



JIBsight

news from Jewish Institute For The Blind ,Jerusalem

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Institute Outreach Broadens Student Population

“We have an outreach program that is unrivaled in our attempts to meet the need of every student,” explains Rachel Skrobish, Director of the Institute’s Department of Education and Rehabilitation. The Jewish Institute for the Blind was founded 108 years ago to help the blind and partially sighted of Israel. In addition to the school children that study and live at the Institute, sight impaired Israeli young people recognize the Institute as a beacon for educational and communal activities, with no shortage of instructional as well as sports and leisure activities.

Blind and partially sighted children are beginning their education at the Institute at an earlier age, and they are being helped for a longer period of time. Young adults are entitled under the Law of Special Education to receive educational help and guidance through the age of twenty-one, but the JIB oftentimes offers guidance and assistance and sometimes even independent living in an apartment for an even longer period. Although the Institute was established with a dormitory setting as the best way to help a young child, more and more parents want their children living with them in their home environment. Today, this situation is being addressed as children are transported by

as many as twelve different vehicles daily from far flung communities up to an hour and a half from Jerusalem. In addition to meeting educational goals and providing a warm, supportive environment, more extra-curricular activities as well as mobility skills are emphasized after school hours, lengthening the school day as much as three hours.

The Institute is today geared to help multi-handicapped blind children, and a curriculum is tailor-made to benefit each pupil. Not only are all facilities accessible to each pupil, but children with severe brain damage and little or no hearing or speech facilities are learning and responding favorably at the Jewish Institute for the Blind. In addition to the individualized curriculum, each student is challenged to do his or her best, and completion of matriculation exams is emphasized for many of the students according to their abilities.

“Today we aim to provide each pupil with the educational stimulus as well as individual programming that he or she needs,” emphasizes school principal Skrobish. In over a century of experience, the Institute knows the importance of going the extra mile for each student.



Individual attention given to each student by Institute’s staff



Pupils enjoying their creativity in JIB’s metal workshop

Institute Auditorium Serves Community

The JIB's state-of-the-art auditorium is today a well utilized venue for both the Institute's population as well as residents of the neighborhood of Kiryat Moshe. "We are in contact with the neighborhood community centers, and we have opened up the Institute's auditorium for public usage, which also enables the student or sight-impaired adult population easy access to excellent cultural and educational programming," according to Shabtai Deutsch, Director of the Institute's Department of Community Services.

A production of Shalom Aleichem's "Hard to be Jewish" was recently enjoyed and well known Israel singer Shuly Natan performed as part of a recent concert. Deutsch emphasizes that the 235 – seat auditorium was recently constructed with the visually handicapped in mind, and textures as well as Braille numbers facilitate sight-impaired members of the audience in finding their seats. Rows of seats are widely spaced, which also enable the audience to continue sitting comfortably as people pass to reach their seats. "We are glad the auditorium is widely utilized in the neighborhood, and it increases the social interaction of the local



Musical performance at the Institute's new auditorium

blind and partially sighted population with their neighbors," emphasizes Deutsch. "The idea was not a commercial venture but another way to promote integration between those that are served by the Institute and the neighborhood community." Young adults and students also sell refreshments during intermissions and before the productions.

Pnina Levik

One of the Institute's Most Outstanding Employees

According to Webster's definition, a pearl is described as being rare, fine, and admirable. These accolades describe Pnina Levik, a teacher at the Institute that works tirelessly as a homeroom teacher, helping to prepare her students for matriculation exams. (The word 'pnina' in Hebrew means pearl!) Her dedication to her students is certainly admirable, and at present one of her biggest challenges is teaching the spatial concepts of geometry to a blind student!

"We are very fortunate at the Institute that we are able to divide classes into groups according to their abilities, and I am preparing students for matriculation exams in several subjects," explains Levik. "These exams will be held nationally, and although some of my students will have a slight addition of time or some will be able to complete the exam on computer, but basically they are competing with their sighted peers from all over the country."



Pnina Levik

Not only is the motivation of these pupils contagious, but they help to raise the level of the entire student body. Oftentimes these are pupils that could not receive the help they needed when they were mainstreamed in regular classes in their home towns. Many have become top students after exhibiting behavior problems as well as poor grades. Levik is kept busy in preparing questions on computer for partially sighted students, on a Braille writer for the blind and by hand for those with less visual difficulty. An excellent educator, Levik is able to help her students reach goals that they and their parents did not know would be possible.

Levik has worked for fifteen years at the Jewish Institute for the Blind, and from the beginning she has been challenged with helping to push her pupils to new heights. "We are encouraged to give our students our all, and the pupils rise to our expectations," she explains.

