



JINsight

news from Jewish Institute For The Blind, Jerusalem

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Opening the Doors to the Institute



Mobility lessons at the Institute's open house

The Jewish Institute for the Blind opened its doors to the public in early June, inviting visitors to walk in the footsteps of the blind. As part of the Tzamid festival which showcased events and performances of artists with disabilities, the Institute was on the Jerusalem map, and visitors experienced firsthand the daily life of a student, walking with a cane on city streets, enjoying the Institute's cafe 'in the dark' and trying to recognize different types of food or just putting on a blindfold and trying to walk in the shoes of a blind student.

"Although we live in nearby Kiryat Moshe, we have never been inside the Jewish Institute for the Blind, and my children and I were fascinated by this first visit," wrote Shira in a letter received after the open house. She

adds that the visit was a 'fascinating look at the Jewish Institute for the Blind from the inside,' as she put it. "The informative visit really opened our eyes to our neighbors, and we could understand a bit more of the life of every pupil and blind person." Although the JIB has been located in the Kiryat Moshe neighborhood for almost eighty years, and people do have contact with the synagogue or sports center, the Institute is opening its gates to the public for more programming in the auditorium and welcomes more and more visitors to the complex. Neighborhood youth group activities are held with our students, and young people as well as their parents are being exposed to the work of the Jewish Institute for the Blind.



Visitors to the Institute learn to play goal ball, a fast sport designed for blind athletes

Outreach Programs Bring Pupils from Near and Far

Each day taxis or vans pull into the JIB parking lot and students jump out, eager to start their day. Although the Institute was established as a dormitory setting over a century ago, oftentimes today, parents prefer that their young children live at home. And today, pupils begin studying at the Institute from an early age, commuting daily from as far away as Israel's coastal plain and Netanya.

"Many parents want their children in the family home, so we have introduced a new program where our external students board at the Institute two nights weekly," explains Director Chaim Reshelbach. "This project helps develop independence, and the pupils are able to benefit from many more extra-curricular activities with their peers." Most of the students suffer from many problems



Summer arts and crafts are friendly to the environment

other than visual, and this dormitory option gives the parents a break as well as offering quite a bit to the individual student.

The Institute still serves as a beacon for educational and communal activities, and in addition to schooling, the sports and leisure activities are very important. In Israel, young adults are entitled under the Law of Special Education to receive

educational help and guidance through the age of twenty-one. Today with the new outreach programs, young people are enjoying a lengthened school day. They stay later at the Institute, experiencing more in a supportive environment, and they have a wide range of programming and extra-curricular activities during the long day.

A Glimpse at One of the Institute's Employees

Aliza Dahan

"...Thirty-five, thirty-six years," says Aliza Dahan, when asked how long she has worked at the Institute. She checks her calendar to make sure, counting back through the years, but Aliza Dahan's memory rarely fails her. She has been at the Institute since 1982, and her jobs have included organizing contributions from Israel. As she thinks back to her first years at the Institute, her day-to-day activities seemed so full of detail as receipts were handwritten, the mail was prepared and sent out, the bank deposits were made, and of course, the manual typewriter was so slow.

Although technology has sped things up, Dahan still keeps an old charity box from the days of individual collections; engraved on it the text from Isaiah 42-



Aliza Dahan

16: "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known; along unfamiliar paths I will guide them. I will turn darkness into light before them and make rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them." These words of the prophet are still the motto by which the JIB operates, and every individual contribution is important at the Jewish Institute for the Blind, helping to provide more for each student. Individual donors still come by the Institute, today more often with a check or credit card rather than cash, but they are all acknowledged

by Dahan. Yes, times have changed in three decades at the Institute, but sometimes, the same valuable employees can still be found.

Spotlights

✿ Graduation Bells

This year graduation at the Institute was a time for cheers as well as the occasional sad farewell. After the festive ceremony in the JIB auditorium, graduates, family and friends enjoyed a picnic in the large amphitheatre and musical playground.

✿ Happy End

Natan, a young pupil at the Institute loves to sing, and he always admired the music of the Jerusalem Boys' Choir known as Pirchei Yerushalayim. As part of a school project he opted to interview choir director Hanan Avital. During their discussion, Avital asked Natan to sing, and the rest is history. Today he is a full-fledged member of the choir!

