



# INSIGHT

news from *Jewish Institute For The Blind, Jerusalem*

volume 23 number 45 - Autumn 1999

## Sports Activities Develop More than Muscles

Athletics and sports activities have always been emphasized at the Jewish Institute for the Blind, and today they are a source of pride as well as integration. The state-of-the-art Sports Center is used by school pupils during school hours, and afternoons and evenings it is utilized in community outreach programs by youngsters and adults. The new Director of the Department of Community Services, Shabtai Deutsch, is very excited about the potential of sport at the Institute as well as opening up the services for sighted members of the community.

First and foremost, our responsibility is to the blind and partially sighted community, but our Sports Center and olympic size pool are a great way of bringing the sighted community into the Institute and our activities, explains Deutsch. One example of a game which attracts both blind and sighted players is goal ball. A fast-paced competitive sport, the game is played with two teams of three players each using their entire bodies to stop opponents from making goals. Goal ball is played with a special ball equipped with an identifying bell inside. The game was actually invented in 1946 for post World War II sight-impaired veterans. Today, in Israel, league play involves people from all over the country, and very often, sighted players join in this active game with blindfolds to eliminate their advantage. Blind players usually

surpass their sighted colleagues, however, as their senses other than sight are acutely developed.

The Institute sent two players to the European Championship of Goal Ball this year in Calgary. Institute graduate Shlomi Tamir and student Ferrence Oiberi were accompanied by their coach Ariel Fuerta and came home bearing a seventh place trophy for the Israeli team. Young Ferrence immigrated to Israel with his family only three years ago from Hungary and has been absorbed quickly into the student body at the Institute. He has developed extremely well in sports and scored 80% of the goals won by Israel.

### Sports Organization Raises Level for Blind

The Institute established the Sports Organization of the Blind in Israel hoping to see the level of sport for the blind improving throughout the country. "In addition to the importance of sport for relaxation and fitness, the blind benefit in many other ways, explains Deutsch. Strict adherence to the rules and regulations and a development of good sportsmanship is as important as is the competitive element that has been added.

With the special needs of some of the pupils at the Institute, body work is important to strengthen their muscles and increase their flexibility. Sports like judo teach students to fall



Action-packed game of goal ball



Block that goal!

(continued on page 4)