I’d like to welcome you all to our second parent program of the year. We have a very fun and educational event planned for you this evening. When we decided to host this program, we specifically chose this time of year. This week, at sundown on Wednesday, we celebrate Tu B’shevat. Tu B’shevat literally means 15th day of the month of Shevat on the Jewish calendar. It is the day that marks the beginning of a “new year” for trees. This is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle. The purpose of Tu B’Shevat is to calculate the age of trees for tithing. Lev. 19:23-25, which states that fruit from trees may not be eaten during the first three years; the fourth year's fruit is for G-d, and after that, you can eat the fruit. Each tree is considered to have aged one year as of Tu B'Shevat, so if you planted a tree on Shevat 14, it begins its second year the next day, but if you plant a tree two days later, on Shevat 16, it does not reach its second year until the next Tu B'Shevat. Tu B'Shevat is not mentioned in the Torah

Tu B’Shevat is celebrated by eating fruit, particularly from the kinds that are singled out by the Torah in its praise of the bounty of the Holy Land: grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. On this day we remember that “man is a tree of the field” (Deuteronomy 20:19), and reflect on the lessons we can derive from our botanical analogue.

Refer to Yarden about how Tu B’shevat is celebrated in Israel.

I can’t think of a better way to celebrate Tu B’Shevat than with an Israeli wine tasting activity. Before we begin I want to update you on what your teens have accomplished to this point in their Diller journey.

It is amazing how quickly time is flying. It is hard to believe that the teens are already 1/3 of the way through their journey. Our very first workshop focused on building our Diller kehillah/community of 18 teens and we began the conversation about what is a Jewish identity? We continued with that theme at the first Shabbaton were we explored what Shabbat means to each of us, what Jewish values are important to each of us, and what Jewish values are important to our group as a whole. At the next workshop, we explored the many aspects of our identity and the uniqueness of our identity. We also explored the components that make up our Jewish identity through the Jewish Identity Buffet. At the next workshop we began to discuss leadership. Each workshop since November has focused on a different piece of leadership. The teens learned the value of good communication through improv, they assessed their own strengths and weakness as a leader through a personal leadership inventory, they went through the Journey of Bread and water which taught them the importance of creating a mission, vision, goals and objectives for achieving success when working on a project. They also explore different leadership styles and discovered what type of leadership style they have. For the last two months, the teens have been putting into action all that they have been learning. Each of the teens is in a committee to help plan our upcoming Shabbaton in February. They have been working with the staff to plan the logistics, ritual, educational, social, and Tikkun Olam aspects of the Shabbaton and they have been doing a remarkable job. The theme that the education committee came up with for the Shabbaton is “Leadership skills, Responsibility, Taking Action!” We are delighted to have Greg as our guest educator joining for the Shabbaton. Greg……. It looks to be an amazing experience.

Moving forward we are going to be preparing for the Israel Diller Teen Fellows from Karmiel-Misgav to join us in April for NAS as well as begin to discuss Tikkun Olam and our responsibility to our community. I have enjoyed working with your teens and look forward to working with them over the next 10 months.

We are going to begin the evening with an icebreaker activity. We are going to play Human Bingo.

Explain Human Bingo and mention that the first three winners will win a prize at the end of the night.

Tonight, we are going to take you on a journey through Israel using your taste pallet. We have a lot of wonderful wine for you to try this evening. Along with the wine, Yarden and I will provide you with some information about each winery and wine that we will be using tonight as well as information about the region in Israel that the grapes are grown in. We will begin by providing you some context on the history of wine in Israel.

**Wine in Ancient Israel**

Wine has been produced in the Land of Israel since Biblical times. The ancient land of Israel (known at various times as Canaan, Judea and Palestine) was making wine over two thousand years before Europe. In Biblical times the wine industry was the mainstay of the economy and wine had significant ritual importance.

After the Roman conquest of Judea in 70 C.E., many vineyards were destroyed, and the remaining vines were torn up during the period of Muslim rule that began in 636 C.E. due to alcohol being forbidden in Islam. The Muslim conquest led to a 1,200 year halt to local wine production. These ancient wines lacked the quality that people have become accustomed to in modern times. They were thick and sweet and had to be seasoned just to make them palatable.

