

RRIS CAMPUS LIFE MAGAZINE 2024-2025



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WELCOME TO CAMPUS LIFE

Here at the Raphael Recanati International School, the Campus Life department strives to offer our students endless opportunities for social and cultural activities. As the largest international school in Israel, it is our goal to create a welcoming and inclusive community for all students who decide to embark on this academic journey and make Reichman University their home.

From the very first week of the year, our unique Orientation Week is designed to bring first year students together and build connections that will last them long after finishing their academic studies. The time spent at the RRIS is filled with festive celebrations, trips across Israel, international events, Shabbat dinners, sports activities, and so much more. Even in challenging times, Campus Life at the RRIS works to create a safe environment that assures students they are not alone and always have a friendly face to turn to.



Omer Balva z"l
Fell in the Swords of Iron
War



Joseph Yosef Gitarts z"l
Fell in the Swords of Iron
War

As we take a look at this last year, it is easy to see the challenging times we faced as a nation. The Raphael Recanati International School class of 2025 is coming to an end with two less students – Omer Balva z"l and Joseph Gitarts z"l who both fell in defense of Israel. However, all our hardships are overpowered by perseverance and resilience. We remember the sacrifices made by many and use it as a drive to keep moving forward.

We're proud to present this year's RRIS Campus Life Magazine, with articles written by our amazing and dedicated students – **you are the reason we keep doing what we do.**

THE ETHEL & LEONARD TIGAY ORIENTATION WEEK

Opening Day

Orientation week started with Opening Day, and the campus was alive and full of excitement! The first stop was gathering and registration, where we met up with our Orientation Week group and RRIS Peer Counselor. We were welcomed by the RRIS staff and faculty, received our student ID cards, and officially became students – hello, university life! To wrap up a long and informative first day, we all came together for the RRIS Opening Ceremony, which included a motivating speech from the one and only Jonathan Davis, as well as words of encouragement from several of Reichman University's Deans.



Following this ceremony, the RRIS held their annual Clubs Fair, giving us many opportunities to be an active part of the school, explore interests, and maybe even find a new hobby or two. We also got a deeper look into our academic paths, with introductions to our programs and what to expect this year. The Student Union gave us the inside scoop on how they've got our backs and how we can contribute to them as well. For the rest of the week, students stayed within their degrees, and we got the opportunity to have a campus tour, activities to get to know our classmates, and a lot of help to get settled into our new life and begin our new journey.



Kickstart your RRIS
journey with lifelong
friendships and
unforgettable
events!



Orientation Trip

On Thursday, the last day of the orientation week, first-year students are taken on an amazing trip to the south of Israel. The day began at Beit Guvrin National Park, where we saw ancient caves, archaeological ruins, and layers of history. After exploring the area and having lunch, we



continued to Kibbutz Revivim, a historic settlement founded in 1943. At the Mitzpe Revivim museum, we learned about life in the early days of the kibbutz, with exhibits featuring a 1940s field hospital and planes used during the 1948 Independence War.



We ended the day with a dinner all together and an unforgettable outdoor party thanks to DJ Liam Elbaz before heading home. This day was an amazing opportunity for us to connect with our fellow classmates, meet other students from different degrees, explore amazing locations in Israel, and make our first batch of friends at the RRIS.



**"From name tags
to memories."**

Article written by: Eva Boujenah, France.
BA Psychology - RRIS





YOU can be part of this next year!



RRIS PEER COUNSELOR

Your go-to guides for university life

This year, I had the privilege of being a counselor for a group of incoming Communications students at the RRIS. As a counselor, I had the opportunity to support students not only in their academic transition, but also in their process of adapting to a new country, culture, and way of life. For many of my students, this wasn't just the beginning of university—it was the start of an entirely new chapter in life. I was there to guide them through questions, challenges, and uncertainties, and to offer emotional support when



things felt overwhelming. Throughout this journey, I met amazing, diverse people, and I feel lucky to have been someone they could count on—whether they needed practical help or just someone to talk to. I felt honored to be a small part of their journey and to walk alongside them as they found their way. Supporting them during those first, uncertain steps and toward a smoother transition into university life and the academic world.

What inspired me most was hearing the stories of students who left their homes and lives across the world and chose to come to Israel, even in times of uncertainty and war. Their courage and determination moved me deeply—it was truly inspiring.

I really enjoyed this unforgettable year alongside an incredible team of fellow counselors who went through this journey with me. I'm especially grateful to my amazing coordinator, Shelly Ness, who was always there for me with support and guidance, and to Sylvia Kassoff, Director of Student Affairs & Wellbeing and head of the RRIS Peer Counselors Program, for creating such a meaningful and one-of-a-kind experience. Being part of a program like this was something you won't find anywhere else and was a real privilege. I'm walking away from it with wonderful memories and new friendships that I'll carry with me forward.

Thank you to everyone who was part of this amazing, intense, and unforgettable journey.



Article written by: Nicole Papiashvili, Israel.
BA Psychology & Business Administration



SHABBAT DINNERS

I had the chance to attend the Shabbat dinners organized by Campus Life, and I thoroughly enjoyed my experience. It was one of those rare evenings that just felt meaningful from start to finish. What stood out to me most was the mix of people, students from all different degrees and backgrounds, many of whom I'd never met before. There was something really special about seeing such a diverse table – Jewish students, both secular and religious, as well as students of other religions and cultures coming together, all sharing a beautiful Friday night meal. It reminded me that at the end of the day, **we are all connected by something bigger than ourselves.**



The atmosphere was warm and genuine, everyone was super friendly, social, and made an effort to get to know each other. It was an amazing way to meet new people I otherwise would not have had the opportunity to meet! The dinner itself felt like more than just a school event in the Karnaf, it actually had a really elevated vibe, like being in a proper restaurant.

