



**What does
Food, Friends, Paintball,
the Big Apple, and Princeton
have do with Judaism?**

**Join the
Rimon
Teen Learning Initiative
and find out**



For more information about Rimon and its programs - www.rimoncenter.org

"Pediatric Judaism," the idea that Jewish education stops at adolescence, is one of the most dangerous heresies of our time...

Excerpt from the American Jewish Committee Statement on Jewish Education 1999

The need

There is a critical need for teen programs. From the day we opened the doors at Rimon a week does not go by that a parent or teen does not ask if we have a teen program.

Some students have not found a comfort level with existing programs and others are searching for an opportunity to learn at a higher level. This situation is not specific to our community. Nationally, only 25% of teens are involved in post bar-mitzvah education.

What is the plan?

The Rimon Teen Learning Initiative in conjunction with the Princeton Center for Jewish Life/Hillel attracts teens that are interested in delving into Jewish text at a level that is not offered by the Hebrew schools in the community. It is opened to students 8th to 12th grade. The program is co-ed and open to the entire community, regardless of religious affiliation and background.

Some of the students may have a day school background, while others may simply express an interest in learning in a different and more intense setting.

The program

Students will meet weekly at the Center for Jewish Life in Princeton on a Sunday evening. They get dinner, *shmooze* a little, and then get to launch right into learning with each other in text based discussions led by our wonderful Princeton student educators, Julie and Will. We expect the program to be limited to 12 students.

Engaging the text

At the request and suggestion of the students themselves, this semester we will be exploring stimulating issues that lie at the very foundation and core of Jewish philosophy. The course will span both metaphysical and moral philosophy and include such topics as free will, morality and justice, faith vs. reason, Jewish exceptionalism, and the depiction of God. Jewish thinkers, throughout the ages, have grappled with such fundamental issues.

Continuing the Rimon tradition, we will, together, analyze sources from Talmudic and medieval ages to the modern day. Get ready to contemplate and share your insights to what promises to be thought-provoking discussions!



Is this Talmud or a brain teaser?

Sharing with friends

We believe that the average teen wants to be challenged and challenge others. Because that is hard to do in a peer setting without feeling comfortable with each other, we hope there is also be a lot of bonding in this program.

Not just sitting and learning huddled over a text, but going out to paintball together, doing icebreakers and discussion together, not just frontal teaching but real discussion and learning.



From back left to right. Adam Rosen (Robbinsville High) , Jacob Kaufman (Princeton Day School – now U Penn) , Will Herlands, teacher (Princeton University) , Julie Meyer, teacher ((Princeton University) Ann Sarnak, (Princeton HS) , Alex Costin (Princeton HS)

Bios of Staff

William Herlands is a senior at Princeton University pursuing a major in electrical engineering. He grew up in New York City, and attended SAR High School, a modern Orthodox yeshiva high school located in Riverdale, New York. Before matriculating to Princeton, he studied at Yeshivat Maale Gilboa, an Israeli religious seminary located in the Gilboa mountain range, which utilizes modern, academic scholarship to illuminate traditional yeshiva disciplines. At Princeton, Will is the Religious Life Chair of Yavneh.

Hana Snow a Princeton University sophomore hails from Newton Massachusetts. She is a graduate of Maimonides (a Modern Orthodox Jewish school in Boston). She is on the board for Yavneh at the Center for Jewish life. Upon graduating high school she spent a year studying in Israel at Machon Maayan, a seminary based in Beit Shemesh.

“I am looking forward to a great semester of lively discussion and good learning with the Rimon teen program. I have heard such wonderful things about it”



Our Founding teachers, Matt & Zahava

Schedule of classes for winter 2012

Feb. 12, 19, 26 - March 4, 25 -April 1, 15, 22, 29, May 6

What is Rimon?

