



## 'DORE L'DORE

FROM ONE GENERATION OF COMMODORES TO THE NEXT

### A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ARI DUBIN

During my years at Vanderbilt Hillel (16 years? Yikes! I remember the days when Vandy students were closer in age to me than my now 15 year old daughter...) I've learned that every year has its own unique context and dynamics. Students change, issues change, and the topics and causes that inspire and challenge them change year after year. As a Hillel, we strive to anticipate what those campus needs and conversations will be, and position ourselves to provide answers to the questions students will ask. While we entered last year with anxiety and trepidation, we entered this year with great hope... and some trepidation. We knew the challenges weren't over, but we also knew that our community was ready for a return to (almost) normalcy. This year brought a unique challenge: how do we help students emerge from their collective hibernation, from their virtual existence, and re-engage with the world? As this newsletter demonstrates, Hillel has more than risen to this challenge. We have re-established terrific programs from the past. We have created new ways for students to connect with each other and explore Judaism. We have re-imagined old ways of doing things to better answer the challenges of today's world. And as always, we move from strength to strength.

VANDERBILT  
Hillel

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EDITOR IN CHIEF:  
VERONICA GRADY

VANDERBILT HILLEL  
2421 VANDERBILT PLACE  
NASHVILLE, TN 37212

I (615) 322-8376  
WWW.VUHILLEL.ORG  
@VANDYHILLEL

# FYSH FEST

## BY ALEX GRACE

It is hard to believe that just 3 years ago, Vanderbilt Hillel ran their first FYSH (First Year Students of Hillel) Fest. As an incoming freshman looking to meet new people and discover who I would be as a college student, I signed up for FYSH Fest, unaware of where it would take me. Little did I know that in the coming years, I would become a FYSHcillitator (upperclassman program leader), a VP of First Year Engagement during a pandemic, and a President overseeing the whole organization. With each passing FYSH Fest, my love for Hillel is renewed. Each year, upperclass students gather, across majors, micro-communities, and involvement levels to create a truly unique and special experience for our new students. After a year of virtual and hybrid programming, watching our FYSHcillitators come together was a truly electric experience. The day before our first-year students arrived, the building was filled with non-stop laughter, smiles, and a cacophony of “I haven’t seen you in forever!” When the first year students arrived, we were all reminded of what Hillel can mean to students on campus. These first year students, with all of the same worries and excitement that the older students brought with them, additionally brought the excitement of going back out into the world, and meeting new people in person again for the first time in almost a year and a half. I was reminded of how the people I met at FYSH Fest became my best friends, and greatest mentors. I can only hope to leave such an impression on our new students, and I cannot wait to see where this program goes in the future.





# ROSH HASHANAH SEDERS

BY MAYA PARNES

Rosh Hashanah is all about new beginnings, and the holiday this year felt like that in more ways than one. Though it was probably my 5th or 6th Rosh Hashanah seder at Hillel, it was my first in-person holiday since before Passover 2020, my first time leading a Hillel event with my fantastic Little FYSH, Hana, and the first Hillel holiday for this year's FYSH! At the seder, we not only did the holiday blessings but discussed how their themes could apply to our lives at Vanderbilt. For Tashlich, we reflected on how we may have missed the mark; for Unetaneh Tokef, we thought about our goals for our new beginnings and how we want to grow this year. Together, we picked out succulents and decorated the pots as a reminder and symbol of growth! All of the FYSH went home with a delicious meal, a lovely Hillel holiday experience, and new friends. And on my end, I absolutely loved the opportunity to see how Hana grew as a Hillel leader over the past year. As a senior, I feel amazing knowing that Hillel's future is in hands like hers and this year's FYSH, I can't wait to see how the community grows with them.



## HILLEL OUT'DORES

KICKOFF HIKE



After months of anticipation and COVID delays, the Hillel Out'Dores outdoor adventure microcommunity hosted their kickoff event! In honor of Sukkot, the crew headed out to local state park Hidden Lake for a Sunday morning hike. Students enjoyed an escape from the campus bubble and challenge-by-choice route that enabled each explorer to test their own limits on the trail! We cannot wait to get back into nature for more fun and bonding!

# GO WITH HILLEL

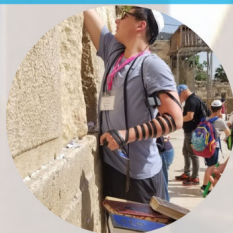
## TRAVELING TO ISRAEL FOR ONWARD

In a year where everything was paused and travel was limited, Vanderbilt Hillel was still able to send a group of 16 students to Israel with Onward Israel this summer. They left a group of students and came back as a family. Students went to Tel Aviv for eight weeks to intern at companies in Israel that complemented their studies and helped them gain experience in their chosen field. They had the opportunity to make connections with peers and professionals from around the world. They were living in central Tel Aviv so they could be close to many restaurants, beaches, stores, and coffee shops close by. Vanderbilt students all lived together in the same building as other campus cohorts from the US. They got to see old friends and make new ones. Not only did they get work experience but they also got to see Israel through directly engaging in Israeli society.

“This past summer, I had the incredible opportunity to live in Tel Aviv, engage in a valuable internship experience at a biomedical device startup, and develop lasting friendships with other Onward participants of the Vanderbilt Hillel cohort. Two months in Tel Aviv provided the perfect amount of time to fully immerse myself in its unique culture; from the exceptional food scene to nightlife to the beach. These enriching city experiences, along with the chance to travel all over Israel with my friends, made this past summer the best of my life.” shared Danny Shade, one of our program participants.



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