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Israel comes to Tucson in Hillel event

Students come for camel, stay to learn about Israeli culture

By Laura Ory

A camel named Chewy drew attention from students at yesterday's Israelpalooza, an event on the UA Mall organized to educate students about Israel.

"He's so cute. How often do you see a camel in Tucson?" said Karen Graves, an engineering senior who had her picture taken with the camel.

"It's kind of crazy and unusual," said Fidel Hoyos, a business sophomore, who took a picture of the camel on his cell phone.

Students had digital pictures taken with the camel that will be e-mailed to them, said Erin Searle, a

Judaic studies senior.

Israelpalooza was sponsored by the Hillel Foundation and was organized to educate students about Israel and erase the misconceptions students may have about the country and its people, said Searle.

"All people see are the bombings and what's in the media," said Searle. "But it is a positive place."

Searle said although there is war going on in Israel, it's not "all-consuming."

"It's still a safe place," said Searle. "People still travel there, and there's still a night life. People don't stop living their lives because of it."

Although the camel drew a lot of attention from students passing by, many students didn't know why the camel was there.

"It's pretty sad if you have to bring a camel to promote Israel, but I guess people are not much aware of it," said Vojislav Labovic, a finance junior. "It definitely drew attention."

Israelpalooza also featured a mock Israeli election, Israeli trivia, Dead Sea beauty products and study abroad and travel opportunities.

"It's kind of bringing Israel to the campus in a fun way," said Racheli Marom, the Israel fellow for the Hillel Foundation.

Brittany Cohen, an undeclared sophomore, and Samantha Morem, a studio art freshman, attended the event as an assignment for their Hebrew class and made bracelets with their names on them using Hebrew character beads.

Students from the Tucson Peace Project, a group of Jewish, Muslim and Palestinian students working to create a peace agreement to resolve conflicts in the Middle



Media Credit: Taylor House

Microbiology seniors Meghan Lloyd, left, and Candice Fulgenzi pose to have their picture taken with Chewy the camel yesterday afternoon at Israelpalooza, an event sponsored by the Hillel Center in order to raise Israel awareness on campus.



Media Credit: Taylor House

Interdisciplinary studies sophomore Jamie Martin pets Chewy the camel on the UA Mall during Israelpalooza. Hillel offered free Israeli

East, were also at the event to get student food and real Dead Sea mud at the event to promote Israel awareness. suggestions.

One student wrote, "In order for the Holy Land to achieve peace, it's necessary for Islam and Judaism to return to its dynamic and loving ideals," as a suggestion.

"We need to recognize the suffering on both sides," wrote another.

David Trick, an art junior, said he was able to learn things about Israel he never knew, like that Albert Einstein was once asked to be the Israeli Prime Minister, and that Israel is about the size of New Jersey, has won eight Olympic medals and is the only democracy in the Middle East.

Katherine Handley, a psychology senior, said she initially stopped just to see the camel, as many other students did, but decided to look at some of the booths as well.

She said she learned about the Israeli elections and political parties.

"I had no idea about all the different parties and their slogans and platforms. There are so many different angles. Here (in the U.S.) there are only two to four parties."

Handley said she usually stops to see booths on the UA Mall.

"I see a lot of positive education coming from booths like this," said Handley.

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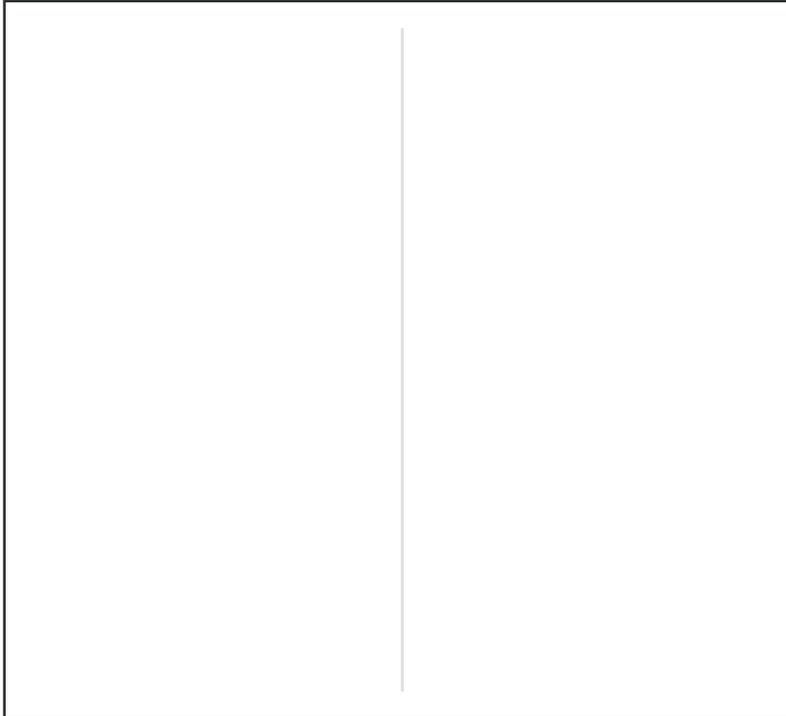
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