The food was delicious, there was a wide selection of drinks, and the singing throughout the night brought a ton of energy into the room. I loved hearing the different perspectives during the short speeches about that week's Torah portion. It wasn't overly formal or preachy, just honest reflections that led to really interesting conversations and reflections. What really stuck with me was how much teamwork went into the night. Everyone pitched in, whether it was helping set up, serving food, or cleaning up. It was sweet to see that kind of collaboration, it made the whole experience feel even more **wholesome.**



HANNUKAH

Jerusalem Hannukah Tour

Every year, the RRIS takes students on a Jerusalem Tour during Hannukah to visit the lit-up neighborhoods of the city. Students visited the Nachlaot neighborhood and were guided through the old alleyways. They learned about the foundation of the neighborhood and its connection to the holiday, as well as the different types of people living in Nachlaot. The tour ended with time to explore the Machane Yehuda Market and some sweet Sufganiot for everyone.

“ The most interesting part of this trip was learning about the neighborhood of Nahlaot in Jerusalem and the celebration of Hanukkah. What was especially interesting to see was all of the old buildings and the culture that is deeply rooted in these streets.

Rena Chang, Singapore
BA Entrepreneurship & Business

I loved learning about different communities of Jews and how they relate to this holiday. Learning about other cultures is something that's always been interesting to me, so being able to be here, see it in person, and listen to the history - **I'm honestly in awe.**

Itamar Nadler, USA
BA Entrepreneurship & Business

I loved seeing everything, the views are impeccable, and the energy is amazing here.

Noah Bereznitsky, Israel
BA Government



The trip to Jerusalem was an amazing experience.

We explored historic Judaic landmarks. We went through the city and saw stunning synagogues, as well as the unique architecture of the city. It was so special to see the people singing and dancing during the Hanukah celebrations and to see the traditions come to life in a vibrant and meaningful way.

Theia Hartenis, Romania
BA Government

Hannukah Candle Lighting Ceremony

For Hannukah, the RRIS hosted a Hanukkah Candle Lighting Ceremony that brought together students, faculty, and friends on campus. It was a simple gathering, but it carried a quiet strength that felt especially needed this year. Jonathan Davis, Head of the RRIS and Vice President for External Relations, attended the event and helped mark the occasion. Six RRIS students were chosen – whether for their service in reserves, involvement in JLIC, or for being especially outstanding – to light the menorah, and slowly, the candles began to glow, one after the other, until the whole menorah stood lit. What made this moment stand out wasn't just the tradition itself, but the timing. With the war still ongoing in Israel, many of us had been carrying a heaviness—worry for family, uncertainty, and a constant stream of difficult news. In that context, lighting the menorah together felt more than symbolic. It was a reminder of resilience, community, and how important it is to keep small moments of light alive. After the lighting and blessings, everyone was invited to enjoy a festive spread of food and sweet treats, including the beloved sufganiyot.

As a first-year student, I didn't expect a short candle-lighting on campus to leave an impression. But it did. In Jewish tradition, light represents much more than something we see — it's about hope, memory, and continuity. That night, in the middle of a hard time, we lit candles together. And in doing so, we reminded ourselves that even when the world feels dark, we don't give up — we gather, we remember, and we carry the light forward.



A powerful
celebration of light,
hope, and
community

Article written by: Sharon Bez, Argentina
BA Communications



TZAHAL 101

Every year, the RRIS provides an info session for students to come and hear about IDF army service after their academic degree. Students hear from representatives from the Meitav army unit – who is responsible for all guidance in the pre-drafting process, as well as speakers from the Academizatzia unit – the unit which offers special positions for those who draft after their academic degree. We have many students who decide to stay in Israel and draft into the army once completing their studies, and it is important to us that students receive all information – right from the source.



“ —

My name is Eliyahu, I'm a BA Government student and I have everything to thank for the care that the RRIS gave and gives me, especially when related to enlisting into the IDF. The info sessions were always insightful, Shelly Levy (RRIS Student Affairs Senior Advisor) always giving the best advice to hard questions and helping with bureaucracy.

— ”

ALIYAH ROUND TABLE

The RRIS Student Affairs team collaborates with the Ministry of Aliyah and Absorption to organize an annual Aliyah Round Table, which offers face-to-face help and guidance to students who are thinking of making Aliyah, have started the Aliyah process, or completed their journey and are still seeking guidance.

One-on-one advice for anyone curious or confused about making Aliyah.

