

TNT UNIVERSITY

After School Program for Middle Schoolers



Photo caption: Jordyn Davidson working with preschoolers during TNT

The JCC is proud to announce its new afterschool program for sixth through eighth graders called TNT University. This program grew out of the summer TNT program, which has been successful for nearly 20 years and that focuses on self-discovery, community service, leadership, and fellowship for rising teens. Headed by Bradley Kerxton, TNT University promises to be as full of fun and learning as the summer program.

TNT University will be based in the teen lounge at the Owings Mills JCC. Each week, teens will have the option of choosing electives in which to participate, such as homework assistance, volunteering as an aide for the preschool, taking fitness classes or dance classes, instruction in weight training, playing sports, creating in arts and crafts, and many more. Once a week, the teens will participate in a team building workshop. Besides the electives and workshops, monthly special events, such as pizza parties, movie days and scavenger hunts will be offered as a reward for teens' successful participation in the program.

The daily schedule from Monday to Thursday consists of arrival time between 3 and 3:30 pm, allowing time for homework. The first elective runs from 3:30-4:30; elective two from 4:30-5:30, and then some social time is scheduled from 5:30-6:00 with pickup by 6 pm. The unique aspect of this schedule is that parents can select one to four days per week for a monthly fee.

The JCC will provide transportation from Franklin Middle School. Transportation to Har Sinai and Beth Israel congregations will be provided on Tuesdays. Transportation and activities are included in the monthly fee. Parents can relax knowing that their child is in good hands.

Kerxton says that TNT University is the start of a movement; in fact, he calls it "an empire." This is not an empire of small proportions either, in Kerxton's opinion; rather it is the start of a solid foundation for youth. And he is correct. Over 20 years ago, Reed Larson wrote in *American Psychologist* that the motivation and concentration levels of young people are much higher in informal youth programs than they are in school (or when hanging out with friends), suggesting the untapped power in youth development programs that can positively impact school performance.

Learning from one another is not the only benefit of TNT; part of the University is helping each other with homework. It is interesting to note that students who participate in programs such as this have higher grade averages and scores in reading, spelling, history, science, and social studies (Arbreton, A., Sheldon, J. and Herrera, C., 2005) In fact, the ACT Policy Report indicates that 78% of students start exploring career opportunities in middle school and with programs that immerse students in leadership workshops, community service projects, and team building exercises, parents can expect their child to be enriched in ways that will affect them well into the future. TNT University starts as low as \$100/month for two afternoons a week.

For more information, contact Brad Kerxton at 410.559.3547 or email him at bkerxton@jcc.org. You can also visit www.jcc.org/tntuniversity.