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BEE ALL THAT YOU CAN BEE: WIZO NIR HA'EMEK BEEKEEPERS TO REPRESENT ISRAEL IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

At the 10th Annual International Meeting of Young Beekeepers' (IMYB) in Slovakia, the students will learn about the future of ecology while forming cross-cultural friendships

June 24, 2019

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The "buzz" around the **WIZO Nir Ha'Emek Youth Village** is that the school's beekeeping program is really taking flight.

Next week, three Nir Ha'Emek 10th grade students, **Ori Shahaf**, **Liran Elyahu** and **Katrin Lukyanov** will represent Israel at the **10th International Meeting of Young Beekeepers' (IMYB)** in Slovakia. The three were selected by Israel's **Honey Council**, which is also sponsoring their trip. During the four-day event, student delegations from around the world will test the knowledge and skills, learn more about the future of ecology, and establish cross-cultural friendships.



Left to right: Ori Shahaf, Liran Elyahu and Katrin Lukyanov with their teacher Sharon Nir Inbar.

Established in 1927 as a working farm, Nir Ha'emek continues to focus on agricultural technology, offering an agricultural track that prepares students for a five-point matriculation.

"This track provides more specific opportunities for environmental learning, one of which is the unique beekeeping program," explained **WIZO Nir Ha'Emek's Director Esti Cohen**.

The program has blossomed under the guidance of biology teacher **Sharon Nir Inbar**, who has been inspiring students with her passion for the subject since the program's inception three years ago.

Beyond being dedicated beekeepers, the students are passionate about their role in spreading worldwide environmental consciousness.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the disappearance of the honey bee would have catastrophic implications for human life. 87% of leading food crops worldwide rely on these pollinators in order to produce fruits or seeds.

"Beekeeping is very important because honey bees are rapidly becoming extinct all over the world," Nir Inbar said. "A huge reason for this is human intervention. That's why it's so important to teach youth how to be part of the solution."



When the three students travel to Slovakia, they will be tested not just in their technical knowledge on beekeeping, but also on practical abilities such as caring for hives and identifying different types of honey through taste tests. Perhaps more important than the competitive aspect of this international convention is the collaborative goal of all of the attendees. As they represent Israel, the trio of students will be entering a community in which countries set aside their differences in order to address a dire ecological problem.

On a personal level, the beekeeping program also helps the students overcome their fears.

"I had a trauma from bees ever since I was a child," Katrin said during a recent interview on Israel's Channel 13 morning program, "Potchim Yom" (Opening the Day). "But thanks to this program, I have gotten over my fear."

When asked by the Israeli TV hosts what he gained overall from the beekeeping program at Nir Ha'Emek, Liran summed up the experience succinctly,

"We're saving bees. It's a good way of helping nature - and it makes you feel good."



Photo Credits: Sharon Nir Inbar, Emek News

Kaylin Berinhout contributed to this report.

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