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## Sports Teachers Learn New Tricks

The Jewish Institute for the Blind recently sponsored professional seminars and courses to help sports educators deal with sports strategy for the blind. "Most blind and partially sighted youngsters are in regular schools today, and much more can be done for them in the school gymnasium and in afternoon sports activities," explains Shabtai Deutsch, a former sports educator himself and today, director of the Institute's Department of Community Services.

"It is very important to see blind students mainstreamed in the schools, but it is also vital to have something on the students' agenda in all classes including sport," Deutsch explains. Perhaps a teacher only has one blind student that he teaches each week, but it is important to engage him in sports activities and not leave him on the sidelines.

"We try and give the sports educators ideas how to delegate partnership responsibility to students, and with a partner the blind student can run or play any game. Included in the activities presented to the teachers was



*Goal ball is a sport that can be easily played by blind and sighted participants*

goal ball, a game in which a ball has a bell inside and can be identified by all players as they try for a goal. It was even suggested that as a one-time activity all the students are blindfolded and then the blind and sighted can play equally. Not only does this raise the self esteem of the blind player, but the sighted players are oftentimes amazed at the skill and co-ordination that have been developed by the blind.

## One of the Institute's Outstanding Former Students



*Rivka Albalak*

Rivka Albalak has been affiliated with the Jewish Institute for the Blind for almost as long as she can remember. Born in 1924, she was blind from birth, and she began her studies at the Institute at the age of five. In those days the Institute had moved from its original home in Jerusalem's Old City to the Street of the Prophets in central Jerusalem. Although she spent many enjoyable years there, she still remembers the construction of the 'new' location in Kiryat Moshe in 1932.

"We had lots of room to play and a new found freedom in the new building of the Institute," she says. Albalak's fondest memories were of playing on the

grounds of the Institute and her art lessons. Upon graduation from the Institute she moved to nearby Beit Salinger which was operated as a home for graduating students until 1998. She worked for years in the Institute's Rehabilitation Industry until her retirement. Albalak never married, but she fondly remembers the camaraderie of the Institute and living among many of her closest friends at the dormitories and later at Beit Salinger which was supported by the Institute until its closure. Beit Salinger was a home for blind female

graduates who were unable to live independently. A similar home was also operated in Jerusalem's Talbiyeh neighborhood for males.

Albalak today lives in a Jerusalem home for the elderly, and she still enjoys her hobby of knitting. Surrounded by the lovely handcrafted items which adorn her room, it is hard to believe that she cannot see. As a favored former student, one of many who has maintained contact to the Jewish Institute for the Blind for decades, we honor Rivka Albalak and wish her many years of health and contentment.