



JINsight

news from Jewish Institute For The Blind, Jerusalem

Insight – Volume 42 Number 81 Fall 2017

Salute to the Jewish Institute for the Blind as Jerusalem Celebrates 50th Anniversary Since City's Reunification

Israel celebrated its 69th Independence Day early in May this year, and several weeks later Jerusalem was in the headlines as the 3,000 year old city celebrated fifty years of reunification since the Six Day War in 1967. As part of the opening ceremony of the festivities, Jerusalem was honored. The Jewish Institute for the Blind was chosen to light one of the torches in the ceremony and a 19 year old student, Dina Simata was chosen to represent the Institute. Eloquently reading from her Braille speech, Dina reflected on her years of study at the Institute as a new immigrant from the Bnei Menashe community of India. Not only has she developed quite a singing career, she has matured and developed into a young lady, and she thanks the Institute for "enabling her to



Torch lit in honor of Jewish Institute for the Blind at Israel Independence Day ceremony

achieve a meaningful existence".

The Jewish Institute for the Blind has been a fixture in Jerusalem since its inception in Jerusalem in 1902. These days people associate the neighborhood of Kiryat Moshe with the Institute, as the familiar building has welcomed guests to the entrance of the city for decades. This year

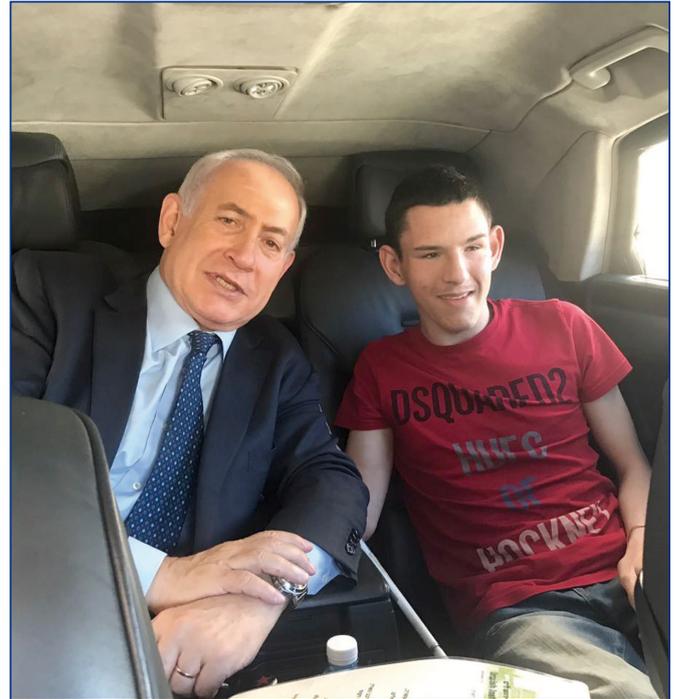
will mark the publication

of a historical commemorative book that will mark the first century of the Jewish Institute for the Blind. Extensively researched and written by Israeli journalist Menachem Michelson, this volume will reflect the history of the last hundred years of the Institute as well as the last century in Jerusalem. Although the JIB's efforts have changed over the years, the Institute is still the hub of activity for the blind and visually impaired population of Israel.

Meeting with Prime Minister is a Dream Come True

When 18-year-old Daniel Defur wrote a letter to Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu under the guidance of his teacher Ahuva, he had no idea that he would be visiting both at his office as well as the Israeli parliament. As International Blind Day was observed this year in Israel, it was also cited in the parliament (Knesset), and Daniel Defur went along for the ride... literally. Not only did Defur visit the Prime Minister's office, but he was thrilled to ride with Netanyahu and his security escort to the Knesset building as well.

Defur, blind since age 13, has been through seven eye surgeries, but his vision has not been saved. Helping him to make the transition to a life of blindness, he studies at the Jewish Institute for the Blind. His family, immigrants from the former Soviet Union are happy for the life preparation skills he is receiving at the Institute, and they hope to see him recognize the life of his dreams – even if that includes the role of Prime Minister!



JIB student Daniel Defur meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

A Glimpse at One of the Institute's Employees Devorah Auerbach

For most of her adult life, Devorah Auerbach has been part of the community of the Jewish Institute of the Blind. As a young woman, she began working in the office, married, had children and left the Institute temporarily to be at home with her growing family. Auerbach came back to work, and today, as the administrative head of the Institute, her office has always been the first place that one turns with a question or problem.

Today, a grandmother many times over, she is slowing down a bit and will be retiring from her position at the JIB, spending more time with family. She has maintained relationships with former students for decades, and until recently, she volunteered with several blind elderly women.

History at the JIB

"When I started working here, the Jewish Institute for the Blind was one of the tourists' first stops in Jerusalem", reminisces Auerbach. "We barely had typewriters in those days, and the children learned to write Braille by hand.

We had a sense of mission, however, and we knew that our work was truly important for Israeli society". Auerbach has not yet forgotten that morning in June 1967 when Jerusalem came under attack by Jordanian forces on the first day of the Six Day War. At the Institute, she helped all the pupils to their respective shelters, and made sure that everyone was well protected, and only then did she and another co-worker run to their own homes and families. Only later that evening did Auerbach learn that her co-worker had been killed by a Jordanian missile.