**Beginnings of the modern industry**

**The** late 1800s saw a resurgence in wine making in Israel. The modern Israeli wine industry was founded by Baron Edmond James de Rothschild. In 1882 he supported the new wave of Jewish immigrants by sponsoring their efforts to start a viable wine industry. There were a number of initial setbacks - the soil was stony and sandy, crops did not survive the hot sun & the first vineyards were struck with phylloxera.

Rothschild built two wineries, one in Zikhron Ya'aqov and another in Rishon LeTzion. Because of high temperatures the wine of the first vintages went sour, so deep underground cellars were constructed at enormous cost.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Carmel produced the first Israeli wine to win a medal at a wine show (Carmel No. 1 1900 was a gold medal winner at the Paris World's Fair). It signaled the rebirth of the Israeli wine industry after 2,000 years. Well into the 1960s, Israel suffered from a reputation of producing wines too thick and sweet to appeal to true wine connoisseurs.

**Wine revolution- Israel is now on the map**

In the 1980s the quality revolution began in Israel, heralded by the formation of the Golan Heights Winery in 1983. Importing expertise from California, using state of the art technology and high altitude, cooler vineyards, the Golan led the country to a new dawn of quality wine. They won a host of gold medals and a number of trophies at the IWSC in London and Vinexpo in Bordeaux - in particular with their premier label, Yarden.

The Golan winery began to encourage vineyard owners to improve the quality of their grapes and, in the American tradition, paid bonuses for grapes with high sugar and acid content and rejected those which they perceived as substandard. The winery was also the first to realize that wines made from Grenache, Semillon, Petit Sirah and Carignan grapes would not put them on the world wine map and focused on planting and making wines from Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, white Riesling and Gewürztraminer.

Many other wineries have made major steps forward in improving the quality of their wines. There are now five major wineries, approximately a dozen medium sized wineries and a rapidly growing host of small and boutique wineries in the country. Many of these are producing wines that are of high quality, and a few even producing wines good enough to interest connoisseurs and wine lovers throughout the world. There are more than 170 wineries in Israel today although the size of Israel is only 5% of California’s land area

**Boutique revolution**

Starting in the 1990s and continuing in the 2000s there has been an explosion of new boutique wineries throughout Israel.

Now that we have some background on the history of wine production in Israel, we are going to explore 4 different wineries in Israel.

**Binyamina Winery**

Binyamina Winery was established in 1952 by Joseph Zeltzer, who immigrated to Israel with a burning desire to produce wine as he did in the country of his birth, Hungary.

The winery’s vineyards are spread throughout the country – from the Golan Heights in the north, through the finest Upper Galilee (Kerem Ben Zimra, Alma, Emek Kadesh) and  Lower Galilee (Kfar Tabor) vineyards and the Binyamina region, down to the Jerusalem Hills and Karmei Yosef. Binyamina also has vineyards around Gedera, substantial vineyards in the Lachish region and its southernmost vineyard is located in Mitzpe Ramon in southern Israel.

Binyamina Winery is the fourth largest winery in Israel and it produces some 2.8 million bottles annually under several labels.

[**Yogev Label**](http://binyaminawines.co.il/en-us/86/)– Binyamina’s Yogev label is tribute to our winegrowers. In Hebrew, Yogev means farmer, toiler of the soil. This label reflects the winegrower’s contribution to the production of quality wines. Yogev wines are aged in used barrels in order to preserve the natural qualities of the winegrowers’ fruit.

**Cabernet Sauvignon**

Dry Red Wine

**Varietal Composition:**
Cabernet Sauvignon (100%) from the vineyard of Moshe Fesherman, Mevo Hama, adjacent to Tel Fares (Golan Heights).

**Production Highlights:**The grapes were harvested at night and were cold-macerated for maximum extraction of color and fruity components. The grapes were pressed after two and a half weeks of fermentation and the wine was oak-aged for 6-8 months. The wine reveals red fruit aromas typical to Cabernet Sauvignon grown in cold and high regions. The wine has a rich, slightly herbal flavor with a long, smooth and elegant finish.

