



Insight

news from Jewish Institute For The Blind ,Jerusalem

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Computer Technology is Both Educational and Fun

"Despite his blindness, L. was a very bright child but had little motivation to learn to read and write Braille.... until he touched the keyboard of the computer," explains Jewish Institute for the Blind educator Benny Shenberg. "Not only did his reading and writing skills improve within days, but L. now excels in computing skills, utilizing the computer for information, correspondence as well as being up-to-date in the world in which he lives."

According to Nehama Lev-Ari, co-ordinator of the Institute's computer education program, computers are such a part of every student's life that is hard to imagine teaching blind pupils today without them. In addition to good hardware, however, the software must be upgraded often and must be state-of-the-art with necessary adaptive programs for the blind and partially sighted. Of course there are those students that succeed using Braille monitors and output devices, and there are those that prefer computer screen readers. Not only does the Institute try and meet everyone's



New computer technology enables the blind and partially sighted to enjoy the educational and social benefits of the world of computers

needs, but they are constantly learning the most advanced technology. "The computer is a vital tool for education, it enables pupils to easily adapt to existing technology, and of course it is always entertaining," adds Lev-Ari.

Today we live in a technological world and the highway of computer possibilities is constantly flowing and even becoming more and more crowded. The Jewish Institute for the Blind realizes the importance of this technology and strives to keep up with the most advanced programs available. Their computer skills will help to open the doors for our students' future employment, advancement of academic skills as well as enhancement of their communication.

We're in the Army Now!

Yachad participants broke all stereotypes as they endured four tough days of army preparation at a military base in northern Israel. Perhaps their visual handicap will prevent these young people from basic training, but these Yachad participants still wanted to experience the rigors of the army first-hand. Dressed in military fatigues in an army training camp, they were instructed in fitness drills and military regimen. On their final day, these young 'recruits' received a big surprise as their parents awaited them at the base to see their final drill and celebrate their successful completion of the army preparatory course.



Blind and partially sighted trainees at an army base in northern Israel

A Glimpse at One of the Institute's Employees Benny Shenberg

Benny Shenberg has been a familiar face at the JIB for over a decade. He began working as a madrich/youth counselor while studying education, and upon graduation when it came time to look for a teaching job, he realized that the Jewish Institute for the Blind was a good fit for him. Today, he is one of the most popular teachers in the computer department at the Institute.

"I have seen so many changes at the Institute, and it is a very meaningful place to work," says Shenberg. "Today there is an incredible outreach program to the sighted community at large as well as to the visually handicapped all over Israel." Benny actually wears



Benny Shenberg

many hats at the Jewish Institute for the Blind. He is oftentimes seen with a camera in hand as he maintains the Institute's web sites and archives. He also instructs a cooking workshop at the afternoon community center at the Institute. In addition to working for the school, he also is a very important part of the Yachad project, working and coordinating with dozens of blind and partially sighted students from all over Israel.

We wish Benny lots of luck and success in all of his activities at the Institute. As a valued member of the Institute's staff, he makes a big difference in the lives of many students and associates.

Spotlights

❁ **20-20 Vision or Blind Day** is the name of an excellent production that was recently held in the Institute's auditorium. Yachad participants starred in a play which expressed the happiness and frustration in a day in the life of a visually handicapped person. With emotion, humor and lots of movement, the production was a rousing success, performed to a full house.

❁ **Parliamentarians Play Goal Ball** - A goal ball court was quickly fashioned, eyes were blindfolded so they would not have an advantage playing with the visually handicapped, and members of Israel's Knesset or parliament challenged the Israeli national goal ball team in an active game of the sport. Although they were soundly defeated, the lawmakers got a lesson in the importance of sport for the blind and visually sighted.

❁ **Bridge of Light** - A great day at the Ramat Gan Safari was shared by Israeli policemen with JIB students. The joint tour and visit to the zoo was one of several activities which have helped to form quite a bond between our students and the Israeli 'men and women in blue'.

❁ **Supply and Demand** - This year a first grade will be opening at the Institute, and the JIB will be ferrying the youngsters up to Jerusalem from many places in Israel to start school on the right foot. Although most visually handicapped Israeli pupils are integrated in their local classrooms, there are many youngsters who will benefit from the special facilities and professionalism at the Jewish Institute for the Blind. We wish them a successful school year.



