Talking Race, Economy, Israel and More in Camp Devoted to Discourse

A program takes teenagers around the country to hear upcoming views on hotly debated issues.

By AUDRA D. S. BURCH

They may run in the Heritage Foundation, the conservative think tank in Washington, but their in-person camps are anything but. They went to Birmingham, Ala., where they sang hymns and talked about the civil rights movement; in Fall Lake City, Minn., they met a gun-president who discussed the sanctity of the Second Amendment.

Each stop was designed to reveal something about the country and how we are divided, all between the ages of 14 and 18, form their opinions on the great social and political issues of our time.

"It was definitely the most powerful move- ment I've ever been a part of," said Max Orston, 15, of Sandy Spring, Ga., who attended the camp in New York this summer. He was impressed by "the power of forgiveness." "It was eye-opening still thinking about Mr. Davis's talk and the possibility of a two-state solution," he said.

"I wanted my son's eyes to be open and his head to be exposed to real-world scenarios that people face so that he can form his own views," said Todd Orston, 52, a liberal attorney in Sandy Spring, Ga., who at- tended traditional Jewish camps through high school.

In Maryland, the campers gathered in a suburban house to hear the story of Daryl Davis, a musician who be- lieved in charity and refused to play any race-based music. Davis described attracting Black crowds and transforming friendships with K.I.C.K. members, some of whom have named their sons after him and have even written hymns to his memory.

On the ride to the nation's capital toward the end of this year's journey, Matt Levine, a 15-year-old from Scotch Plains, N.J., pondered a newspaper article about debt and the middle class. He was reading to prepare for a discus- sion on economics. "I found my voice!" he said after a session in Wash- ington.

"I found my voice!" Matt said as he stepped on the bus in front of the Heritage Foundation, their unseen alma mater. "We're United for a Fair Economy, a pro-growth advocacy group in Boston. "My world is essentially liberal so I wanted to do this camp so I could see what the other side," said a 15-year-old from Scotch Plains, N.J., who attended the camp in New York this summer. He was impressed by "the power of forgiveness." "It was eye-opening still thinking about Mr. Davis's talk and the possibility of a two-state solution," he said.

"I wanted my son's eyes to be open and his head to be exposed to real-world scenarios that people face so that he can form his own views," said Todd Orston, 52, a liberal attorney in Sandy Spring, Ga., who at- tended traditional Jewish camps through high school.

In Maryland, the campers gathered in a suburban house to hear the story of Daryl Davis, a musician who be- lieved in charity and refused to play any race-based music. Davis described attracting Black crowds and transforming friendships with K.I.C.K. members, some of whom have named their sons after him and have even written hymns to his memory.

On the ride to the nation's capital toward the end of this year's journey, Matt Levine, a 15-year-old from Scotch Plains, N.J., pondered a newspaper article about debt and the middle class. He was reading to prepare for a discus- sion on economics. "I found my voice!" he said after a session in Wash- ington.

"I found my voice!" Matt said as he stepped on the bus in front of the Heritage Foundation, their unseen alma mater. "We're United for a Fair Economy, a pro-growth advocacy group in Boston. "My world is essentially liberal so I wanted to do this camp so I could see what the other side," said a 15-year-old from Scotch Plains, N.J., who attended the camp in New York this summer. He was impressed by "the power of forgiveness." "It was eye-opening still thinking about Mr. Davis's talk and the possibility of a two-state solution," he said.

"I wanted my son's eyes to be open and his head to be exposed to real-world scenarios that people face so that he can form his own views," said Todd Orston, 52, a liberal attorney in Sandy Spring, Ga., who at- tended traditional Jewish camps through high school.

In Maryland, the campers gathered in a suburban house to hear the story of Daryl Davis, a musician who be- lieved in charity and refused to play any race-based music. Davis described attracting Black crowds and transforming friendships with K.I.C.K. members, some of whom have named their sons after him and have even written hymns to his memory.

On the ride to the nation's capital toward the end of this year's journey, Matt Levine, a 15-year-old from Scotch Plains, N.J., pondered a newspaper article about debt and the middle class. He was reading to prepare for a discus- sion on economics. "I found my voice!" he said after a session in Wash- ington.