



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **USY Teams Up With Israel Association of Baseball**

Here's a reason to stand up and cheer: United Synagogue Youth (USY) is teaming up with the Israel Association of Baseball (IAB) to support the Israeli baseball team at the opening game of the World Baseball Classic (WBC) on Wednesday, Sept. 19 in Jupiter, Fla.

This historic partnership is being spearheaded by Rabbi David Levy, the new Director of Teen Learning of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, and Haim Katz, President of the Israel Association of Baseball.

Other partners of this initiative include David Rhode, Executive Director of Pitch in for Baseball; Rabbi Steven Wernick; CEO of United Synagogue; Joshua Ull, USY President; and Stephanie Nichol, director of the Hanegev region of USY, which covers the southeastern United States.

The parameters of the partnership are still being developed but according to Levy, the following objectives are being pursued:

- At the Opening Round of the WBC on Wednesday, Sept. 19 in Jupiter, Fla., USY will work to get a crowd to cheer on the Israeli team.
- To encourage the important work of Pitch in for Baseball – an organization that collects baseball equipment for disadvantaged youth – USY will encourage their regions and chapters to hold drives for the organization. Supplies will be offered first to Israel and then sent to other countries with developing baseball programs.
- If the Israeli team makes it to the World Baseball Classic, the Israel Association of Baseball will arrange for a player or two to greet the USYers during their International Convention in Boston from Dec. 23-27.

- Assuming WBC games are held in the United States, USY will work to get their members from the surrounding regions to attend and support the Israeli team.
- Long-range plans are also underway to get participants on Nativ – USY’s yearlong leadership program in Israel – and USY Israel Pilgrimage – its summer program – to work with the association on playing and teaching baseball in Israel.

For Levy, this partnership is the stuff of dreams.

“I could not be more thrilled about the partnership between USY and the Israel Association of Baseball,” he said. “It is wonderful to be able to be able to connect USYers with Israel in a non-political context. Bringing Israel and baseball together is a winning formula that will lead to new avenues of interaction between our teens and Israel.”

Katz agreed with Levy about the efficacy of sports in providing a common language for cooperation across cultures.

“Sports in general and baseball in particular is the best material to build bridges between the youth of Israel and the youth of North America,” said Katz. “We are excited about partnering with USY and their new role in bringing the game of Greenberg, Koufax and Green to the land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

Levy added that he cannot wait for participants on the Nativ and USY Israel Pilgrimage programs to give a part of themselves to Israel as they share one of the great American national treasures with Israelis. “The tzedakah opportunity is here as well because of Pitch in for Baseball’s involvement, which will enable our kids to collect equipment so that disadvantaged Israeli kids can also ‘play ball,’” he said.

The Hanegev region of USY will be primarily responsible for bringing a critical mass of USYers to the World Baseball Classic in Jupiter, Fla. in mid-September.

The new IAB/USY partnership is a winning idea, said Wernick. “Baseball, Israel and the excitement of supporting a ‘homeland team’ is as good as it gets,” he said. “This is teen programming at its coolest and most creative.”

The idea is, in fact, rooted in American Jewish history, Katz added. “At the turn of the last century, baseball was instrumental in bringing the children of new immigrants closer to their new American homeland. Now, 100 years later, baseball will again be instrumental in bringing the Jewish youth of North America closer to their heritage,” he said.

*For further information about the partnership between United Synagogue Youth and the Israel Association of Baseball, or to arrange and interview with Rabbi David Levy or Rabbi Steven Wernick, please contact Shira Dicker at 917.403.3989 or [shira.dicker@sd-media.com](mailto:shira.dicker@sd-media.com).*