



## YSZ HS For Girls Kicks Off Year With Student Retreat (/index.php/local/27-schools/7269-ysz-hs-for-girls-kicks-off-year-with-student-retreat)

QJL\_STAFF . SCHOOLS (/INDEX.PHP/LOCAL/27-SCHOOLS) . SEPTEMBER 21 2022

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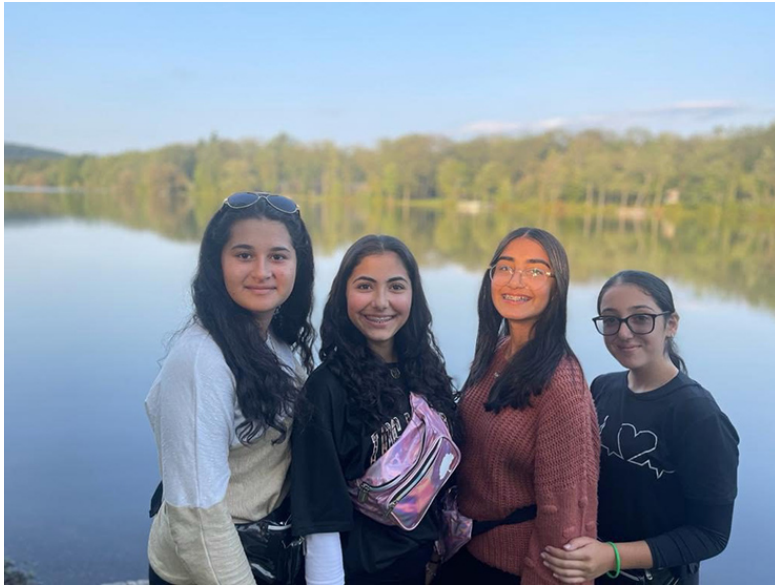
On Wednesday, September 14, students arrived bright and early to YSZ HS for Girls in Queens and boarded a bus for a trip they knew they would not soon forget. With Mrs. Zerykier, Morah Balakhaneh, and Ms. Greenberg in tow, students looked forward to feeling the warmth and encouragement that YSZ is famous for in a new and exciting venue. The retreat was located in beautiful and scenic Pennsylvania, where students could participate in many different types of bonding activities. These activities focused on team building, fostering friendships, and motivating students to step out of their comfort zones. With the theme of "stretching yourself," students had the opportunity to find and hone their own unique strengths and abilities.

As soon as the students arrived at the SkyTop Lodge, they were led by grade to the first set of activities. Freshmen were tasked with boat-building while sophomores participated in a scavenger hunt. Naomi Mordukhaev, a sophomore, appreciated how each activity allowed the girls to bond together while at the same time allowing them to work on their team-building skills. Students then participated in what many considered the highlight of the retreat. Students engaged in a ropes course activity that truly encapsulated the theme of retreat. For many students, the ropes course was new and uncharted territory. With the encouragement and positivity radiating from both grades, many students conquered their fears and walked away feeling empowered and strong. Rebecca Shaulova, a freshman, shared that "Mrs. Zerykier waited for me at every level. All the girls pushed each other, which helped me overcome my fear of heights." Ora Khaimov, a freshman, agreed, and concurred that "At first when I climbed the ladder, I was really scared and it was so high, but with Mrs. Zerykier's and all the girls' motivation, I felt confident and so proud of myself." The rest of the night was spent reflecting, relaxing, and sharing how accomplished everyone felt. Morah Balakhaneh shared how much *nachat* it gave her to see how "mature, deep, and real each of the students' reflections were."



Thursday was another wonderful and action-packed day. Students participated in a variety of activities such as water coloring, keychain crafting, and a delicious salad-making "Chopped" style competition. Hodaya Yaacobov expressed how meaningful *minchah* by the lake was. "Looking at the water and seeing how Hashem created everything made me feel so connected to Hashem." Before dinner, Mrs. Zerykier gave the girls an inspiring Torah chat. With Rosh HaShanah approaching, students were given the tools on how they can continue to become their best selves this year. The day ended with a moving and meaningful kumzits. Ms. Greenberg shared how wonderful it was to see "all the girls coming together and how much of their heart they gave to each activity." The memories made on this year's retreat will surely be the stepping stones to a wonderful and growth-filled year at YSZ HS for Girls!

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