

IASA looks forward every year to the Brincat IASA Summer Camp. Yet this year, we had so many questions as July approached. Could we hold camp during Corona? Would children come? Could they have fun?

In a vacuum of clear information from the government authorities, Camp Director Ofer Zaguri and his staff worked tirelessly to plan for all eventualities. Three days before The Brincat IASA Summer Camp 2020 was scheduled to open, we received the welcome news that the government was allowing summer camps that met its standards to operate.



Thanks to Ofer's expert planning, and much hard work by IASA's maintenance staff, the camp fully conformed to, and even surpassed, the government's coronavirus safety regulations. We disinfected the school thoroughly after the IASA high school students left, reorganized spacing, created signage to mark distancing requirements, did as much as possible outdoors, and arranged individually packaged food service.



We hired more counsellors so we could divide the campers into two capsules, which we further divided into small groups for each subject area: Music, Humanities, Science, and Visual Arts. In this way, the campers came into contact with a small number of other campers.

Despite the anxiety surrounding Corona, 74 campers who had just finished 8<sup>th</sup> grade made their way to us this year: 30 from the Jerusalem Area, 22 from Israel's North, and 22 from the South. We are very proud that IASA has earned a name that leads parents to trust us, even under the shadow of a pandemic.

This year, we had more girls than boys, including in the science program. IASA is often viewed as a haven for girls who are gifted in STEM who, sometimes during the sensitive adolescent years, have a difficult time finding the confidence expressing themselves in male-dominated physics and chemistry classes.





We were thrilled to see a lot of familiar faces. 48 students returned to us after their positive experience at last year's camp for 6<sup>th</sup>- and 7<sup>th</sup>-graders. They were excited to reconnect with their friends and hit it off immediately with the other campers, many of whom were IASA Middle School students.

As in previous years, the camp faculty was made up of IASA-High School's top-quality teachers as well as teachers from the Excellence Educators Institute that runs IASA's nationwide STEM teacher training programs. It is a wonderful experience for these bright young people to learn from educators who are also professionals in their fields.

The **Science Stream** showed just how much fun science can be. Chemistry classes



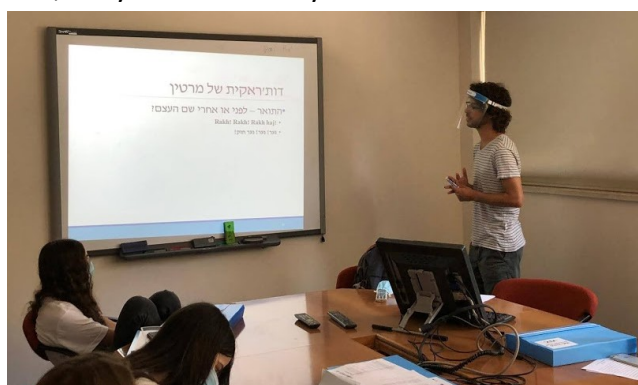
took the form of complex puzzles and mysteries that the student-detectives needed to solve through research and experimentation. Physics encountered sports as balls rolled and flew. And the classroom walls disappeared as campers headed outside to



conduct experiments using the natural geology around IASA's campus.

Based on the wild success of last year's "Fantasy Literature" theme in the **Humanities Stream**, we offered the same theme to this year's campers. The avid young readers discovered the rich history, literature, and culture behind their favorite fantasy novels. With IASA-HS literature teachers, they traced the mythical roots of modern

fantasy characters and explored the deep cultural archetypes that contemporary writers draw upon to build the compelling effects in their novels. The campers turned their hands to writing their own creative fiction, and even took a language class in "Dothraki," an invented language from the famous series *Game of Thrones*.



In the **Music Stream**, the children studied with composer and IASA-HS Music Department Head Yisrael Sharon and professional jazz performer Assaf Shlomi. The budding musicians took part in classes on performance, theory, ear training, music history, and composition. They learned how to analyze compositions, and many of the campers played in an ensemble for the first time in their lives. It was a wonderful exploration of how their weekly music classes throughout the year can transform into true performance.



