

# INSPIRATION COMES to KENTUCKY

**WHAT HAPPENS** when you take a group of guys and bring them on an inspirational kiruv trip to the middle of Kentucky for three days? You get an incredible bonding experience, a spiritual awakening, and memories that will last a lifetime.

**LAST WEEK**, 50 members of JInspire came together for a Men's Spring Retreat hosted by Project Inspire, a division of Aish HaTorah. The trip's itinerary was jam packed with awesome activities including underground cave kayaking, the bourbon trail, ziplining, and more. It also included lots of soul searching, chavrusa learning, and thought-provoking sessions on topics of Judaism and hashkafa.

**KENTUCKY** may seem like an unusual venue for an inspirational experience. Rabbi Chaim Sampson, Founder and Director of Project Inspire, explains, "Of course, a trip to Eretz Yisroel is the ultimate inspirational experience. But not everyone can commit to the time and cost involved in a weeklong overseas trip. So instead we chose a more local venue and planned an action packed three day program. We presented it to JInspire branches in different communities. The response was overwhelming."

**PARTICIPANTS** came from Brooklyn, Long Island, Lakewood, Passaic, Bergen, and Westchester, and even Baltimore and Houston. They stayed at the rustic and relaxing Cliffview Resort where even cellphone service wasn't available. But nobody really cared. The men bonded from the very start, enjoying a rare camaraderie. Best of all, the carefully crafted program included an exquisite balance of ruchniyus and gashmiyus. Scenic early morning jogs gave way to Mishnayos learning. A bus schmooze about sinners and saints led to a distillery tour. And maariv and barbeque paved the way for deep discussions about Yiddishkeit that lasted until the wee hours of the morning.



**RABBI YITZCHOK FELDHEIM** led the spiritual adventure, exploring topics such as Gan Eden, ba'al tashchis, and bringing the inspiration home. Rabbi Chaim Sampson, Rabbi Yoni Zakutinsky, Rabbi Simcha Barnett, Rabbi Yaakov Giniger, Rabbi Aryeh Wolbe and Adam Rosenblum also addressed the group. Out in Kentucky, far from the distractions of everyday life, participants connected, shared, and committed to continuing their journeys to spiritual growth. "A very special thanks to the Rabbis," said Andrew. "Knowledge with a perspective is a powerful gift!"

**THE THREE DAYS** ended much too quickly, but the inspiration doesn't stop. Participants WhatsApp each other regularly, recognizing that they've just experienced something very special together. "I am super glad," says Felix, "to have met, talked to, and had a chance to learn from and pray with such great people from all over the United States." "May Hashem grant us tremendous growth," Jerry posted. "And may these past few days enable us to elevate and support our own families' growth as well!"

**THE DETAILS** of the trip were planned by Rabbi Yaakov Giniger, Director of Programming at Project Inspire. "Everything was absolutely planned to perfection," Gena added. "Thank you to JInspire, who organized the event. But also thank you to everyone who came. It's always amazing to belong to a unique club or private society."

**"I WAS BLOWN AWAY,"** Igor posted, "by the environment, the participants and the activities. Being around a group like this motivates me to continue growing in a positive way as a man and one day as a husband and father who can pass on the right ideas to the next generation. You have already succeeded and it is now my responsibility to continue spreading it."

**THE SUCCESS** of the Kentucky Retreat, says Yossie Friedman, Managing Director of Project Inspire, "paves the way for more creative initiatives in the future. The world of kiruv is always looking out for innovative ways to attract fellow Jews to our programs," he explains. "So we jumped onto this idea and b'H it was a huge success. We at Project Inspire hope to continue developing unique and unprecedented concepts in growth and inspiration so that our fellow Jews will be eager to participate and will eventually become intrigued and engaged."

**PROJECT INSPIRE** is an organization dedicated to activating the Torah community to reach out to our fellow Jews to help stem the tide of assimilation. By providing tools, opportunities, and training, Project Inspire encourages frum Jews to form a grassroots kiruv movement and help change the world. Armed with our warmth, caring, and ahavas yisroel, all of us can do outreach. For more information about the many programs of Project Inspire, call **646.291.6191** or visit **projectinspire.com**.