

STATE & LOCAL

Aliya flight reunites twin brothers from Marlboro

by **Jill Huber**
NJJN Bureau Chief/Monmouth

A young man from Marlboro joined his twin brother in Israel as one of 181 immigrants who crowded a chartered flight to Tel Aviv.

Leor Suissa, 24, was a passenger on a Dec. 26 flight arranged by Nefesh B’Nefesh, a group that promotes immigration to Israel.

“This is the fulfillment of a life-long dream,” Suissa told *NJ Jewish News* before he left for Israel. “I’m bringing my religious and

Suissa was one of 3,500 *olim* who left North America for the Jewish state in 2007, and traveled on Nefesh’s 31st chartered aliya flight.

The 2007 figures represent the highest number of Jewish immigrants from the region in 25 years and were part of the 80 percent increase in *olim* within the past five years, according to Nefesh executive director Tony Gelbart.

Israel has long been a second home to Suissa. He attended summer camp there for several years and often was a guest at the wed-

“My family members are Zionists, and they are happy that I decided to start a new life in Israel,” he said. “We all know it will be a leap of faith, as well as an adventure, but the quality of life in Israel is good. And I’ll be there as part of Israel’s present and future.”

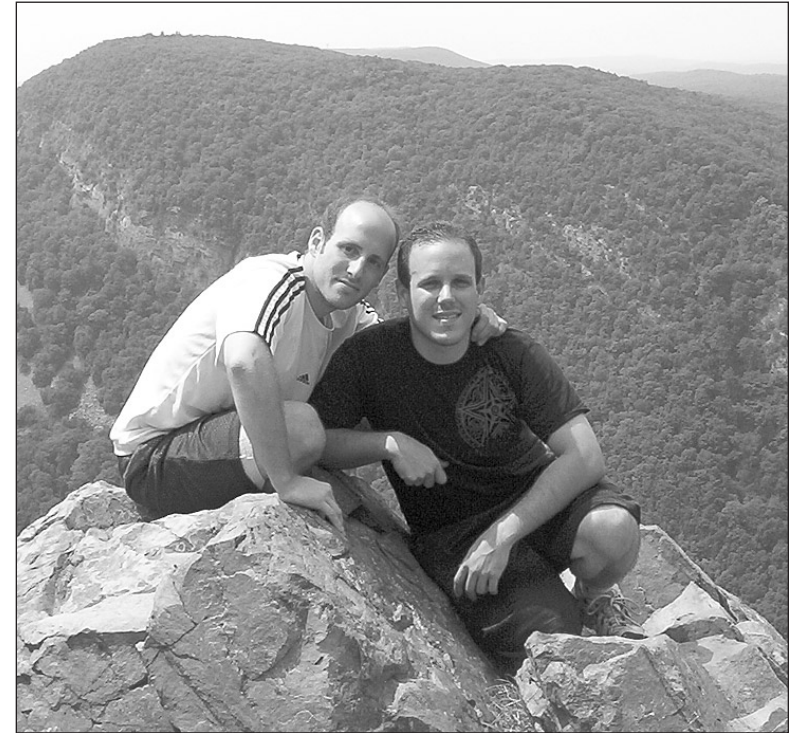
Suissa plans to settle on Kibbutz Yagur near Haifa, where he will broaden his Hebrew language skills before joining the Israel Defense Force.

“I’ve always wanted to pursue a military career in Israel,” said Suissa. “I want to be part of the defense force that protects the country and its people. I’m eager to do this; I want to help sustain Israel’s existence. The Jewish people want a place to call home, and there have always been threats and efforts to undermine this. I’m dedicated to the preservation of the Jewish homeland.”

He and his twin brother also may try to cultivate new farmland in Israel’s southern region; newly developed land, complete with irrigation systems, will attract settlers to the area, he said.

“I want to be a part of Israel’s economic growth and economic success,” said Suissa. “One way to achieve this is to help the population grow and expand.”

In 2005, Suissa earned a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Tufts University in Massachusetts. His studies will serve him well in



Leor Suissa, right, of Marlboro was on board the eighth and final 2007 chartered Nefesh/ [Nefesh B’Nefesh] B’Nefesh aliya flight. His twin brother, Erez, has lived in Israel for the past 18 months.

Photo courtesy Leor Suissa

‘My family members are Zionists, and they are happy that I decided to start a new life in Israel.’

Zionist feelings to the Jewish homeland.”

Suissa’s twin brother, Erez, settled in Israel 18 months ago and is fulfilling his Israeli military service obligation. Suissa also expected other Israeli relatives — including several aunts, uncles, and cousins — to greet him as he arrived.

Last year, Suissa decided to make aliya after hearing enthusiastic reports of Israeli life from his twin. He contacted Nefesh’s North American headquarters in New York City to begin the process.

dings and b’nei mitzva ceremonies of his Israeli relatives.

His parents, David and Judith Suissa, although born in the United States, lived in Israel during the 1960s and 1970s. The couple was married in Israel in 1978, returned to the United States in 1980, and settled in Marlboro in 1988. His entire family, including siblings Yanev, 27, who works in Washington, DC, and Avital, 19, a student at the University of Maryland, all endorsed his decision to make aliya, Leor Suissa said.

his new home, he said.

“Many Israeli leaders, such as Ben-Gurion, helped to create a sense of Israel, and this foresight also took into account the country’s future,” Suissa said. “As they predicted, the population is now more spread out, and new homes and businesses have been created

as a result. The size and shape of many towns and cities has changed and will continue to do so.”

Additional information about Nefesh/B’Nefesh is available at www.nbn.org.

Jill Huber can be reached at jhuber@njewishnews.com.