



## The Machon Mitzvah Corps Atlanta Program

June 21 – August 2, 2019

\$4,350

The Machon Mitzvah Corps Program is a Leadership Development and Staff-in-training program. Mitzvah Corps Atlanta is run in partnership with Camp Best Friends, a subsidized, quality summer program for Atlanta children, engaging them in wholesome, organized and productive recreational activities while school is out for the summer. Machon participants will spend 14 days volunteering as junior counselors at Camp Best Friends, while living in dorm-style accommodations in Atlanta. This program is inspired in part by the relationship that Camp Coleman and NFTY have built over many years with the City of Atlanta in running Camp Jenny. As participants do volunteer work, listen to guest speakers, and learn about issues of race and access to education, they will build meaningful relationships with one another and their global peers, understand the complexities and challenges facing various communities, take action on issues they care about, and embrace the ways that Judaism empowers them to enact real change.

Participants of this program will arrive back at camp on opening day of 2nd session and will spend the next 4 weeks incorporating their Mitzvah Corps experience into our Leadership Development and Staff-in-training program. Participants will learn what it means to be a great staff member and will develop the skills necessary to be an effective role model and mentor to our campers. Machon Mitzvah Corps participants live in Machon Village, and have **daily opportunities to work directly with campers and practice the skills they are developing.**

### QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT THE CAMP COLEMAN MACHON MITZVAH CORPS PROGRAM

**What can *you* expect?**

**What do *we* expect?**

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Machon Programs are Leadership Development and Training programs. Machon are ***NOT*** staff and do not share the same responsibilities or privileges as contracted staff members. Our emphasis in the program is to provide participants with an opportunity to work directly with campers and other staff members and to reflect on their experience.

**Why:** To prepare all participants to be excellent staff members and activity leaders at URJ Camp Coleman in the years ahead.

**Who should apply for the Machon Mitzvah Corps Program?** The Machon Mitzvah Corps program is best for teens whose past experiences show that they are passionate about social justice and are interested in an intense volunteer experience with children coming from a wide variety of backgrounds. The ideal candidates have experience with service work and/or experience working with children.

**Application Process:** The Machon programs are open to rising 12<sup>th</sup> graders. They are selective programs and all participants must complete the application process. Applicants are evaluated based on the strengths of their application, reference and interview with a Coleman representative. Applicants who have participated in a combination of programs such as Coleman, NFTY travel programs or other Union for Reform Judaism Israel programs and NFTY-STR/SAR are given

priority. **Particular attention is paid to the evaluation of candidate's attitude and level of participation in previous programs.** Applicants will be notified by e-mail of their application status in late January.

**Where:** At the Union for Reform Judaism, Camp Coleman in Cleveland, GA. The first two weeks of the Machon Mitzvah Corps program will take place in Atlanta, GA at several Camp Best Friends sites around the city. Participants will live in dorm-style accommodations in Atlanta during those two weeks.

**When:** The Machon Mitzvah Corps program runs parallel to Camp Coleman's second session. The 2019 dates for the Machon Mitzvah Corps program are June 21 – August 2. Participants are expected to attend the full program. **It is expected that Machon attend an orientation weekend at Camp Coleman during the weekend of March 15-17, 2019 (this date is subject to change).**

**What do Machon Mitzvah Corps participants do at camp 2<sup>nd</sup> session?** After returning from an incredible Service experience, the Machonikim participate in interactive training sessions focusing on camp leadership skills, child development and behavior management, so that they can become effective camp leaders. Included in every Machonik's training are a wide variety of opportunities to learn and grow as cabin counselors and specialists based on the participant's assignment to a specific bunk or specialty. The program is designed so that a Machon participant can learn about children, group development and his/her own strengths/limitations based upon active involvement in a specific cabin group or specialty area.

Every participant should understand that, **at times, training will be hard work** and, like anytime we learn new things or gain new skills, can be a little bit frustrating. Machon need to understand that they are no longer responsible for just themselves. **Machon Mitzvah Corps participants are taking on a much greater responsibility in the camp community.**

In addition to their training sessions, all Machonikim have real, meaningful opportunities to work directly with campers. Every Machon participant will do a 3-day internship in a specialty area, where they will get to first observe, and then teach the specialty. They will also do a 3-day internship in a bunk, where they will become a part of that cabin community and get to experience almost everything a counselor does.

**Machon Mitzvah Corps participants will live in Machon Village under the supervision of the Machon adult advisors.**

## **Mitzvah Corps Component:**

**URJ Mitzvah Corps** is the Union for Reform Judaism's network of immersive social justice travel programs for high school students, running summer programs in locations around the globe. We have consulted with URJ Mitzvah Corps to develop a custom experience for our Machonikim. Through direct service, supplemented by exposure to many voices in the local community, you'll gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex challenges this community faces, and the innovative ways in which individuals and organizations are creating effective and lasting solutions. Most importantly, you'll have the chance to build meaningful relationships with both children and your peers, ask valuable questions, support local efforts, and be a real global citizen!

### **Details and Sample Daily schedule:**

While in Atlanta, Machon Mitzvah Corps operates on a regular schedule, with participants spending each weekday at their day camp jobs, with afternoons to relax or cook dinner, and evenings to engage in learning or explore activities around Atlanta. Camp Best Friends operates many sites around Atlanta. Machon volunteers will be placed at several sites, in small groups. A sample schedule of a typical day:

7:00am - Wake up! Use the kitchen in the dorms to make breakfast and pack a lunch.

8:00am - Depart for volunteer sites by van.

8:30am - Spend the majority of the day immersed in volunteering at Camp Best Friends. Build meaningful relationships with the campers and staff, and engage with them for an extended period of time. Lunch is eaten on site.

4:00pm - Return to the dorms.

4:00pm - Free time. Relax, do laundry, plan some programs, or enjoy being outside.

6:00pm - Dinner as a group.

7:30pm - Evening activities. A Jewish prayer experience, meeting with a local leader or member of the clergy, interactive group program, field trip, social activity, or combination! This is the time to delve into the issues that are addressed during the day while volunteering, and develop a new skill set and perspective. It's also time to build strong friendships with fellow Machon participants!

9:30pm - Evening ritual. Time to conclude the day, and prepare for tomorrow.

10:30pm - Lights out!

## **URJ Mitzvah Corps Resources:**

Read the URJ Mitzvah Corps blog and hear from participants in a similar program in New Jersey:

<https://mitzvahcorps.org/2016/07/28/urban-mitzvah-corps-volunteering-play-safe/>

Watch a video about URJ Mitzvah Corps:

<https://vimeo.com/77140726>