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## **SJCC's Dagan Cohen Tosses Out Ceremonial First Pitch at Long Island Ducks' Jewish Heritage Night**

*Maccabi Games Gold Medalist 16U Baseball Team Gets On-Field Recognition*

**Central Islip, N.Y. (Aug. 26, 2024)** – As the community continues to rally in response to the ongoing conflict in Israel, Sid Jacobson JCC, along with its fellow Long Island JCCs, braved the elements on Sunday, August 18<sup>th</sup> to unite for Jewish Heritage Night at the Long Island Ducks baseball game in Central Islip.

A capacity crowd of over 4,000 fans filled Fairfield Properties Ballpark proudly adorned in gear in support of Israel, for the Ducks' first celebration of Jewish Heritage Night since the horrific events of October 7<sup>th</sup> almost one year ago.

In the lead-up to the first pitch, the family of **Omer Neutra** – his parents, Ronen and Orna, and brother, Daniel – continued to convey a powerful message of hope and determination for the safe return of their son and the hostages amid the ongoing struggle against Hamas.

A chant of “Bring Them Home” resonated through the stadium, further amplifying their call for action and resolution.

Accompanied by his family, Sid Jacobson JCC's Randie Waldbaum Malinsky Center for Israel Director **Dagan Cohen** delivered a perfect strike from the mound to Long Island Ducks manager **Lew Ford**, marking the ceremonial first pitch of the game.

Very appreciative of the opportunity, Dagan viewed Jewish Heritage Night not just as a celebration, but as a platform to emphasize the urgent message of bringing the hostages home. “It's our mission [to bring them home]. That's why we're here – to use every chance we get to advance this cause and push the message of ‘Bring Them Home Now.’ It's a privilege to be part of this effort.”

Members of Sid Jacobson JCC's 16U Baseball Team were on hand, and invited to the field for a pre-game tribute, commemorating their improbable journey to win the gold medal at this year's Maccabi Games in Houston, Texas.

A team that was reestablished in 2023 after a long hiatus defied the odds, authoring an undefeated run that will lead to Sid Jacobson JCC raising its first-ever championship banner for baseball.

Over the seven games the team played, Team LI Jacobson outscored its opposition, 50-12.

"These kids recognized the talent they had and knew they would win the gold medal," said **Mark Rosenman**, who began coaching the team last summer. "I had emailed them all and said to 'make sure you leave space in your suitcases to bring back the gold.' This was a really special group, and they were on a mission."

Team LI Jacobson will now look to defend its gold medal next summer at the 2025 Maccabi Games in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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#### **About Sid Jacobson JCC**

Sid Jacobson JCC ([sjcc.org](http://sjcc.org)) in East Hills provides a full range of cutting-edge recreational, health, fitness, educational, cultural arts, and social service programs. SJJCC promotes Jewish identity and provides a comprehensive program based on Jewish values, traditions, heritage, and culture, and is committed to enriching the lives of all individuals and families in its community. See community differently, "Like" the JCC on Facebook ([facebook.com/sidjacobsonjcc](https://facebook.com/sidjacobsonjcc)).

**Sid Jacobson JCC is a beneficiary agency of the UJA Federation of New York.**