



INSIGHT

news from Jewish Institute For The Blind, Jerusalem

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Institute's Community Services Attract New Visitors to Institute; Provide New Programming

Lectures, workshops and retreats for the visually impaired, these are just some of the new services that attract quite a few visitors and newcomers to the Institute. The new Community Outreach program is directed by Oren Ganor and Haim Held, co-ordinators in this new project for the JIB. Both Ganor and Held come from backgrounds



Interested participants hear political candidates speak at fact-filled evening at the Institute

in media and marketing, and they are pushing forward projects that promote Community Services for the Blind. Recently they planned an informative evening in the JIB's auditorium in order to help inform the public about different Israeli political parties and their policies. The politicians represented the wide spectrum of Israeli politics, and they were all faced with difficult questions about making the workplace more accessible to all members of the population.

Not only did the blind and partially sighted population

find the evening informative, but it was also open to the public in general, attracting a wide response. Other programs on the drawing board are tandem bicycle championships that will take place in the Ben Shemen Forest in early spring, a self-healing workshop for visually impaired women, a Shabbat retreat at the Institute for the blind population and their families, as well as a Passover seder utilizing the Institute's dormitories to host families and friends of the blind and partially sighted community. An open lunch invitation has also been extended to the visually impaired to eat at the Institute's dining room daily for a very minimal price. "We are glad to see the JIB open its doors for all types of projects that can be of interest to the blind and partially sighted community," explains Oren Ganor, who is blind from birth. According to partner Haim Held, these new projects are bringing new people to the Institute, utilizing the facilities of the JIB, and are thereby helping the blind integrate into society in general.



Tandem biking enable both sighted and visually impaired riders to experience the excitement of the trail

New Developments at the JIB

Growth and change are always important, and new developments are also taking place at the Jewish Institute for the Blind. A hearty welcome to new Director, Shabtai (Shabbi) Deutsch, who has been at the Institute for almost twenty years and has recently replaced Chaim Reshelbach who retired this year after a very illustrious career. Deutsch has directed the Department of Community Services at the Institute for two decades, and he has been responsible for the positive emphasis on sport and leisure activity that has put the Institute on the map.

Former school principal Rachel Skrobish is now the Deputy Director of Pedagogical Development, and she comes to this job with many years of experience to help the Institute develop in new academic and educational ventures. Educator Menucha Trop who has taught at the JIB for close to two decades and also served as a guidance counselor for years is now School Principal at the Institute.

Another change at the Institute is the new role of the Deputy Director of Operations and Development which is being filled by Yaron Shane. He is busy developing exciting business plans for the JIB many of which have been implemented.

Oren Ganor and Haim Held who co-ordinate Community Services for the Blind, are also contributing to the Institute with their ideas in strategic media creativity. They initiated 'Blind Day' in Israel on June 6, 2010 which has helped to create both interest and increased awareness of the blind and partially sighted in society, (20/20 vision is 6/6 in metric countries). This is in addition to sports' activities, artistic and photographic exhibitions by the blind and partially sighted. Even the Israeli parliament has held a show of solidarity with the visually impaired yearly on June 6. Ganor and Held have many new plans for utilizing the facilities at the Institute for joint programming for both the visually impaired and sighted in the next few months.

Photography is Therapeutic and Interesting for Visually Impaired

"Song and tunes fill me, and music is the scenery of my soul," the photograph's caption reads, and an image of hands on a piano keyboard have been captured in the picture. An interesting photographic exhibit is currently on display on the walls of the JIB, and all of the pictures are the work of students, past and present, at the Institute. Although most of the images were actually filmed by Yehudit, a counselor at the JIB, the work expresses the feelings and emotions and instructions of the visually impaired students.

In a black and white blurry photograph, N. has a cane and is surrounded by people but looks a bit lost and alone. In the caption he expresses how he oftentimes feels the loneliness of a crowd and despite being surrounded by people, he asks for help.

We know the blind experience the world in vivid detail, but oftentimes it is their other senses which help to create the mind's image. Photography is one of the many therapies which can help them to express themselves.



