **Chicago Bnei Akiva Madrichim**, along with reflections from **Tamar Scheinfeld (Harvard)** and **Channah Yurovsky (Stern)** about their experiences in the Mizrachi Campus track at Yavneh.

After Havdalah, students were surprised with a video call from Israel with **Kobi Greenfield, Maslul Mizrachi Director**.



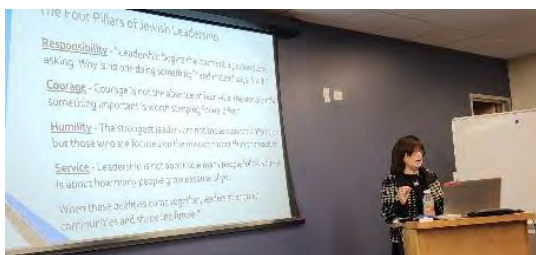
The evening concluded with a lively party bus tour of Chicago, featuring specially prepared music, colorful and exciting lighting,



and stops at iconic downtown sights, including a fan-favorite visit to “The Bean.”



Sunday was an amazing opportunity to tour the remarkable **Walder Education Center** and to hear an inspiring presentation by its founder, **Rouhama Gorelick**, on the meaning and substance of leadership, with a particular focus on religious Zionist leadership on campus.



Their hospitality, from a full breakfast to an inspiring tour of their extensive resource center, was deeply appreciated. The weekend concluded with Mizrahi Campus fellows making practical connections with Walder Education, with one new and one expanded project being set up for immediate implementation on their campuses.

Overall, the Shabbaton was filled with extraordinary ruach, meaningful learning, and deep connection. More than anything, it reflected the profound investment that Mizrahi is making in cultivating the next generation of Religious Zionist leadership. By bringing together students who are already demonstrating passion, commitment, and initiative, we are helping to build a cadre of young leaders who will strengthen Jewish life on campus today and, B'Ezrat HaShem, carry these values forward for many years to come.

Mizrachi Campus expresses its sincere gratitude to the entire Mizrahi – Religious Zionists of Chicago family—its professional and lay leadership, as well as the many generous host families who opened their homes with warmth and hospitality. Their partnership and dedication made this remarkable Shabbaton possible and helped create an experience whose impact, we hope, will yield dividends both now and for generations to come.

*Mizrachi Campus brings together USA college students who are committed to developing as thoughtful and active Religious Zionist leaders on their campuses, deepening their learning, strengthening their connection to Am Yisrael, Torat Yisrael, and Eretz Yisrael, and building meaningful initiatives that bring these values into campus life. In addition to the campuses mentioned above, Mizrahi Campus 5786 includes fellows from **Cleveland State University, Rutgers University, and the University of Florida**. The track operates within **Yavneh on Campus of JLIC-OU** and through this partnership Mizrahi Campus fellows receive additional learning opportunities, mentorship, and practical tools for Religious Zionist leadership.*

*The program is part of **Maslul Mizrahi, an RZC-RZA-World Mizrahi broader multi-phase initiative** designed to cultivate Religious Zionist leadership from the gap-year experience in Israel through college and beyond, connecting students at key stages of their development and helping them grow intellectually, spiritually, and organizationally while building a leadership pipeline that ensures the values of Religious Zionism are thoughtfully represented and actively advanced within the next generation of Jewish communal leadership.*