

What's Hillel Uruguay's Alternative Spring Break Program?

A ROOF FOR URUGUAY



Hillel Uruguay's Alternative Spring Break Program is an extraordinary opportunity to engage students in an unforgettable and highly enriching experience of social justice work in South America. It is Hillel Uruguay's answer to the call of many university students' desire to travel to South America and make a difference in the process!

Participants will join students from their school (and possibly from other schools) for a week in which they will implement social justice projects and explore the magical city of Montevideo and its Jewish community. Montevideo is situated on the Atlantic Coast and offers an array of beautiful beaches, a vibrant culture, and a very hip nightlife.

In *Hillel Uruguay's Alternative Spring Break 2010*, participants will:

1. Experience community partnership and do meaningful community service concentrated on the fundamental human right to housing (together with the NGO "A Roof for Uruguay" -- www.untechoparamipais.org) by constructing pre-made houses for Uruguay's most impoverished residents, thus, improve the quality of life of people living in precarious conditions in the periphery of Montevideo. Participants will begin and finish building single-family homes together with the family for whom the house is intended, and will get the chance to see their finished project and celebrate the tangible results of their labor with a toast, balloons, and the smiles and hugs of the people whose dream they have helped realize.
2. Engage as volunteers in other social justice projects for the local community, such as implementing educational activities and distributing snacks at a community center, visiting English classes at a Jewish day school and helping students practice their conversational abilities, or fixing up and painting playgrounds at other Jewish organizations in need.
3. Deepen their understanding of and involvement in social problems and poverty related issues, with the ultimate goal that they will become socially conscious and impassioned leaders concerned with social justice issues and capable of implementing social transformation efforts.
4. Learn about and discuss the meaning of social justice from a Jewish perspective.
5. Experience the vibrant Jewish community of Montevideo and the Uruguayan Jewish youth at Hillel Uruguay.
6. Meet and strengthen relationships with other Jewish students and graduates.

ASB - Alternative Spring Break Program

7. Discover a country with a rich history, vibrant culture, and complex socio-political system, enjoy great people and have fun while exploring the city nightlife and cultural expressions such as tango, or while enjoying Uruguayan beaches!

* Details of the program are subject to change.

In the past eight years, about 900 students from 30 prestigious Universities and Colleges (Duke University, Yale University, University of Delaware, University of Massachusetts, Vanderbilt University, University of Illinois, University of Southern California, Princeton University, University of Texas, University of Michigan, University of Maryland, San Diego State University, York University -Toronto, University of Toronto, University of Colorado, University of Montreal, Bucknell University, Rice University, Columbia University, Michigan State University, Northwestern University, MIT, New York University, University of Oregon, Cornell University, Dickinson College, Juniata College, University of Virginia, Elon University, and Vassar College) have come to Uruguay to participate in our ASB Program and, as they said, had an "unforgettable experience."

What past groups have accomplished

A ROOF FOR URUGUAY

In 2006 through 2009 our ASB has concentrated on the fundamental human right to housing. Accordingly, Hillel took the initiative to hop on board a project already in the works by an NGO called *Un Techo para mi País -- Uruguay* (A Roof for my Country -- Uruguay), whose aim is to eradicate extreme poverty. Their first step to achieving this end is through the construction of pre-made houses. Our ASB participants have constructed over 50 new homes for Uruguay's most impoverished residents, in what have been very moving and enriching experiences for everyone involved.



COMBATING HUNGER

In 2009, we also focused on another issue pertaining to poverty: hunger. Students visits distributed after-school snacks and played games with the children at Merendero Nuevo Amanecer, a community center dedicated to distributing meals and providing educational programming to the local poverty-stricken community. Continuing with this theme, participants constructed organic greenhouses at rural public elementary schools with the NGO Fundación Logros (Achievements Foundation). Fundación Logros aims to better the lives of the poor via education of the children, by giving them and their teachers, parents, and communities the tools for self-sustainability through the hands-on, environmentally friendly Organic Farms project. In this sense, the project also secures the children's main nutritious meal of the day and helps the homes and surrounding community to copy the project.

MURAL PAINTING AT JEWISH RETIREMENT HOME

In 2004 and 2005, our ASB participants got a chance to bring some color into the lives of the residents of Uruguay's only Jewish Home for the Elderly. They put their creative skills to work designing and painting murals on the

ASB - Alternative Spring Break Program

formerly barren walls of the institution. The students also renovated the existing facilities, and while they worked to improve the residents' living conditions they were able to spend time and share stories with each other as well.

CONSTRUCTION OF TOBOGÁN'S COMMUNITY CENTER

In 2005, our ASB participants also built a multipurpose community center in an impoverished neighborhood called *El Tobogán*, in the periphery of Montevideo. In coordination with architecture majors at Uruguay's finest universities, along with professionals in the field, the visiting students got their hands dirty doing the manual labor and design involved in making a much-needed community center. The community center has since then helped *El Tobogán* tremendously in promoting health, education, and access to information.

