

NEWS LOCAL

Roving Rabbis help Banff Hockey Academy players celebrate Chanukah

By Larissa Barlow

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At right, Yuval Rosenthal and Dylan Robertson got to celebrate Chanukah with their Banff Hockey Academy teammates and Roving Rabbis Zushi Rivkin and Levi Levitin. A program to connect with Jews in rural areas, the Roving Rabbis spent a few days in the Bow Valley helping people celebrate Chanukah. SUBMITTED PHOTO

For some members of the Banff Hockey Academy, who left their home in another country to come play the sport they love in the Canadian Rockies, the holidays can be a bittersweet time.

Far from home, it's hard to celebrate like you would with family all around. And if you're Jewish, celebrating Chanukah in a place without a strong Jewish community can be difficult.

So Yuval Rosenthal and Dylan Robertson were happily surprised this week when the Roving Rabbis showed up at the hockey academy house.

A program where young rabbis, or those studying to be rabbis, travel to rural communities to connect with Jewish men and women, the Roving Rabbis saw Zushi Rivkin and Levi Levitin of the Chabad of Alberta spend a few days in the Bow Valley meeting with Jewish residents and visitors, helping them celebrate Chanukah.

The two brought traditional Chanukah foods and games to the hockey academy house where Rosenthal, from Israel, and Robertson, from Atlanta, Georgia, got to celebrate the holiday. Their hockey academy teammates also joined in on the fun, eating potato latkes and playing a few games of dreidel.

“It was a great surprise, it makes me feel like I’m back home,” Rosenthal said of the visit.

“It can be tough this time of year. It’s my third year here, and I do get to go home, but this year it’s kind of tough because we have a tournament over Christmas so I won’t get home for a while. So this was great.”

Robertson was also happy the Rivkin and Levitin were able to stop by and help celebrate the holidays with them.

“It was a great surprise. Me and Yuval usually do the holidays together, but it’s nice to have the rabbis come here,” he said. “All of the other guys loved it, too.”

Indeed, the table was full as the Roving Rabbis told stories of Chanukah traditions while sharing the food they’d brought from Calgary.

“The best thing was students from all around the world getting into the spirit and coming together,” Levitin said.

In addition to the food and games, the two also helped light the menorah, a tradition to mark the days of Chanukah.

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