# Yarden to talk about the Region of Golan Heights

# Cabernet Sauvignon - Petit Verdot

**Dry Red Wine**

**Varietal Composition:**
Cabernet Sauvignon (80%) from the vineyard of Yosef Arbesman in Kfar Kish (Lower Galilee).
Petit Verdot (20%) from the vineyard of Ishai Adler in Mitzpe Ramon (Negev Mountain).

**Production Highlights:**
The grapes were de-stemmed and each variety underwent two weeks of fermentation with the skins. After crushing the wines were aged separately for six months in oak barrels. The final blend was created at the end of the aging period. The blend of Cabernet Sauvignon from the Lower Galilee with its refined fruity character and full-bodied Petit Verdot from Mitzpe Ramon, with its deep color and black fruit flavors and hints of desert spices, results in a wine with an interesting balance between fruitiness and oak influences, generous complexity and a pleasant finish.

**Yarden to talk about the Region of Negev Mountain:**

**Recanati Winery**

Recanati Winery is owned by Lenny Recanati and the Winemaker is Gil Shatsberg. It was founded in 2000. Recanati strives to create wines that speak of a Mediterranean style - blending old and new world styles. Gil Shatsberg is leading the charge to define “Israeli winemaking style,” and one of Israel’s pioneers in the growing worldwide trend of the past five years or so to more subtle and elegant wines utilizing a lighter hand with oak. Recent vintages have more elegant fruit, higher acidity with a rounder mouth feel to them with less “oakiness” (resulting from tighter-grained, lower toast barrels of which a lower percentage are new).

The Recanati Winery is located in Shomron but sources most of its grapes from northern Galilee. Located near the Mediterranean coast, this region remains the largest grape growing area in the country. The area has medium-heavy soils and a Mediterranean climate, with warm summers and humid winters.

Yasmin White & Yasmin Red

This series includes a red and a white wine, both young, blended wines that are the first to be marketed in each harvest year.

**Yasmin White**

A blend of Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc

Yasmin White is a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and a small amount of Emerald Riesling grapes harvested in the winery's vineyards in Binyamina and the Jezreel Valley.

The aromas of this very crisp wine are reminiscent of spices, aniseed, pear and citrus.

**Yasmin Red**

Yasmin Red is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Shiraz grapes grown in the winery's vineyards in the Galilee and the Ella Valley. This light-bodied wine has rich fruity flavors and low astringency and can be enjoyed while still young.

Talk about Region of Binyamina & Jezreel Valley

**Diamond Chardonnay**

The Wine

This Chardonnay was made from our Upper Galilee Chardonnay vineyards and aged sur lies, a techniques used to produce wines that are buttery, complex and rich in flavor at an optimum altitude of 2,500 feet above sea level. The grapes are harvested in the early morning hours in the vineyards at Kibbutz Manara and Kerem Ben Zimra, at the foothills of Meron mountain. These well-nurtured and quality vineyards, with their high quality low crop load, are characterized by scents and flavors of white flowers, grapefruit, pineapple and tropical fruit. After being selectively handpicked, the grapes were transported in cold storage to the winery where they underwent cold and controlled pressing to allow the fruit to release the must gently without harming the seeds. Slow cold fermentation in a stainless steel tank helped to preserve the distinct flavor of the Chardonnay fruit. When the alcohol reached the level of 4%, the wine was transferred to French and American oak barrels for continued fermentation and aging. The wine remained with its sediment and developed flavors and scents of vanilla, butter and toasted bread that combined with the wine's fruit flavors and full, robust body.

**Cabernet Sauvignon**

This wine was made from Cabernet Sauvignon grapes harvested in our choice Galilee vineyards. The aroma of this full bodied wine comprises hues of cassis and black forest fruits with hints of black pepper, cloves and nutmeg.

Aging in French and American oak together with its intense tannins and balanced acidity promises continued development and improvement in the bottle for several years.

The next two wines from Recanati are from their Reserve collection. Reserve collection wines are produced from the finest grapes, those conducive to producing excellent wines. The wines are aged in oak barrels for extended periods and are characterized by intense and complex flavors. The winemaking philosophy behind these wines is neither "old world" nor "new world" - but rather "Middle Eastern", that faithfully represents the growing region of the grapes.

