

From the blog, "Onward Israel and Beyond," by Camille Phillips, Boston Onward Israel (Jerusalem) Participant and Social Media Fellow 14'

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Welcome to the Holy Land!

After a five hour plane ride to Philadelphia and an eleven hour plane ride to Tel Aviv (on top of countless hours at the airport), I finally made it to Israel! I spent a full day flying and arrived to Tel Aviv Sunday afternoon. Since Onward Israel orientation didn't start until the following day, I took some R&R time for myself and stayed the night at a hotel in Tel Aviv. The sauna, pool, and a nice comfy hotel bed was just what I needed after such a long flight! The next morning, I ate at the breakfast buffet at the hotel--a typical Israeli breakfast! Shakshuka, Israeli salad, chocolate rugelach...they had it all!

The same morning, hundreds of Onward Israel participants from Boston, Baltimore, New York, Cleveland and other cities gathered at a hostel in Jerusalem for an overnight orientation. The ice breakers ensued! The Boston Jerusalem group met our two program coordinators and got to know each other through countless icebreaker games. The following day, we left on the bus to our hostel in a neighborhood called Talpiot in Jerusalem. On the bus, I could barely contain my excitement! I wanted to relive the memories I had on Birthright, and I had no idea what new memories the summer had in store for me.

After a night of settling into the hostel, I woke up the next morning eager to start my internship! This summer, I am interning at an international public relations firm called Finn Partners, whose clients fall under the nonprofit and tech sector. On my first day of work, navigating on the buses was quite a challenge since I don't speak Hebrew. Luckily, I met Israelis that were very friendly and patient with giving directions. Right from the first day of my internship, I had a good feeling about Finn Partners! It's a small office setting so everyone is friends and we eat lunch together every day. You don't get that in corporate America! I started working that week just in time for Pizza Thursday! Every Thursday, my boss buys pizza for the office--a great way to celebrate the last day of the work week. Since Israel acknowledges Shabbat, the work week is Sunday to Thursday. Definitely something that I'm starting to get used to!



Onward Israel Orientation



Finn Partners Office

Stay tune for more details about my first week in Israel.

Shalom for now!

-Camille Pilar Phillips