“My name is Emma, and I just finished studying my first year of Psychology. I had been eager to make Aliyah for months, but didn't know where to start. For me, making Aliyah is a crucial part of my journey to set up my life in Israel, but dealing with Israeli bureaucracy on my own seemed daunting. Making such an intense, adult decision while living abroad, seemed much easier to put off than to execute. I didn't know if I'd be immediately required to draft into the IDF, what benefits I'd receive, or even where to start applying. The RRIS Aliyah Round Table was a phenomenal resource for someone in my position. I had the opportunity to sit face-to-face with Israel's Ministry of Aliyah and directly ask my questions about how to complete the process most effectively. The Ministry and the RRIS staff created a very welcoming environment to allow the students to ask any questions they had about the obstacles they were running into along the way. Not only was it helpful to have my questions answered and to hear the advice of the Ministry's members themselves, but it was also comforting to hear the experiences of my fellow students who had gone through the same process already. I left with every single one of my questions answered clearly, and I knew exactly how to take the next step. Now, a month later, I have finished the Aliyah process, and I can say that I would not have reached this point as easily without the help of the Aliyah and Absorption Round Table.”



Article written by: Emma Shaykin, USA
BA Psychology

CLUBS

Ambassadors' Club

The RRIS in collaboration with StandWithUs brings the Ambassadors' Club Speakers Series to campus. It offers all students the opportunity to learn about Israeli advocacy and diplomacy, international relations between Israel and the world, Zionism, and how to tell Israel's story abroad. Students in the Ambassadors' Club shared how the program gave them a deeper and more personal understanding of Israel's history, politics, advocacy and diplomacy. Here is a collection of quotes and insights from some of this year's participants:

“

“I joined the club to learn more about Israel's role in the world, and I left with more than just facts. It completely changed the way I see history and current events.”

“Miri Eisen's lecture on the Israel-Hamas war was a turning point in my understanding. She explained the conflict so clearly. It helped me think beyond the headlines and see the deeper issues at play.”

“Noa Raman, Doron Speilman, Noam Koren, and Charlotte Korchak, all left a strong impact on me. They helped me understand Israel's history, media presence, and global challenges while encouraging open discussions where we could ask tough questions and clear up misconceptions.”

“Visiting key places like Rachel Crossing, Mount Scopus, and Bethlehem made everything feel real. Hearing about Israel's security challenges while standing in these locations was a powerful experience.”



“Dan Oryan's lecture on remembrance was especially meaningful to me. He showed how Israel honors victims of terror through memorials, digital archives, and art. It made me realize that history isn't just about the past, it's something we must actively remember and share.”

“The Ambassadors' Club was about more than just learning history, it was about understanding the people, emotions, and stories behind it.

I leave this program with new knowledge, curiosity, and a strong desire to keep learning.”

CLUBS

DJ Workshop

Moving to a new country is always an adventure, filled with challenges, excitement, and unexpected opportunities. When I began my journey at the RRIS, I was super determined to explore new experiences beyond my studies. Whether it was clubs, workshops, or work, I wanted to make sure I immerse myself in new experiences to try and find new passions and strengths.



When I saw the email regarding a DJ workshop, I didn't think twice. As a musician and lover of all music, it seemed like the perfect workshop—something fun, engaging, and right up my alley. From the very first session, the workshop exceeded my expectations. It was more than just a class, it was an experience that brought people together through music. The atmosphere was welcoming and created a safe space for all of us to learn, experiment, and grow. I was lucky enough to be part of a group that was very new and supportive, making it easy to laugh at our mistakes. The best part was all the hands-on experience as we weren't just sitting and listening; we were actively mixing, practicing, and playing live. We were also using the best possible DJ equipment and software ensuring a good experience.

Learn to DJ from real pros, no experience needed!



The highlight of the workshop for me was performing in front of an audience at a bar—I truly felt like a DJ, and since then I knew it would be a fun passion to work on. Beyond the technical skills, the workshop provided great advice and guidance. The DJs running the workshop, Nadav Shpliman and Ohad Paran were incredibly supportive, always available to help, even outside of workshop hours. They even gave us free tickets to their parties! Their dedication to our growth was evident, and their encouragement pushed us to take our passion more seriously. They didn't just teach us how to DJ—they inspired us to turn our love for music into something greater, whether as a hobby or a potential career path. Looking back, this workshop was a super rewarding experience. For anyone considering stepping out of their comfort zone and trying something new, I can't recommend it enough. You never know where a simple side quest might lead you!



Article written by: Maya Sinay, USA
BA Communications



CLUBS

Talk Israel Content Shapers Workshop

I initially had no intentions to work on content, but with time I realized that videos are an instrument of change. Stories expose and uncover truths that mass media often tries to bury. I learned that there is real responsibility in sharing stories, and then I found Talk Israel - Content Shapers Workshop. Working with them has been a game-changer, like finding the right tool for a tough job.



**Become a
voice for Israel**

They don't just wait for stories to come to them, they seek out storytellers, giving us the skills and connections to share tales that might otherwise stay untold. These aren't just posts or videos; they're pieces of a bigger story, threads of different lives and cultures that weave together into the bold, living story of Israel. Through Talk Israel, I've met other storytellers, learned to sharpen my own voice, and I have grown better at capturing what makes this place special. There's more to come, and I'm ready for it.



Article written by: Thadeo Arlo, Indonesia
BA Entrepreneurship & BSc Computer Science



PURIM



Purim was amazing! The entire community of the RRIS came together along with members from JLIC (Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus). There was a beautiful reading of the Megillah done by Rav Benjamin Menora. Everyone listened quietly and respectfully and would “BOO” as loud as possible when Haman’s name was read. It was beautiful to see the entire community show up and it was so fun to see everyone's creative costumes! There was food, fun and friends! I am so grateful to have a school that promotes and celebrates Jewish holidays. Thank you to the JLIC for being my religious family at Reichman University and giving me the opportunity to connect with my Jewish identity.



