

The story of Emanuel School students and Daniel Kashavchuk

By Emanuel School madrichim Noa Avner, Hadar Burstein, Tohar Dahan, Hilli Lam and Abraham Tebeka

I had the privilege of being one of the Israeli madrichim at Ayekah - a week long camp with the Emanuel students of Year 10 where they explore their Jewish identity. I wanted to share a moment that made this experience more than just a privilege, but a great honour .

One evening during Ayekah, I shared something personal with my very special 'family' group. I spoke to them about my friend, Daniel Kasavchuk who was killed at the Nova Festival on October 7. Daniel was thoughtful and kind and always stepped up to a challenge. Enjoying life and spreading happiness was his super power. My family group showed such incredible compassion and understanding. I never would've imagined such a reaction from this young yet very mature group of teens.

But it did not end there. The next day, my group wore Daniel's name and the number of days since October 7 on a piece of tape stuck to their clothing. They did this to show their solidarity with Israel and honour Daniel's memory.

This set the foundation for the rest of camp as we talked about how to bring this spirit of Ayekah, of deep connection, back to school. Without my knowledge, my family group created a group chat and talked all night. They came up with the idea of ordering wristbands with Daniel's name on them.

On Monday morning they surprised me with a pack of 100 wristbands. I was shocked and deeply moved by this meaningful gesture - this is the embodiment of the spirit of Ayekah and it will always be part of me as much as it will be part of this amazing group of teens.

When I return to Israel, I will be giving some of these wristbands to Daniel's family and sharing the impact that Daniel's story has had with teens all the way in Australia.

This article is dedicated דניאל קסבצ'וק ז"ל