No, it hasn’t gone. Every day is Tu Bishvat. Although Israel is the only country in the world growing more and more trees, there is a growing threat to Nature because of population growth and the development of the country. But it’s just because of population growth and Israel’s development that we need to preserve Nature.

To mark Tu Bishvat, Tamar Perls, the Hebrew teacher, told a story about the carob tree:

The carob tree, which grows in many parts of the country, is not mentioned at all in the Bible. It is not one of the seven special species (Deuteronomy 8:7), its fruit is very dry and shaped like a sword. Previously, it was thought not to be native to Israel and brought by the Romans about 2,000 years ago, but archaeological remains indicate that it is native to the Eastern Mediterranean, including Israel. While the carob is not mentioned in the Bible, the Talmud and midrashic literature mentions it many times.

Here’s a story about the carob:

Once upon a time, Honi the ‘Circle-maker’ (as he was called) was on a journey, when he saw a man planting a carob tree.

‘When will this yield fruit?’ he asked him.

The man replied: ‘In seventy years.’

Honi said: ‘Do you think you’ll ever enjoy its fruit?’

The man answered: ‘I found a world with carobs. My ancestors planted for me, so I will plant for my children.’

(Babylonian Talmud, Taanit)

In our generation, we often think of the benefits of the moment; you regularly hear ‘It’s my right’, ‘I want’, ‘That’s what I want, right now and for myself, not for anyone else’. Not for the future. But the world can be better and more beautiful if we learn from the story of Honi the Circle-maker. If we all would notice the good that we inherited from our ancestors and think about the good we want to bequeath to our descendants, it would be of such benefit to every one of us. You can see the carob tree and enjoy its fruits at the entrance to the Botanical Gardens - right in front of the School building.
Snow...

‘On Monday the 16th of December there will be no university studies ...’ This was the news received by Mechina students and teachers. ‘What, no studies? Why? Ahhh ... snow in Jerusalem. All because of the snow?!’ asked many students, especially those who came to us from Europe, North America and Northern Asia. The students from Korea, the Chinese, Swedes, Canadians, Russians couldn’t understand why they had to stay home. And indeed, they did not stay at home; they went out to build a snowman and enjoy the vista of a white Jerusalem. In Jerusalem as always one day off was not enough; only on Wednesday – meaning, after a weekend and three more days – did students return to their studies amid great joy, but when they crossed the campus, they discovered what havoc the blizzard had left: toppled trees, fallen signs, and severe damage to the Botanical Garden. Since the blizzard, we haven’t had a lot of rainy days, and we’re all looking heavenwards and praying that it will not be long in coming.

Do you have pictures of the snow? Please email us and we will post them on Facebook!
Math Marathon

No road closures, no cancelled classes, but the Marathon was underway! Yes, yes, they set off on 9 and 10 February. You didn’t have to bring sports shoes but rather ... a calculator. This was the date of the Math Marathon, which prepared participants for an extra exam in mathematics. The club, which began to work alongside the Mechina last year, recruits adult volunteers in aid of students today. Thank you to Ofer and Michal for the organization, and of course a round of applause to the Steering Committee headed up by Lena Burisvitz.

From the Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee has addressed the following incidents this semester:

1. A student who kept his cellphone with him despite being instructed by the proctor to remove all cellphones from one's desk.
2. A student lent her dorm key to her cousin. Students received strong letters of warning in both incidents. Please make sure to be attentive to your general conduct both in the academic setting and in the dorms.

Visiting the Israel Museum

On 8 December 2013 we went to visit the Israel Museum. For many of us it was the first visit to the museum but for others a return visit. Everyone was happy to wander through the various galleries and discover archaeological remains from different religions: Judaism, Islam and Christianity. In addition, we saw ancient synagogues, traditional costumes from various ethnic groups, antique menorahs, but the most impressive part was the exhibition about Herod. Visiting the museum has already become a Mechina tradition, and we would like to take the opportunity to thank the excellent team of instructors and of course Flavia, in the distant past a Mechina student and now director of guided tours at the museum.

A study fair

In advance of the beginning of registration for the next school, the Mechina is organizing an open day coming your way. A study fair will be held in March with representatives from Israel’s top universities, various colleges, the military, the student administration and others. Representatives will tell you about their institutions and then you can visit their stands, ask them specific questions and gather written materials. During the fair, you will get information that will help you make important decisions about your future. Participation mandatory.