Rimon - the Mordecai T. Mezrich Center for Jewish Learning began a few years ago with a simple bold vision: **to create a place where people of all Jewish backgrounds could come and learn more about their Judaism.** We wanted to make it a place that would make people think and also feel. We wanted to make it a place that would display the many vibrant voices of Jewish thought, while maintaining an eye to the culture at large

For more information about Rimon and its programs-

www.rimoncenter.org

Contact:

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Testimonials

***Rebekah Costin**, a resident of Princeton, talks about the Rimon learning program that her two teenage sons attend ...*

“Sunday was the last class of the Rimon teen class and after it was over, my two sons came bounding through the door brimming with lessons and associations to share with me:

My 13-year-old, with all the confidence of a wise man, lectured me on the relationship of Judah to his brothers as seen through the prism of the Tamar story. He was particularly keen on explaining the racier bits to me - which, even though I was familiar with the story, I didn't remember. In the heat of the discourse, I pulled out my own Tanakh, and we discovered, to his amazement, that the JPS translators had sanitized his favorite parts. Undeterred, he proudly gloated: "well, my version is the real version - from the Hebrew!" Feeling vindicated, he then turned to explain the Tamar story to his younger sister, who was in need of a good story about a strong woman taking things into her own hands, against all odds, to do the right thing.

A few minutes later my worldly 17-year-old son informed me why Nathaniel Hawthorne had chosen the color Scarlet for his adulteress' Letter: from the scarlet thread tied around the wrist of the (alleged-adulteress) Tamar's first twin! The next day, he told me how pleased his AP English Literature teacher was when he explained the scarlet thread and the similarity between Tamar, the biblical righteous "adulteress", and Hester Primm, Hawthorne's puritan "righteous adulteress". The teacher was thrilled that one of her students had applied material from her class to enrich and enhance his understanding of something else he was learning, and then circled it all back into her classroom.

This Rimon program has worked wonderfully for both of my sons. The material is vigorous and interesting, and the teachers are engaging and confident. The program also fills a Jewish educational gap that exists in their own lives. The oldest completed the normal course of study at his home community but he and his friends wanted to continue with text study, rather than join the more social-action oriented programs available to them. The younger had become frustrated by his inability to find his place socially and intellectually in his own Jewish community following his bar mitzvah, but he has found it here. He joined late in the year and was technically underage, but next year he intends to return and already has a number of friends whom he intends to bring along.”

Alex is a sophomore and Nate is spending a year in Israel and then on to University of Michigan

Benjamin Neumann

Through Rimon, I have engaged in serious study of Jewish texts in a different way than I had been exposed to before.

This is a quote from his sophomore year at Lawrenceville Prep.
He is currently a sophomore at Princeton University

Rabbi JJ Schacter

Personal autonomy and individual choice are values that are central in American culture at large and in the Jewish community within it. In contemporary times, when Jews will engage with their Judaism only if they choose to do so, Rimon stands out as an example of an institution that inspires Jews to connect with Judaism. It is open, warm, accepting, and non-judgmental while presenting the beauty and substance of Jewish life. Blessed with extraordinary and dynamic lay and rabbinic leadership, it is a model for engaging – and re-engaging – Jews of all backgrounds and orientations. It deserves the support of all who care about the future of Jewish life in America.

University Professor of Jewish History and Jewish Thought
Senior Scholar, Center for the Jewish Future
Yeshiva University

Excerpt from the American Jewish Committee Statement on Jewish Education ... 1999

"Pediatric Judaism," the idea that Jewish education stops at adolescence, is one of the most dangerous heresies of our time. ... Serious Jewish education is essential for everyone. Adult Jews must see Judaism as an intellectual and spiritual challenge that successfully competes in the global marketplace of life choices. If parents think Judaism is "childish" because they stopped growing Jewishly at adolescence, they will make no commitment to infuse their homes with Jewish values or insist on intensive Jewish education for their children. That is, they will not meaningfully commit themselves to Jewish continuity in future generations. If intellectually mature Jews do not understand that their heritage speaks to modern and postmodern life issues—values, community, death, spirituality, rationality, transcendence, and relationships—they will seek answers in non-Jewish communities, movements, and traditions.

On campuses and in JCCs, synagogues, Jewish organizations, and communities across America, we need to uncover the finest intellectual and spiritual achievements of our culture. Jews should understand that the Bible teaches a great spiritual drama, that the Talmud can help us with moral and existential questions, and that Maimonides can talk to Kant. Serious, informed Jewish living possesses the means to unleash the creative potential implanted in each of us.

Eugene Korn

Judaic scholar at Metrowest (NJ) and Federation, and adjunct professor of Jewish thought at Seton Hall University