The **Art Stream** campers explored a wide variety of media they had never encountered before, including brush-and-ink, lithography, and multimedia. The students, used to the small art rooms in their regular schools, felt like they were in heaven in IASA's large, airy professional-level art studios. In the abundant natural light, IASA's professional



drawing teachers taught them how to draw still lifes and portraits. With a professional sculptor as guide, they tried their hands at clay and paper sculptures. They had a blast producing their own stop-motion clay animation videos, with very successful results they shared with their fellow campers.



Despite Corona, the **social activities** at Brincat Camp were as rich as ever. We had to make many adaptations, but necessity is the mother of invention! We had to cancel our scheduled trips to sites outside of Jerusalem, but at the last minute, we were able to arrange a trip to the Jerusalem Zoo, which is minutes away from the IASA campus. The Zoo is a large, beautiful green site, and the campers enjoyed seeing the amazing

biodiversity as well as learning a lot about sustainability and ecological interdependence.

The camp counsellors made sure there were fun social activities every evening, even though this year it was not permitted to bring the whole camp together for social activities as in previous years. In addition to concerts by the Music Stream ensemble, students interested in performance put together a musical theatre piece.



The first night of camp, there was an ice-breaking game show with lots of zany tasks for the campers to do in small teams. Another evening the counsellors led an outdoor sports night under the stars, and the campers also enjoyed a hilarious trivia night. The popcorn-and-movie night mimicked a real movie theatre, as the students sat several seats apart in IASA's darkened auditorium.



IASA is incredibly grateful for the good spirits of the campers and the flexibility of our staff, who were all cheerful and happy despite the masks, hand sanitizing and social distancing. The children's parents were wonderfully supportive and encouraged our staff throughout the day as we kept them updated about changes and developments due to the government's evolving regulations. In the end, camp had to be shortened to 5 days. Yet, despite facing higher costs due to increased staff, hygiene procedures and losses due to tuition returns, the Brincat IASA Summer Camp leadership, staff, and campers left with a feeling of success at the wonderful week of fun and learning we all experienced in face of all the obstacles.



We think you'll share in our excitement when you read the following emails we got from parents:

Dear Ofer,

I cannot believe what trouble you had to go through during this crazy period, and yet you managed to put together an unforgettable camp experience. Our daughter enjoyed every moment and came home bubbling over with happiness and full of energy. I wish we could send her to you four times a year! Thank you so much for everything. It was a perfect experience.

Hi Ofer,

I want to take the opportunity to thank you from the bottom of my heart—both you and your whole team. In the midst of an impossible set of circumstances, in the midst of daily uncertainty, you created an amazing camp. The children came home with such wonderful memories of their experience. Please consider a camp for 10th-graders next year!!! Thank you!



To Ofer and the IASA team:

We take our hats off to you. What an amazing camp you managed under such difficult circumstances! We are so grateful to put our son into the hands of such a wonderful team. The camp is truly a gift for life. We thank you all for everything!



Hi Ofer,

Can you please organize another week? I haven't seen my daughter so happy in ages. In a world of uncertainty, you succeeded in creating a wonderful experience for the children.

To Ofer, Rotem, and all the counsellors:

You were an island of calm and creativity in the midst of challenging times. Our daughter told us she had a wonderful time and that the activities were interesting and different. Thank you so much for all your hard work. We truly appreciate it.

Dear Ofer and team,

I know many parents have already written to you, but there's no such thing as too much praise! My daughter came home full of excitement and joy. I can only imagine how challenging it was for you all to manage a camp under so much uncertainty, and I truly appreciate it. We are so sorry you don't have a camp for 10th-grade students.



**The Brincat IASA Summer Camp 2020 Director,  
staff, and campers warmly thank the  
Brincat Family  
for helping to make this special summer  
learning experience possible!!**