Next year, you'll be here too!!!

Article written by: Maya Schapira, USA
BA Psychology



OCTOBER 7TH SITES TOUR



With the help of Mor Perez, a fellow Reichman University student and RRIS Peer Counselor, who is originally from Netiv HaAsara, we organized a tour of Otef Aza to better understand the aftermath of the October 7th tragedies. We visited the Nova Festival site, where survivor Oren Bouganim told her story for the first time. We continued to Kfar Aza, where Alon Amar took us on a tour of the kibbutz and the young neighborhood which was completely destroyed. Finally, we visited Netiv HaAsara and the famous "Path to Peace" wall, and the biggest Israeli flag in the country. To end the tour, we visited the Oren Winery, opened in memory of Oren Stern z"l who fell while protecting his community on October 7th.



Visiting the sites of the October 7th massacres was not just a journey through grief—but a profound lesson in resilience, unity, and humanity. As part of the RRIS delegation, I stood alongside students of every background and belief, united by a need to understand and remember. We listened to the story of Nova Survivor Oren Bouganim as we walked through tragedy, and bore witness to stories that cannot be forgotten. From the haunting silence of the Nova Music Festival grounds to the courage-filled retelling and devastation in Kfar Aza, from the quiet strength of Nativ Ha'asara's symbol-laden walls standing boldly just meters from the Israel-Gaza border, to the message of hope found in the Oren Stern memorial winery—each stop carried a weight that deepened our perspective. **And yet, amid the sorrow, what struck me most was the shared strength of a nation that chooses life, kindness, and solidarity in the face of darkness.**

The trip sparked conversations that lingered well beyond the sites—reflections on safety, identity, and purpose. For me, it was a humbling reminder of how deeply interconnected we are, and how essential it is to carry forward both memory and meaning—with gratitude, courage, and love.

It is important to mention that one of Reichman University's students – Idan Shtivi z"l, was tragically killed at the Nova festival. His body was kidnapped and has yet to return home. We pray for his return and the return of all remaining hostages.



Article written by: Zach Henzel, USA
BA Economics & Sustainability



POLAND DELEGATION

My experience in Poland was unforgettable. Having my grandparents on my mother's side experience the Holocaust in different ways is what really made me connect to this experience and every sight we had the opportunity to see.



I had the privilege to share my great-grandmother's survival story of her deportation from Salonica, Greece in 1944 to Auschwitz II (Birkenau) where she would be one of the only survivors of her family. By the end of 1944, she was death-marched to Bergen Belsen and in March 1945 she was sent to Dachau where she was liberated at the end of April 1945.



I also shared my maternal grandfather's survival story and the details of what his parents went through during the unimaginable experiences of pogroms and forced labor.

Throughout the delegation, we visited many locations and preservations that left me speechless. The Old Jewish Cemetery in Warsaw, the Mila 18 where the last stand of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising took place,

the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau. We visited Majdanek, which is the concentration camp that is most intact to this day, as well as the first camp to be liberated in July 1944. The visit to the Chachmei Yeshiva in Lublin was extremely uplifting because it is a reminder that we as the Jewish people will always rise above our challenges and struggles.

On day 5 of the delegation, we saw what remained of the Warsaw Ghetto before we went to Treblinka. Almost 900,000 of our people were murdered there in only a year. Personally, I had the chance to remember my friend Samuel Willenberg who was one of fewer than 70 people who survived Treblinka. Walking around the gravestones of whole communities wiped out and sharing his story of how he survived and fought back is a moment I'll never forget. Shabbat in Warsaw was an amazing and meaningful experience before we all summarized how this delegation impacted us. This was a unique and special opportunity and I am very thankful for it.



Why watch from the
sidelines?
Be part of it.

Article written by: Matan Zimman, USA
BA Government & Sustainability



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

Zikaron Ba Salon

On the evening of Yom HaShoah, students and faculty gathered on campus for a moving Zikaron Basalon. Shlomit Levy shared the powerful story of her parents, both Holocaust survivors from Romania. She spoke about their experiences throughout the war, in concentration camps, losing everything they ever knew, and the painful, often overlooked chapter that followed. After liberation, they were placed in refugee camps in Greece - no longer under Nazi control, but still far from freedom.



Shlomit explained that the war didn't simply end with life returning to normal, they had to rebuild their lives from the ground up. Her parents eventually made Aliyah to Israel and rebuilt their lives with resilience and hope. Today, Shlomit stands surrounded by four generations of her family - a living testament to survival and strength. The evening was a powerful reminder that Holocaust memory is not only about the horrors of the past, but about the endurance of the human spirit. L'dor vador: from generation to generation - **we carry forward the stories, the lessons, and the promise of "Never Again."**



Memorial Shabbat Dinner

I participated in the RRIS 15th Poland Delegation, so when I heard about the Shabbat dinner planned for the weekend in between Israeli memorial days, I knew I had to sign up. I was looking forward to seeing all my friends again from the Poland delegation, as well as celebrating Shabbat with other Reichman University students.

We started off by greeting each other in our nice Shabbat clothes and praying at the campus synagogue.

Catching up with both the Israelis and internationals is always an important part of seeing each other. We sat down at the dinner table, a room full of people who experienced something so meaningful together, and starting singing Shabbat songs.

