



YSZ High School For Girls Takes Third Place At CIJE Hackathon (/index.php/local/27-schools/6000-ysz-high-school-for-girls-takes-third-place-at-cije-hackathon)

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It was not just another day for Yeshiva Shaarei Zion High School for Girls, as the freshman class joined students from high schools across the Tri-State Area to compete in the CIJE's Tech Annual Hackathon. The Hackathon was an intense competition challenging students to design, build, market, and present a product in one day. Sha'arei Zion girls proved their mettle by winning third place, behind the Frisch School and SAR Academy.

Centered on the theme of ecological sustainability, the competition tested students on a multitude of skills including technical programming, creative advertising, and public speaking. The competition assigned students the task of promoting a more sustainable earth by developing devices to tackle problems such as waste management, food preservation, and water conservation.

The Sha'arei Zion girls were initially intimidated by the other schools, many of which had several years of competition experience in STEM fields. But the girls took to heart the advice of Menahel Mrs. Zerkier to enjoy the process and leverage a sense of play and enthusiasm to create a compelling product. The girls were guided toward a sense of calm by their CIJE teacher Ms. Greenberg.

The Sha'arei Zion girls divided themselves into two teams, both focusing on water sustainability. One team worked on creating a more efficient showering system, designing an app named iCare that would change water pressure at different points during a shower to prevent water waste. The second team, called Circle to Life, created a product that would vacuum the bottom of the ocean to preserve clean water.

Upon completing coding, the girls drafted presentations for their products using graphics knowledge they had learned in their art classes. During their presentations, the girls surprised themselves and wowed the room with their passion. Starting with an explanation of "why" water is crucial for survival, they described their products alongside the responsibility each person has to better the world.

After the Frisch School and SAR Academy placed first and second in the competition, respectively, YSZ High School for Girls was called up as the third-place winner, producing audible excitement in the crowd. The Hackathon was the first competition YSZ HS girls had ever entered. The girls proudly accepted their trophy and were empowered with confidence about their place in the competition landscape. YSZ's robust STEM classes and extracurriculars are a major feature of its academic curriculum.

To those who feared it couldn't be done... these girls showed that with determination, grit, and heart, that *they* could!

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