JIB students on a tour in Jerusalem with their leader



Oren Ganor



Haim Held



Menucha Trop



Rachel Skrobish



Yaron Shane

Spotlights

🌸 Congratulations to former graduates and students who have qualified to represent Israel at the Eurovision music competition with the Shalva band. This special group brings a lot of pride to Israel, but unfortunately they will not be on stage as the show is being broadcast around the world on Saturday evening and will involve them performing on the Sabbath. Several of the musicians and vocalists were former students at the JIB or began developing their music careers here in many of the Institute's vocal or musical programs.



Former students wow Israel in performance with Shalva band

🌸 The Institute's students are now writing and publishing their own newspaper. Through their class work, interested pupils contribute to their own informative publication several times a year. Not only is this a great way to highlight the developments of the Institute; it helps their writing skills and raises self esteem.

🌸 This spring the Institute will hold a happening for pre-school children that are visually impaired so they and their parents can see the services and facilities offered by the Jewish Institute for the Blind. Although most of these children will be integrated into the public school system, the Institute is an educational facility that will offer them programming and will accompany them with both leisure and learning experiences during their school years and beyond.

🌸 Mercaz Keshet, is an organization that emphasizes employment skills at the Institute, helping to train students during their school day as a new project. Students prepare and package gift bags for birthday favors as well as the recent Purim gift treats that were so popular in the Jerusalem neighborhood of the Institute. These packages are sold locally and have very quickly become a money-making venture for the Institute. The money is channelled back into the educational project, making it a win-win situation for all.

🌸 Another Gadna season is underway, and interested students will be able to participate in a pre-army preparation course. These young people are exempt from serving in the army, but they oftentimes find it fulfilling to meet the challenges of the physical regimen and understand what volunteering could be open to them in the Israel Defense Forces.

Director's Corner



As spring unfolds in Israel we are excited to see the new developments and changes that are taking place before our eyes at the Jewish Institute for the Blind. It is with great respect and humility that I move into the director's chair at the Institute. In over a century of service to the blind and partially sighted populations of Israel, the Institute is known throughout the world for their work with the visually impaired.

I look forward to continuing working with the blind population of Israel and in all aspects of the Jewish Institute of the Blind. It is an ongoing challenge to help Israel's visually impaired population develop independence, realize their dreams and ensure that their opportunities are equal in education, occupation and all the hurdles that life has in store.

We also look forward to collaboration with schools and frameworks all over the world, and as always, we will enjoy hosting you here at the Institute on your visits. I personally look forward to meeting with you. May you and your family have a wonderful spring season and a happy and kosher Pesach Holiday!

Shabtai Deutsch

Shabtai Deutsch, Director

Recent Visitors to the Institute



FRANCE

Mrs. Myriam Nathan, La Varenne



PANAMA

Mr. Isaac Tarazi



UNITED STATES

Mr. Zev Berman, New York
Mr. & Mrs. Stan & Dianne Bikritsky, New Jersey
Mr. Leo Brandstatter, New Jersey



NORWAY

Mr. Oystein Egeland

COME TO VISIT US

On your next trip to Israel
we would like to welcome you
to our campus, situated at the
entrance to Jerusalem

8 Degel Reuven Street
Kiryat Moshe

To arrange a visit
please call: 02-6599501/11



Our students packaging gift bags



Bi-annual Newsletter

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Jewish Institute for the Blind

serving Israel's blind, visually impaired,
and multi-handicapped

For over 100 years

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Educational Opportunities Abound

The Israeli Department of Social Welfare is making big changes, and the Jewish Institute for the Blind is moving forward in tandem with them. The Institute has always been supportive of continuing education for students upon graduation, and today these wishes might be answered on our campus. The Institute is in a stage of negotiations which will hopefully result in an educational framework that will enable students to continue their studies at the Institute upon graduation, earning certification as well as enjoying courses for personal enrichment.

"We are happy that we will be able to provide further academic courses here at the Jewish Institute for the Blind, allowing students to pursue their educational aspirations, earning credits and becoming certified in fields of education, sport training, homeopathy and therapeutic professions," according to JIB Director Shabtai Deutsch. "The Institute has always tried to help our graduates succeed in their professional goals, and continuing education will certainly provide them with new opportunities."