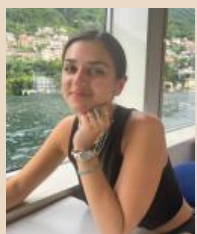
We enjoyed a beautiful dinner, and introduced our Shabbat chants that we did in Poland to the rest of the students present at this dinner – enjoyed by everyone including Jonathan Davis!

Reconnecting on this especially important Shabbat was such an important experience for me.



SHA SHA Shabbat Shalom!!!
SHA SHA Shabbat Shalom!!!

Article written by: Mickey Fried, USA
BA Government & Sustainability



Yad Vashem Museum

It can be said that Yad Vashem is one of the world's most well-known – and at the same time, somber – memorial museums. It is not just a place – it is Jewish people's pain, memory, struggle, pride, and courage. This is a location where suffering of the past is felt physically and as if under the skin. Today, it is most bitterly realized at what cost the Jews were able to retain their right to be, to exist, to have a home. And with bitterness, there comes pride — for those who never lost hope, for those who toiled, for those who kept the flame alight in blackest darkness. This was particularly true after October 7, 2023.

In honor of Israel's Holocaust Memorial Day, RRIS students from various faculties visited the Yad Vashem Museum, where they listened to a simultaneously fascinating and heartbreaking tour.

This was my first visit to Yad Vashem. I have long dreamed of visiting there, and once inside, I suddenly felt how deep and inextricable my connection with the Jewish people is. At some point, I just couldn't hold back the



tears – from the pain, from the pride, from the feeling of the memory that we must preserve. Following the tour of the museum, we heard from Bertha who shared her story: An 11 year old girl who was saved by Christians in the French Alps. Bertha converted to Christianity in return for her protection and was only able to reclaim her Judaism many years later. Bertha is now 93 years old and recites her story to visitors of Yad VaShem. Listening to her story, it was impossible to hold back the tears. There is anguish, strength and unmeasurable devotion to her country in her voice. Her testimony is a living testament to history and the imperative of human courage, compassion, and memory.

Be part of the memory that shapes who we are.

Article written by: Elena Ronin, Russia
BA Communications



YOM HAZIKARON

Student Soldiers' Panel

On Yom Hazikaron, Reichman students gathered at a Yizkor memorial to hear IDF soldiers speak in honor of their fallen friends. Mr. Jonathan Davis, head of the Rafael Recanati International School, opened the ceremony with a few words. He spoke about the important day, the heroism of Israeli soldiers and the integrity of the state of Israel. The event continued with a panel of three RRIS students, all currently serving in reserves. They told personal stories of their experiences as Lone Soldiers, and then each spoke of a fellow soldier they had known who had given their life in the



service of Israel. Through the speakers' words, participants were given a window into the lives of true heroes. We were told of who they had been, their personalities, and how they had uplifted the people around them. Listeners heard about these soldiers' dreams and their service in the IDF, ending in their tragic sacrifice. The attendees at the ceremony were encouraged to ask questions, and a moving discussion ensued about the IDF heroes, their families and the legacy they left. It was a somber ceremony and a sad one, but listeners left a little bit more uplifted, knowing the memory and honor of the fallen IDF heroes is being perpetuated by those who remain to tell the story.



This year's Soldiers' Panel was nothing short of extraordinary—an event that left a deep impact on everyone who attended. Listening to three RRIS students share their personal stories from the frontlines was not only powerful, but truly inspiring. Each of them spoke with honesty and emotion about the pain of losing fellow soldiers and close friends. It was heartbreaking to hear, but also incredibly moving to witness their strength, resilience, and continued commitment to defending our country. This was, without a doubt, one of the most meaningful and unforgettable events of the entire year. I want to express my deepest gratitude to the brave students who participated, to all the soldiers currently serving in reserves, to our veterans, and especially to the fallen Reichman University students whose memories will live on forever.

Fallen soldiers honored at the panel:

Danil Pechnyik z"l – honored by Menachem Reinitz

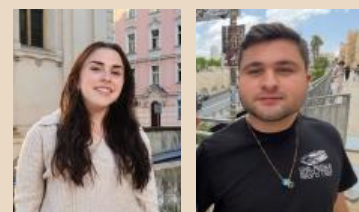
Ariel Biton z"l – honored by Aviv Harel

Ro'i Sasson z"l – honored by Ezra Ruderman

**“They were our friends.
They were our heroes.”**

Article 1 written by: Leah Brenenson, USA – BA Psychology

Article 2 written by: Daniel Saade, USA – BA Business Administration



MASA Yom Hazikaron Ceremony

In remembrance of Israel's fallen soldiers or victims of terror

This was such a powerful and meaningful experience, and I am so grateful to have attended it. I was able to attend with other RRIS students, which made it even more special as I was able to make more memories with the Reichman community. For example, my group and I were able to take great photos, such as one on top of a tank that soldiers use on the battlefield, a photo that I will cherish forever. There were people from MASA Israel Teaching Fellows, as well as family members of fallen soldiers in attendance, all of whom shared emotional stories about the soldiers. Each speaker had a very powerful story, some of which brought tears to my eyes.



This event significantly contributed to my time at the RRIS as we were able to come together as a community to remember our heroes who fell in battle, take group pictures for memories, and have an important and powerful experience; a couple of examples of the RRIS's goals and core values. Overall, this was a very emotional, powerful, and important experience and I am very happy and proud to have been a part of it. [Am Yisrael Chai always.](#)



INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL



This year's RRIS International Festival brought together students from different countries all around the world to share their own cultures through a taste of their delicious food and drinks! Countries like Venezuela, Panama, South Africa, USA, France, Italy, Turkey, and many more were proudly represented. I had the honor of being part of the Venezuela stand, together with fellow Venezuelan students.



