

OUR IMPACT

Overseas Stories:

A Summer of Jewish Journeys



This summer marked 14-year-old Galya's first time at Szarvas — JDC and the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation's pioneering international Jewish summer camp bringing together 1,300 children and teens from 25 countries. Nestled in the Hungarian countryside, Szarvas is a haven for young Jews to bond with each other and develop the motivation to become engaged in Jewish life. In many cases, a summer at Szarvas has been the formative

event that has led young Jews to embrace communal identification.

When her friends from Liga, her Jewish youth group in Turkey, mentioned their experience in Szarvas, Galya knew that traveling the more than 1,100 miles to the camp in rural Hungary was something she had to do. "I really think that Szarvas will be a good experience because we'll all get to learn about new cultures and meet new people from all around the world," Galya said before she started camp. "I'm pretty sure I'm going to have fun and an experience I will never forget."

Now, at the end of a camp session that saw the creation of incredible memories and the forging of a

powerful connection to the global Jewish community, Galya is hooked. She's learned more about Jewish culture, experienced Shabbats full of music and energy, and made friends with fellow campers from all over the world.

Galya said she'd love to come back next year to have more fun, make more friends, and bring more of her friends from Turkey who have yet to experience the unique adventure that is Szarvas. In the meantime, she plans to become a madricha (counselor) back home in Izmir, using the new songs, prayers, and dances she learned at Szarvas to transform her youth group.