Talk about region of Upper Galilee & Lower Galilee

**Petite Sirah – Zinfandel Reserve**

The Wine

A blend of mainly Petite Sirah with some Zinfandel grapes, this succulent and intensely flavorsome wine is deep purple in color with the aromas of forest berries, chocolate and walnuts. The Petite Sirah grapes come from a mature vineyard in the Lower Galilee while the Zinfandel grapes are grown in the Upper Galilee. The result is a harmonious and uniquely Israeli blend, a combination of the best of both regions – one hot and one much cooler, and of two varietals, each with distinctly different characteristics. Fermented separately, the two varieties are then combined together and aged in oak barrels for eight months

**Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve**

The Wine

This wine, intense and generous, has luscious lingering flavors of forest berries, black plum and vanilla with the aromas of Mediterranean herbs, such as thyme and rosemary. The grapes are handpicked in the early morning hours in two small plots at an average elevation of 800 meters on Kerem Ben Zimra and Manara in the northern Galilee, overlooking the Lebanon Mountains. The grapes were grown in two different soil types - chalky soil and terra-rossa. Immediately upon arriving to the winery, the grapes underwent cold maceration for three days prior to fermentation to extract the grape's rich flavor and color. After undergoing slow and controlled fermentation, the wine was gently pressed and transferred to French oak and a few Hungarian barrels to begin a 16 month aging process that determined the wine's structure and contributed to its complexity and refinement.

**Barkan Winery**

Barkan winery was born at the end of the 19th century in 1899. Shlomo Friedman established the Friedman Winery in Petah Tikva, located in the center of Israel, to produce sweet Kiddush wine and brandy for the Jewish community in Palestine. Barkan Wine Cellars as it is now named is the second largest Israeli winery, producing 5-9 million bottles a year. The main building of the winery is located at Kibbutz Hulda, east of Tel Aviv. Barkan was founded in 1990, by Yair Lerner and Shmuel Boxer. They immediately set forth on a program of modernization and the planting of vineyards, which they saw as the key to the production of fine wine and expansion of the company. Barkan receives grapes from vineyards in the Golan Heights, Upper Galilee, Lower Galilee, Mount Tabor region, the Jerusalem Mountains and Mitzpe Ramon.

**Chardonnay**

The wine is produced from 100% Chardonnay grapes, picked from the vineyards of the Barkan Winery in the Upper Galilee region and the Jerusalem Mountains. The wine has an abundance of fragrances and tastes of citrus fruit and white peaches with a smooth and round finish.

**About the Regoin of Jerusalem Mountains:**

**Shiraz**

An exceptional wine with perfectly mature fruity tastes, deep shade, and a medium-full body. The wine, which is produced from the vineyards of the Barkan Winery in the Judea region is made from 100% Syrah grapes.

**About the Region of Judea:**

**Givon Winery**

The Givon Winery is located in Givon Hadasha, 5 km north of Jerusalem, Israel – an area that was the traditional wine making center in Israel more than 2700 years ago.

When the Givon Winery was founded in 2001, the Segal and Arnesti families returned to that ancient tradition of wine making with the belief that only the highest quality grapes will make the highest quality wine. They produce 40,000 bottles of wine each year.

The city of Givon was the center of wine making in ancient Israel. In 1959 and 1960 archaeological expeditions discovered ancient wine cellars saved and preserved at temperatures of 20 degrees Celsius. Furthermore it has been determined that wine was made and stored in ancient Givon between 600 C.E and 700 C.E.

Givon Winery is now owned and operated by Barkan Winery.

**Emerald Riesling**

Givon Emerald Riesling is in the classic semi-dry style. Riesling is one of the world's finest white wine grapes, and when handled well-as it is here-makes a truly exceptional wine.

Origin: Samson Region - Israel's Samson wine region is composed of the central coastal plain

Characteristics: Pleasant fruity flavors, charming and semidry.

**French Colombard**

Colombard is one of the world’s great blending grapes. Colombard adds citrus aromas of lemon and grapefruit, leading to stonefruit flavors such as nectarine and peach.

Origin: Samson Region

Characteristics: Fresh and crisp, with a pleasant floral bouquet.

**About the Region of Samson:**