We prepared and served our country's traditional dishes and also enjoyed discovering and learning about other cultures along the way. The International Festival is not just about food. It's a meaningful tradition that celebrates where we come from and reminds us of the unique and diverse community we are part of at the RRIS.



**Your turn to represent your
country is coming!**



Article written by: Salomon Fogel, Venezuela
BA Business Administration





Get ready for your booth!





Student Coordinators



Natalie Jalfon, Venezuela - BA Communications
 Sarit Fogel, Venezuela - BA Communications
 Sofiia Turlais, Russia - BA Entrepreneurship & Business
 Tayra Polikar, Turkey - BSc Computer Science
 Sharon Bez, Argentina - BA Communications
 Luna Bentolila, Spain - BA Psychology

“

It was amazing to support so many passionate students and see how much effort they put into sharing their traditions. There was something really special about watching people light up when they talked about their culture.

- Sharon Bez

For me, it was an honor to contribute to the organization of the International Festival. It is without a doubt one of the best days of the year here at the RRIS, as it allows all of us international students from all over the world to showcase our culture and typical dishes. I had a wonderful experience with the entire Campus Life team. I feel like it was a great process, and thanks to our motivation and enthusiasm, we were able to do everything as it should have been and in the best possible way. It was an amazing opportunity to volunteer and contribute to my university community.

- Sarit Fogel

”

KAYAK CLUB



That smile? It could be yours next semester.

When I first signed up for the Kayak Club, it was mostly because I wanted to take advantage of how close we are to the beach in Herzliya. I forgot how lucky I was to live a short bus ride away from the beach, and I really just wanted to appreciate it more. What I didn't expect was how much I would love it. Every time we had a session, I left feeling genuinely happier. Being out on the water was like an instant serotonin boost.

In the beginning, I was honestly really bad at kayaking—I flipped over at least twice every session—but I still had the best time. The instructors were always so nice and patient, helping me get back into the kayak each time without being upset that I kept flipping over.

I also got to meet new people and make friends, which made the experience even better. Even though the club didn't last as long as I'd hoped, it still became a really special part of my school year. It reminded me how important it is to just try things, even if you're not great at them, and to enjoy where you are.



Article written by: Natalie (Shana) Kelner, USA
BA Communications



NORTH TRIP

Day 1

A good journey often begins at a new turning point in life. Whether it appears by chance or gently urges us to start a new chapter; it's hard to say. But somehow, a journey has always been there at the start of something new. Every year, the RRIS prepares a special 2-day 'North Trip' for its international students. I'd like to share my experiences on this trip.

This one truly surprised me. The water hiking at Nahal HaKibbutzim was nothing like what I had expected; sweating under the sun as I walked. Instead, it led us through chest-deep water, where I felt the richness and beauty of northern Israel in a way I hadn't before. Along the way, we paused to hear fascinating stories about the surrounding environment. What began as an experience of the dynamic vitality of the Galilee region gradually deepened into something more historical.

The Galilee region holds significant weight in Israel's early history. Considering how crucial water resources are in shaping the fate of nations, especially here in the Middle East, that's no exaggeration. At Old Gesher, we witnessed a historical site where early efforts to develop water infrastructure played a vital role in the nation's founding. We also learned about the pure and resilient spirit of the Jewish workers who dedicated themselves to this mission. Strangely, the moment that brought the spirit closest to heart came later that same night.

Our accommodation stretched out along the Sea of Galilee; an ideal setting for enjoying the evening breeze by a fire. We enjoyed a hearty BBQ dinner and an especially festive party with a really cool DJ, and we lit a small bonfire to end the night. A warm smoke rose into the quiet night sky. Some of us felt drawn to the water and found a safe spot to enter. The water, which I had expected to be cold, was surprisingly gentle and warm. The moon and countless stars rising over the Sea of Galilee seemed to watch over us, as if they had accompanied us through every step of the day's journey.

**No one knew yet how meaningful
these people would become**





Day 2

We continued the trip the next day by descending Mt. Arbel. From its peak, we had a panoramic view of the Galilee, the very landscape we had walked through. With our knowledgeable tour guide, a former IDF soldier, we hiked along a trail enriched by stories and historical insights. As we descended, we neared the water again, where a final mission awaited us: rafting. We were instructed to build connectors for the boats using only wood and ropes, and to complete a series of tasks while navigating the water. My team won the competition, and I am grateful for the teamwork and dedication we shared. Throughout this journey, water remained a central element, and it left us with a lasting impression of the abundance and vitality of the Galilee.

On October 7, 2023, a heartbreaking terrorist attack struck Israel; the country where I've studied and lived for years. The war and military operations that followed continue to this day. That must be why public gatherings and travel have become more cautious. Over the past two years, we've each fought our own battles in our own ways and grown weary of them. But perhaps that is where the meaning of this journey lies; not in escape, but in arriving at the edge of weariness, and quietly taking a step toward renewal.

A step filled with hope.



Article written by: Junil Lee, South Korea
BSc Computer Science





Next year's adventure is waiting for YOU.



