

Story of Success

"With every lesson I teach at the Institute, I am deeply aware of the power of music," says Esther Hooli, a music instructor at JIB. "Through music, the children learn to listen to themselves as well as to others, and they work and create together, developing vital skills to help them adjust as part of society." Hooli, herself, is a source of inspiration to her pupils as she is blind and a graduate of the Institute, and she credits a lot of her musical success to her days as a pupil.

As part of the Institute's family

for 50 years, Hooli was brought to the Institute as a young child in 1938 from her native Alexandria, Egypt. Blinded after a bout with diphtheria as an infant, her parents realized that only in Palestine could she have any educational opportunities. Hooli learned Hebrew quickly and found refuge from her loneliness in music. Only in 1950 was her entire family able to join her in the new state of Israel.

"At the JIB my musical talents were discovered and developed," she adds. "I had private lessons from

an early age, and thanks to the encouragement and investment in my talents, I was the first blind student to graduate from the Rubin Academy of Music in Jerusalem."

Hooli never had a doubt as to where she would make her career as a music educator. "I knew I wanted to come back to the Institute and teach in the place where I had gotten so much as a pupil. I wanted to close the circle."

With dedicated staff members like Esther Hooli, the Jewish Institute for the Blind emphasizes the world of music, but they are helping to develop more than talent. They are opening the horizons of the blind and partially sighted.

Zionism on Graduation Day



As the State of Israel honors 100 years since the convening of the First Zionist Congress this year, and the Israeli Ministry of Education adopted this motto, it was taught and imparted to students at the Jewish Institute for the Blind. Even graduation ceremonies reflected the theme with subjects such as 'separation from home and family', 'independence' and 'adaptation to a new environment'. Just as the Jewish nation has undergone all of these changes, so will the graduate face new challenges of the future.

In graduation ceremonies held in June, musical numbers were sung to (or by) each participant, and they were based on popular Israeli folk songs encompassing the past 100 years of Israeli history. Not only was the ceremony moving, but it was beautifully performed and a happy, if tearful, occasion for all.

New Dorm Director Fills Position

"I was looking for a new direction and my position at the Institute has certainly been very challenging," explains Moshe Ben-Mocha, Director of Residential Facilities at the Institute. Not only is Ben-Mocha responsible for all of the boarding students at the Institute, but there are a wealth of afternoon activities and a large staff of counselors and volunteers that he helps to select and supervise.

Ben-Mocha has just completed his first year at the Institute after 17 years of being a school principal in Afula. He has made the jump from formal to informal education without a hitch. "After a busy morning of schooling, afternoon activities must be varied and



Moshe Ben-Mocha

interesting for the students," he says.

Ben-Mocha has helped to form a new student council, and now the students take an active role in their own

activities. In addition to a variety of afternoon plans from homework assistance to swimming and judo, a pupil can always find a quiet corner to play a game or talk to a counselor.

Ben Mocha also finds time to make sure that counselors and volunteers have the professional help they need to help them cope with problems that might arise. He takes an active role in the decision making process of all activities of the Institute.

"The Institute is a vibrant place, and it is possible to see the positive work going on here in every department," remarks Ben-Mocha. "We have a lot to do to provide the best for our special needs students."