Hiking through ravines on JIB field trip



Director's Corner

In this upcoming academic year we can report on a growing number of activities that are starting at the Jewish Institute for the Blind which will expand our base of operations and reach an ever growing population. Although more and more visually handicapped children are integrated into regular schools each year, there are still many youngsters with other physical difficulties that need the special attention that they can get in classes at the Institute. This year we are opening a first grade class to assist those youngsters, and they will be provided with transportation from their homes to the classroom at the Institute. By opening up elementary school classes, we will be able to provide opportunities for a younger group, giving them a head start in development. The Jewish Institute for the Blind is known throughout Israel for the individual attention that is given to each pupil. Parents of young children in the new division know that they will receive the preparation and assistance here that would not be available in a neighborhood school.

This year we are also establishing programming for young people from the ultra-Orthodox community that will also study in custom-designed programs at the Institute. After morning yeshiva studies, many pupils will report to the Institute for vital courses in Braille, mobility, and computers and other classes that will enhance their everyday life. The Jewish Institute for the Blind is constantly on the lookout to see just where our expertise can help with new projects or subjects of study for young people all over Israel.

Wishing you and yours
a Happy and Healthy New Year!



Chaim Reshelbach, Director

Recent Visitors to the Institute



COLOMBIA

Mr. and Mrs. Jaim Bejman, Barranquilla



ENGLAND

Mr. Danny Handler, London



FRANCE

Mrs. Myriam Nathan, La Varenne



COSTA RICA

Mrs. Kathy Margules, San José



FINLAND

Ms. Helen Palm, Helsinki



UNITED STATES

Mrs. Judith Jelen and Family, Stamford, Ct
 Rabbi & Mrs. David E. Lapp, Fair Lawn, NJ
 Mr. Shaya Tischler, Brooklyn, NY

The Jewish Institute for the Blind sorrowfully announces the death of **Aryeh L. Handler** of Jerusalem.

Before making aliyah to Jerusalem at the age of 90, Mr. Handler was a devoted trustee of the British Aid Committee in London. In his early years he was active in helping to save Jewish children from the Nazis. As a young man he lived in Eretz Israel and was even present at the signing of Israel's Declaration of Independence. A few years later he moved to London where he became very active in the Mizrahi movement, helped to establish the Bachad Fellowship, Bnei Akiva and chaired the organization for many years. He was also Chairman of the National Council for Soviet Jewry, assisting in the exodus of many for the Land of Israel. In addition, he also assisted in projects to save the Jews of Ethiopia, helping them to settle in Israel.

Mr. Handler is survived by two sons Danny and Gabi and their families. A memorial service to this great friend was held at the Institute in the presence of family and friends.



'Blind Day' Performance at the Jewish Institute for the Blind



Insights from Abroad



Institute Director Chaim Reshelbach recently returned from America where he attended the annual meeting of the American Friends of the Jewish Institute for the Blind. In a roster of impressive projects, Rabbi David Lapp reported on ongoing activities. Eric Loeb is a longtime administrator in the New York office, and we wish him continued success. We would also like to extend a hearty welcome to Beth Guterman who also will take an active role in administration in the NY offices.



Blindinstitutet I Israel Vänner I Sverige held their annual meeting in May and the decision was made to help the Institute upgrade and acquire new computer hardware and software. The very generous Swedish donation has helped to raise the level of the computer department of the Institute. Also today every classroom has at least one computer for use by the instructor as well as the students. At present, Peter Christensen heads the Friends organization in Stockholm and Inger Glasman is co-ordinator.



New classroom furniture was recently donated by the Canadian Friends of the Institute in memory of the late Smuel Feig, former President of the Canadian Friends. The bright new fittings are thanks to the initiative of Leslie Breiner, son-in-law of the late Smuel Feig.



We thank the Hilfe für Blinde in Israel, Basle, Switzerland, under the leadership of Dr. Jakob Silbiger for financing an important addition to our carpentry department at the Institute, a 'dry spray booth' which will enable students to work in an environment friendly room. The Hilfe für Blind is a continuing source of generous support for the JIB.



Bi-annual Newsletter

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Jewish Institute for the Blind

serving Israel's blind, visually impaired,

and multi-handicapped

over 100 years

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