RECANATI GALA

A Night to Remember

As a third-year psychology student, the Recanati Gala marked the completion of a transformative journey—academically, personally, and emotionally. It was more than just a beautiful evening; it was a powerful celebration of resilience, unity, and growth.

I still remember during orientation week, everyone saying these three years would fly by. At the time, it was hard to imagine – but it was true. Those years truly passed in a blink, filled with moments that shaped us far beyond the classroom.



Generously hosted by Mr. Oudi Recanati, Chairman of the Board of Directors at Reichman University, the Recanati Gala brought together the 2025 graduating class of the Raphael Recanati International School for an unforgettable farewell. As students and faculty shared their reflections, one theme echoed throughout the evening: a profound sense of community. What began as a diverse group of individuals from all over the world became something deeper—RRIS became a family. That sense of closeness was felt especially in moments of remembrance. Two members of the Class of 2025, Joseph Gitarts z"l and Omer Balva z"l, fell during the war while courageously protecting our land. Their absence was deeply felt, and their memory honored. The evening served not only as a celebration of our achievements but as a tribute to their lives and legacy.

An exceptional classmate of ours, Zara Maloon, who served many days in reserves, took the stage to share her experiences. Her words were powerful reminders that even while pursuing a degree, it is possible—and incredibly meaningful—to continue serving and protecting our country. Her strength and resilience inspired us all. Despite the immense challenges of the past years, including the war and all that came with it, we persevered. We leaned on one another, we adapted, and we continued.



Completing our degrees in such a reality was more than an academic milestone—it was a testament to the resilience, unity, and spirit of our community. As I looked around the room that night, surrounded by friends who truly became family, I felt an overwhelming sense of pride and gratitude. The Recanati Gala was not just a farewell—it was a celebration of everything we overcame, everything we became, and everything we carry with us as we step into the **future**.

Article written by: Elisheva Nordmann, Switzerland
BA Psychology



TAZUZ

ETHEL & LEONARD TIGAY SPORTS & CULTURE PROGRAM

Starting a new degree at the RRIS – Reichman University, after transferring from another university was nerve-racking. I wasn't just adjusting to new classes, I was starting an entirely new campus life. I didn't know how I would manage my studies while also building a sense of community. That changed when I discovered Tazuz, a student sports club. I had never joined a sports club before, but Eitan Hirsch, RRIS graduate and founder of Tazuz, encouraged me to get involved. What I thought would just be exercise quickly became something much more meaningful.



In my first year, I became the logistics coordinator of Tazuz. I worked closely with tribe leaders (students who lead different interest-based groups, "tribes"), both on and off campus. Each tribe focused on a shared passion, whether it's Pilates, basketball, art, table tennis, yoga and even surfing. Every student could find a space to belong, regardless of their fitness level or background. Alongside these weekly tribe meetings, we also organized monthly campus-wide events. These gatherings were creative, social, and fun, such as a winter painting night with hot cocoa, Shesh-Besh tournament, a mocktail class, and so much more. They brought together students from all degrees and years, turning our big campus into a smaller, connected community. For me, Tazuz became a place of belonging. Even on long days after classes, I looked forward to seeing familiar faces, laughing with friends, and

moving together. My close collaborators, Eitan and our marketing coordinator Rajel, helped shape that environment, and I'm proud of what we built as a team.

Tazuz brings more than just activity to campus, it brings movement, friendship, and joy. It reminded me that university life is about more than academics. It's about showing up for each other, sharing what we love, and moving forward— **together.**



Finding Movement and
Community
Through Tazuz

Article written by: Noam Fruchter, USA
BA Psychology
Tazuz Logistics Coordinator



JLIC - OU MIZRAHI HERZLIYA

A Year of Connection, Growth, and Jewish Life on Campus

This past year with JLIC Mizrahi Herzliya has been vibrant, meaningful, and filled with opportunities for students to connect with spirituality in a warm, inclusive environment. From weekly Lunch 'n Learns to daily minyanim, and from spirited holiday celebrations to welcoming Shabbat gatherings, JLIC has continued to create a spiritual space at Reichman University — embracing students from all backgrounds and from across the globe.

Holidays were brought to life through creative, student-centered programming. On Purim, we hosted a lively Megillah reading complete with costumes and music.

During Hanukkah, students gathered to light candles, enjoy sufganiyot, and celebrate the miracle of Jewish continuity. Throughout the year, we also hosted Shabbat dinners and onegs, giving students a chance to unwind, sing, and enjoy homemade food and community after a long week. In collaboration with the RRIS, we hosted daily minyanim on campus, enabling religious students to pause their day to daven in the campus synagogue. Each event was designed to meet students where they are — **offering inspiration, connection, and support.**



Our weekly Lunch 'n Learns were a staple on campus, drawing students in for engaging shiurim on the parsha from our amazing rabbinic staff. Each session sparked thoughtful conversations about modern Jewish life — and, of course, included delicious pizza. Lunch 'n Learn became a place where students could bond through Torah and Zionism, and connect with one another in the middle of a busy academic week.

More than anything, JLIC has grown beyond just being a Jewish Learning Initiative — it now fosters a strong, supportive sense of community for the many students studying and planting their roots in Israel. As the year comes to a close, we are truly thankful for the opportunity to support Jewish learning on campus and to be part of such a **vibrant and welcoming community.**

We extend our gratitude to the RRIS, Rav Ben and Ellie Menora, and Rav Shmuel and Miriam Rosenthal, for their tireless efforts to make each event impactful and meaningful. We also thank the JLIC Board, volunteers, and the incredible student body for making each event so special.