✿ Sports History

This is a historical year as the sports prowess of the Institute is on the rise. After the women's goal ball team defeated China at the International Blind Sports Association world games in Seoul in 2015, they are en route to Rio de Janeiro to play in the Paralympic Games following the Olympics in Brazil. Stay posted!

✿ Summer in the City

The Israel National Chess Championship for the Blind will be played in early August this summer. These games will be held in a four-day championship match that pits skill and concentration. Despite the tense competition, the players are excellent sports, and they enjoy the matches as most have played against each other in previous matches. May the best man win!

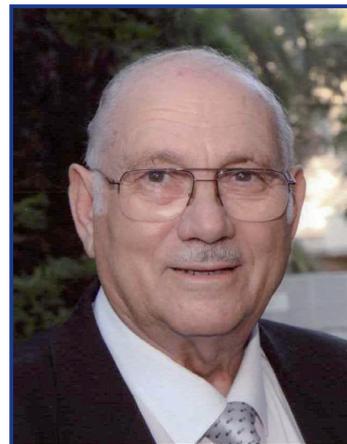
✿ Chess Intrigues

Students at the JIB studied through the month of July, and this extra month of school was packed full of fun and water! Students enjoyed visiting water springs in the hills of Jerusalem, they opened pools on the grounds of the Institute, making boats, windmills and water toys out of recycled objects, and they tried to stay cool during the hot summer days.



Our student Dina is a singing sensation throughout Israel...here she is welcomed on stage by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu

Director's Corner



All of us know the beneficial value of sports, but for the blind and partially sighted, sports activities can be life saving and as well as life changing. Every modern society is facing the challenge of obesity in this era, but the thrill and excitement of sport at the Institute is part of the daily curriculum. This summer, with our teams participating on international levels both at home and in the Summer Paralympic games in Rio de Janeiro, the excitement is palpable. We are proud that the Jewish Institute for the Blind can take the helm in sports leadership and that Shabtai Deutsch, our Director of Community Services represents Israel on the International Blind Sports Association advisory committee. Our students are succeeding in raising the level of sports as well as their own self esteem on the playing field. Today every child at the Institute learns the thrill of victory or reality of defeat.

Interestingly enough, it has been proven that the students benefit academically from sports just as they are improving body awareness, motor co-ordination, posture and balance problems. In addition to being fun, sports activities teach the skill of competitive sport as well as the intense concentration needed for chess matches. So from the gym by way of the pool (swimming lessons are an important part of every pupil's curriculum) to the chess boards, let's wish a hearty 'mazel tov' to all of our sportsmen and women this summer and fall. May you and your family also have a beautiful autumn and a happy and peaceful New Year! May you be inscribed in the book of life.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chaim Reshelbach".

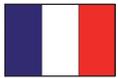
Chaim Reshelbach, Director

Recent Visitors to the Institute



UNITED KINGDOM

David Collins, Trustee and Honorary Secretary,
Jewish Child's Day, London



FRANCE

Mrs. Myriam Nathan, LaVarenne



FINLAND

Avraham & Aura (Outi) Arnon, Helsinki



UNITED STATES

Mr. Zev Berman, New York
Dr. Abraham Bichler, New York
Mr. Leo Brandstatter, New Jersey
Lucille Gilbert, Illinois
Isaac & Shulamit Safdeye, Florida
Judith Jelen, Connecticut
PJ Jelen, Connecticut

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



Natan today sings with the well known Jerusalem boys' choir Pirchei Yerushalayim



Lifting weights at the JIB is good exercise and lots of fun

We're in the Army Now

Although the blind and partially sighted are exempt from serving in the Israeli army, an enthusiastic group of Yachad teens has successfully completed a recent Gadna or pre-army preparatory course. These young people are active in Yachad activities at the Institute on school vacations and in the summer, but they live at home and attend high school all over Israel. This group of students made quite a name for themselves through their hard work and effort on the army base and even attracted the television cameras. "We very rarely have groups that work so hard to succeed in all of their challenges," explained Yael, a commanding officer in an Israeli t.v. interview. "We can all learn something from the work that was done this week by these teens despite their visual difficulties." The students simulated boot camp training in regulation IDF uniforms during their week of training. After spending hours learning what their volunteering possibilities would be in the army, they spent rigorous days in physical training. The students completed a long hike on their last day, and they were surprised at the end by their proud families.



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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