TOBOGÁN'S NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYGROUND

In *El Tobogán*, children normally take on adult responsibilities at a young age. They chronically miss out on the best parts of childhood—playing. In 2004, our ASB participants made it a little easier for these children to enjoy their free time. They joined forces with the residents of *El Tobogán* and, under the guidance of specialized carpenters, built a beautiful wooden playground. This project was a resounding success and remains a pillar of community life in *El Tobogán*.

What's included?

Volunteering/Education:

- Tzedek Hillel Uruguay provides all of the logistical support and materials needed to execute the community projects.
- Education on poverty and related issues in Uruguay.
- The experience of Hillel Uruguay (and feeling a part of the Uruguayan Jewish Youth at Hillel Uruguay)

Accommodations/Recreation/Others:

- Transportation to planned activities, to and from the airport
- Four-star accommodations at the Armon Suites Hotel (www.armonsuites.com.uy), in triple rooms
- 7 kosher breakfasts at the hotel
- 5 kosher bag lunches/dinners
- A welcome dinner at Café Hillel, Hillel Uruguay's kosher restaurant
- A Shabbat dinner and Kabbalat Shabbat service at a local synagogue (optional morning Shabbat service)
- An ASB closing lunch at Café Hillel
- Montevideo city tour
- General organization and coordination
- Local coordinators
- Security during organized activities
- Optional visits to typical markets, beaches, city nightlife/bars, etc...

When and how can you come this year?

It's easy! If you are a student interested in coming to the *Hillel Uruguay's Alternative Spring Break Program 2009*, let the Hillel staff of your University know!



ASB - Alternative Spring Break Program

If you are a Hillel staff member interested in organizing a group for your university, contact our International Programs Coordinator as soon as possible (limited space).

ASB Uruguay trips are the jointly coordinated efforts of Hillel campus groups and Hillel Uruguay. Each university should independently (or together with other universities) organize a group of its students (between 17 and 30 years old) to come along with their own Hillel staff member/s. It is required that the group comes with at least one staff member. However, it is recommended that at least two staff members come with the group. Once in Uruguay they will also have a local coordinator, so leave all the local planning to us.

The Program is a week long (7 nights). Group arrival should be on Sunday and departure the following Sunday. The program will be held the week that students have their Spring Break, for example:

- Sunday, February 28th. through Sunday, March 7th, 2010
- Sunday, March 7th through Sunday, March 14th, 2010
- Sunday, March 14th through Sunday, March 21st, 2010
- Sunday, March 21st through Sunday, March 28th, 2010
- Sunday, March 28th through Sunday, April 4, 2010
- Other dates? Please let us know.

Cost

The cost of the program is \$900 USD per participant (airfare not included), with no maximum amount of participants (provided we have spots available), and with a minimum of 8 participants. For groups of fewer participants, as well as for the extra costs of single or double rooms, please check with us. Students and staff pay the same fee.

Contact information

Contact person: International Programs Coordinator

Email: asb@hillel.org.uy

American line: (646) 257 3504

Uruguayan number: +598 (2) 712 2518

Application deadline, deposit and balance due

To confirm your space in *Hillel Uruguay's Alternative Spring Break Program 2010*, please ask us for the 'ASB Uruguay 2010 - Campus Commitment Form', fill it in and send it to asb@hillel.org.uy or by fax to +598 (2) 712 4842 by Friday, November 20th. A \$200 USD non-refundable deposit per participant is required along with the 'ASB Uruguay 2010 - Campus Commitment Form', either with a wire transfer to Hillel Uruguay or by check to Hillel International. There are limited spots available, so please send it in as soon as possible.

The remaining amount should be paid 30 days before your arrival date to Uruguay.



ASB - Alternative Spring Break Program

Some of the students' thoughts from ASB 2009...

University of Virginia

"An unforgettable and inspiring spring break."

"If you are interested in visiting South America, doing community service, getting in touch with your Jewish identity, and having fun, then this trip is for you!"

Vassar College

"Eye-opening and exhilarating!"

"An eye-opening, culturally informative, really fun experience."

Juniata College

"Enlightening and life-changing."

"Fun through experience and hard work."

Dickinson College

"This was an eye-opening experience and an amazing change to learn about a new culture and Jewish life."

"This trip was an amazing balance between learning, community service, having fun, and experiencing Uruguayan culture."

"The trip has the power to profoundly affect your worldview by offering experiences unique to Uruguay and the Montevideo Jewish community."

University of Maryland

"A powerful experience that opens your eyes to a world unlike your own. It leaves you challenged and excited."

"Once in a lifetime, very meaningful experience."

University of Southern California

"Empowering and motivating...I loved it!"

"It will exceed your expectations, period."

"My spring break experience was absolutely amazing; it was an eye opening and life changing experience, building and interacting with strong passionate people."

Elon University

"A diverse experience filled with culture, service, and fun!"

"An amazing program that allows you to experience a variety of the different aspects of Uruguayan culture."

University of Illinois

"ASB Hillel Uruguay was a great experience. It had the perfect balance of volunteering and learning about the community. I highly recommend it to everyone!"

"An incredible opportunity to do something great and gain a whole new experience!"

"An eye-opening experience into a wonderful Jewish community."