

Revolutionary Golden Leaves Institute Now Under Way

Sarina Roffe

A new and ingenious program that combines Jewish learning and ethics, with business leadership opportunities, is now underway. Golden Leaves Institute is an 11-month, four-phase program beginning in Israel; then the students spend four months in China and return for the last two phases to Ramat Gan and Jerusalem.

The Shehebar Sephardic Center, Golden Leaves Institute is a revolutionary program under the leadership of Rabbi Shlomo Sam Kassin, Abi Bitton, the director and Yair Salem, assistant director.

Ten students bravely began this new program in August, spending two months in Jerusalem, learning Jewish business and ethics from Rabbi Ezra Kassin and religious business experts. Most of the students did not know that there was a Jewish perspective on modern day business.

The students are Eduardo Attia (Mexico City, Mexico), 20; Menajem Benchimol (Miami, FL), 18; Morris Braha (Brooklyn, NY), 20; Abraham Gindi (Deal, NJ), 20; Jason Kron (Manchester, England), 20; Joshua Morrison (Manchester, England), 19; Jorge Pier (Mexico City, Mexico), 19; Samuel Saka (Miami, FL), 19; Betzalel Wacks (Manchester, England), 22; and Chananel Yosef (Bne-Brak, Israel), 20.

For Phase II, the students went to China. They began their time in Shanghai in late October where they were placed in Syrian owned businesses for internships. In addition, they spend part of the day learning Mandarin and continue to learn business ethics, taught by Rabbi Yitzhak Levenstein, Rabbi Eyal



Students of the Golden Leaves institute arrive in China

Cohen and Syrian businessmen. Guest speakers included Morris Dweck of Bentex, Ricky Sutton of Lollytogs, and Steve Korman of Jacques Moret.

Dr. Simcha Leibowitch, who taught leadership in the Israeli Army Officers Training School, as well as to ambassadors and diplomats in the Israeli Foreign Ministry, is in China teaching the students business leadership and Jewish community leadership. Dr. Leibowitch is the Head of the Leadership Center at the World Zionist Organization headed by Mr Avraham Duvdevani. Mr Duvdevani and Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman have been crucial for the massive success of the Golden Leaves Program.

In China, the students take university classes at YCC International Business School. These 10 young motivated pioneers, along with three faculty members and two staff members, are in Pudong, one of the world's most important business centers and one of China's most modern cities. The students live in two apartments in a compound with many facilities and amenities.

Golden Leaves thanks the following supporters for providing internships to the students, showing faith in this amazing program:

Morris Dweck, Allan Shamah, Joey Harari, Joey Habert, Stevie Korman, David Beyda, Ricky Sutton, Joe Cohen and Albert Sassoon. In addition, the program thanks Jack Mann for loaning us a Sefer Torah, in memory of his father Nat Mann, in Shanghai.

Abi Bitton, the Director of the Golden Leaves Program, is the son of Rabbi Yosef Bitton of Manhattan Beach and the brother of David Bitton, the Rabbi of SSC Shanghai. Yair Salem, Assistant Director, is the former program director of the Menorah Foundation of Argentina.

The Golden Leaves Institute is located in the financial district of Pudong within 10 minutes of the five star hotels at Dong Tai Road. Visitors are welcome for prayers three times a day, meals and Shabbat services. Shachrit minyan is at 8 am; mincha at 12:30 pm, and arbut at 10 pm. It's always nice to see friendly faces from New York, Mexico, Panama, Argentina, England and Guatemala.

The office phone is 862.15.081.7263 and the mobile is 861.852.105.0868. For more information, visit www.goldenleaves.net. □

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