Just as the Jewish Institute for the Blind is a part of Jerusalem's history, it is a big part of my life," she explains. "Although the Institute has grown and developed and the physical buildings have tripled in size, I miss the days when our offices were in the classroom building, and I had contact with the students every day."

"From my earliest days here, I felt like my work with these children was a calling, and yes, there is still work left to be done." We wish her much happiness in her retirement, and she will be sorely missed at the Jewish Institute for the Blind.

Spotlights

❁ Many Yachad students spent part of their summer in preparation for an informative trip to Poland this summer. Although, for many sighted kids this trip is a part of their school activities, the needs of the blind and partially sighted are not always met. In this August visit to Warsaw, Cracow and Auschwitz, 28 blind and partially sighted students travelled with 25 sighted escorts to learn about the Holocaust and the Jewish community of Europe that was annihilated.

❁ Jerusalem womens' international goal ball tournament was played and hosted at the JIB this July. The participating teams included players from Israel, England, Finland, and Russia.

❁ Israel Blind Sports Federation finals will be held in Finland this year in mid-September. Both the Israeli men's and women's teams are strong runners and they are each in second place in their leagues. Best of luck to all participants.



Elhoum. woman's captain of Israel's goal ball team

❁ As Jerusalem celebrates fifty years since the Six Day War in June 1967 which resulted in the unification of the city, the students have learned about recent history in the city. Tours as well as a school wide quiz prepared them with background history about Jerusalem as well as life in the war-torn city as it was between 1948 - 1967.

Director's Corner



As Jerusalem celebrates 50 years since the Six Day War was fought in June 1967, it is time to reflect on the flourishing capital city of Israel. Just as Jerusalem is the heart of Israel, one can easily say that the Institute plays a vital role in the history of Jerusalem. Not only has the JIB been near the main entrance to the city, but it has hosted students and visitors from all over the world. In looking at the visitor's book of the Institute, an interesting quote from Arthur Wauchope, the British High Commissioner in 1935 strikes a familiar note:

"I have been deeply interested and profoundly impressed by what I have seen...It is evident that the institute is excellently organized and administered, and I am glad to note the work done towards teaching the residents to become self-supporting."

Over eighty years have passed since that historic visit to the Institute, and if one looks closely, he can still see the same dedication to the blind population we serve. I still see vital objectives that we strive to fulfill for our pupils; we hope that they will live a normal independent life, enjoying the quality of life that independence can provide. We also strive to assist not only our students but the entire blind and partially sighted community in Israel. Although the Institute has reached the ripe old age of 115 years, its activities are young and constantly developing.

Wishing you and your family a Happy and Peaceful New Year, and may you be inscribed in the Book of Life.

Chaim Reshelbach, Director

Recent Visitors to the Institute



AUSTRALIA

Avi & Nikki Olshina, Victoria



COLOMBIA

Mr. & Mrs. Pinhas Gabay, San Andres Island



PANAMA

Mrs. Suzy Cohen and children, Bella Vista



CANADA

Leslie & Sara Breiner, Ontario



FRANCE

Mrs. Myriam Nathan, La Varenne
Ronit Zimmerman, Paris



UNITED STATES

Dr. Abraham Bichler, New Jersey
Rabbi & Mrs. David & Ruti Lapp, New Jersey

Tandem Cycling Attracts More and More Athletes

Canvelo, Israel's first tandem cycling club was established over a decade ago and more blind and visually impaired Israelis are enjoying the camaraderie and thrill of cycling. 'Can velo' in Hebrew means 'yes' and 'no', referring to both sighted as well as blind cyclists. 'Velo' in biking lingo also means a two-wheeled bike, and the words have been combined to provide a name for the Israeli tandem cycling clubs. This year in honor of 'Blind Day' on the sixth day of the sixth month (June 6...stands for 6:6 or perfect vision) the Jewish Institute for the Blind as well as Canvelo organized the tandem race and over one hundred blind and sighted riders teamed up on tandem bikes for a race on desert terrain in the Grove for the Blind in the Ben Shemen Forest.

Cyclists of all ages lined up at the starting line to begin the nine-kilometer challenging race. They maneuvered sharp turns, sped over rocky terrain and tackled steep slopes to reach the finish line. Trophies were presented to the different categories of winners, but the real heroes were all of those participants that competed, enjoying the thrill of the ride.



Tandem cyclists hit the road



INsight

news from Jewish Institute For The Blind, Jerusalem

Bi-annual Newsletter

Editor: Janet Mendelsohn Moshe

Jewish Institute for the Blind

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

For over 100 years

P.O.B. 925 Kiryat Moshe

91008 Jerusalem, Israel

Tel: (02) 6599501/11

Fax: (02) 6512186

E-mail address:

office@jewishblind.org

www.ivrim.org

www.jewishblind.org



Insights from Abroad

In a recent donation, a Braille reader was presented to the Jewish Institute for the Blind by the Canadian Friends of the Institute through the efforts of Leslie and Sara Breiner. This donation will be a big assistance to many of our students and visitors.

With great sorrow, the Jewish Institute for the Blind received news
of the death of

Jeannette Cameron Nadell

Jeannette has been an untiring supporter of the Jewish Institute for the
Blind for years, as well as the President of the Los Angeles Group.

We send condolences to her sons Herbert and Steven and their families.
She will be sorely missed.