With love and gratitude,
Co-Presidents Lexi Price and Noah Chesir

Article written by:

Alexa Price, South Africa - BA Psychology
Noah Chesir, USA - BA Entrepreneurship & Business



RESILIENCE ON CAMPUS

On Friday, June 13th 2024, Israel entered a brief but jarring experience - War with Iran. On the Reichman University campus, the classrooms were empty, but the dorms were filled with students. In efforts to keep students connected in a calm atmosphere, the RRIS Campus Life organized a Friday Kabbalat Shabbat, starting with Pilates and meditation sessions.



I had been teaching Pilates on campus as part of Tazuz throughout the year, so of course when asked to lead this class I agreed. But this session was different. It was special. We pushed the event through every group-chat and when the day came, I was happily surprised with a great turnout for both sessions. It was needed.



We stretched our bodies and strengthened our cores on the beautiful grassy area under the big tree in front of the dorms. Students from different degrees and different countries shared a moment of peace and quiet. Jonathan Davis came to meet us and participate in the special get-together. We welcomed the Shabbat with an early kiddush and received readymade Shabbat meals.

Sylvia Kassoff, an absolute gem of a human being, was also present. Officially, she made sure students received their meals. Unofficially, she provided her signature motherly care to all of us, accurately fulfilling her role as Director of Student Affairs and Wellbeing. After the Pilates and meditation sessions, students sat together with RRIS staff. We sang Shalom Aleichem, sipped wine, and shared names and hometowns. Jonathan spoke: **"We're here to make sure the students of Reichman University know they are not alone."**

This simple statement carried great weight and its meaning came through. In a strange wartime intermission, faculty and friends showed up and passed plates.

I saw that Reichman University is not just a leading university in entrepreneurship. It isn't just a place for international students to live in Israel and study in English. It's a place to call home as long as you're here. This war was a nightmare come true for the faculty of Reichman



University, having to worry about the safety of so many students. Some were here in Israel, others were stuck abroad. But regardless of who or where, that Friday I was reminded that as a student here, I am never alone.

I am class representative and will also be stepping into the role of reps' coordinator of the Communications degree. I have been very involved in Student Union since the beginning of the year. I see the ins and outs of this university. Israel is my home. It is the home of the Jewish people. Because of it, Jews can live outside of Israel. But we cannot live without it. As a Jew and a person of virtues and values, I am proud to study at a university that stands for what is good, true, and just. Most importantly – **as a member of the Reichman University and RRIS community, I know I forever have another home.**

**"Finding light
in the darkest weeks."**



Words from the RRIS Campus Life Manager

Hi everyone,

My name is Nichole Amar, and I am the RRIS Campus Life Events Manager.

Before taking on this role, I was one of you. I began my BA in Government, Diplomacy and Strategy at the RRIS four years ago, and my time here as a student was extremely special to me. I participated in my Orientation trip, attended Campus Life events and activities, completed an internship, and for two years I was a part of the RRIS Peer Counselors team. Looking back through my time as a student, the core of all my amazing memories was this beautiful community. It was unbelievable to see so many different people, from different places and backgrounds, somehow seem so similar to one another. Whether bonding over shared interests, exchanging stories on their journey to Israel, or simply learning about one another, I felt how unique this body of students is, and I knew I wanted to not only continue experiencing it, but to contribute to it.

My first year as the RRIS Campus Life Events Manager was full of fun, challenges, excitement, unexpected obstacles, and memories I will cherish always. I look forward to another year of events, activities, trips, and continuing to watch this beautiful community grow.

Love, Nichole Amar

RRIS Campus Life Events Manager



**Looking back with pride,
and ahead with excitement.**



Editor's Note

Hi everyone,

My name is Kineret Benjamin, and I'm the Student Affairs Advisor at the RRIS.

After seven years of being part of the RRIS, both as a student and now as a staff member, I had the privilege of editing the Campus Life Magazine for the first time this year.

Putting this magazine together gave me a chance to relive all the amazing moments of the year through your eyes — the students. It reminded me just how much was accomplished, even in a year that brought its fair share of challenges.

Thank you for showing up, for sharing your experiences, and for making this year so meaningful.

I hope you enjoy reading the magazine as much as I enjoyed creating it.

With love,

Kineret

RRIS Student Affairs Advisor



Putting this magazine together reminded us how much happened in one year – and how lucky we are to have shared it.



YOU HAVE QUESTIONS? WE HAVE ANSWERS!

How do I join Campus Life events?

- Follow [@rris_campus_life on Instagram](#)
- Keep up with the RRIS Campus Life Monthly Calendar
- Read the Newsletter sent to your student email every week
- Register to the events through the links provided
- Don't miss out on any event, trip or activity!

Can I volunteer with Campus Life?

Yes! Become a volunteer as a way to enrich your student experience and take part in the behind the scenes of Campus Life! Send us an email to campuslife.rris@uni.ac.il to find out more.

What if I have an idea for a new activity?

- Stop by the Campus Life office in room O-116 (Arison-Lauder building, floor -1)
- Contact us at campuslife.rris@uni.ac.il

* GET INVOLVED



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Magazine Editor:
Kineret Benjamin
RRIS Student Affairs Advisor

Photos- RRIS collection