Spotlights

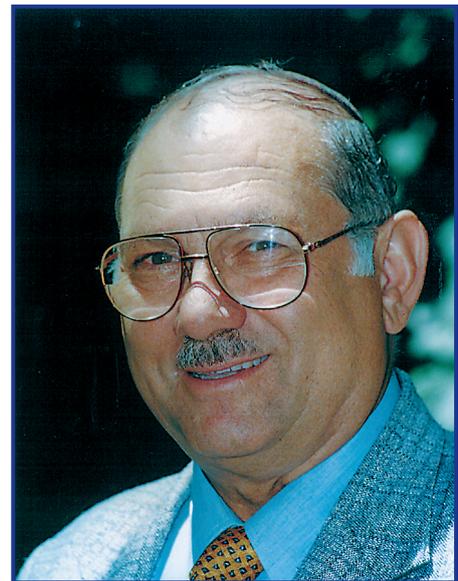
✿ This summer we celebrate a decade since the inception of 'Yachad', or the together project which unites blind and partially-sighted young people from around the country with stimulating programming and activities. Our programming today reaches approximately 300 young people aged 13 -21, and they are brought to the Institute for diagnostic, therapeutic, educational and social programming.

✿ An international goal ball championship tournament will be held at the Institute's Sport Center in late August. The sportsmen of the goal ball team sponsored by the Jewish Institute for the Blind won the first-place trophy last year. This year our team will be representing the European Championship in Denmark, and we are sure that they will uphold our excellent ranking!

✿ An exciting Purim celebration gave the students and staff a great excuse for costumes and lots of fun this year. Joining in the celebration were girls from North America that are spending a year studying in a seminary in Jerusalem.



Yachad participants love even the most active tours such as rappelling



Director's Corner

In the Institute's early days, a dormitory enabled students to live at the Institute, helping them to immerse in an educational and rehabilitative atmosphere. Today, there are approximately 2,000 blind children in Israel, and 80% are integrated in their local educational system. For those families that choose to educate their children at the JIB, our dormitory is still a vital part of that learning experience for many students, but more and more parents are opting for their children to live at home and commute daily to the Institute. Our pupils oftentimes suffer from many other handicaps in addition to their blindness, and their families prefer that they commute in their early years. When students are in their teens, they oftentimes choose to live in our newly refurbished dorms.

Options are recommended for each pupil by our advisors together with parental input, and the Jewish Institute for the Blind builds a curriculum for each student. Today a program called 'Shachaf' provides a long school day, integrating mobility skills, social and leisure activities after class hours. The students are provided with quality leisure and social activities, and the long day is welcomed by parents who recognize the need for stimulating experiences for these pupils.

Although our student body is always changing, and the incidences of blindness from birth have thankfully been minimized through medical advances, the Jewish Institute for the Blind is constantly looking for ways to improve our services to the blind and partially sighted population of Israel.

We wish you and your family
a happy Passover holiday.

Chaim Reshelbach, Director

Recent Visitors to the Institute



ARGENTINA

Mr. David E. Kostzer, Tucuman



AUSTRALIA

Ms. Karen Doobov



COLOMBIA

Mr. David Abadi, BTA
Mrs. Margarita & Miriam Bejman, Barranquilla



DENMARK

Philip & Andre Rothschild, Vanlose



FRANCE

Mrs. Myriam Nathan, La Varenne
Family of the late Rabbi Avraham (Albert) Messas, La Varenne



GERMANY

Ms. Anne Meidenbauer, Nurnberg



PANAMA

Mr. & Mrs. Jack Bejman



SWITZERLAND

Mrs. Liliane Bollag, Widnau



UNITED STATES

Mr. & Mrs. Jordan Brinn, Silver Spring, Md.
Mrs. Joanne Chernin, Livingston, N.J.
Dr. Don Cortum, Palm Springs, Ca.
Mr. & Mrs. Ezra Dabah, Great Neck, N.Y.
Mr. David Jacobs, Palm Springs, Ca.
Mr. William Kase, West Hills, Ca.
Mrs. Sonya Loeb, NYC
Mr. Meir Ohebsion, Los Angeles, Ca.
Mr. & Mrs. Yakov Potesky, Monsey, NY
Rabbi Henry Ruben, Brooklyn, NY
Mrs. Brenda Tawil, W. Long Branch, NJ

COME TO VISIT US

On your trip to Israel
we would like to welcome you
at our campus situated in Kiryat Moshe,
8 Degel Reuven Street
at the entrance of Jerusalem.
To arrange a visit please call: 02-6599501

The Jewish Institute for the Blind as well as its Board of Directors and staff express their sadness and condolences at the sudden passing of Miriam Reshelbach, lifetime wife and helpmate of Director Chaim Reshelbach. Miriam Reshelbach was well known by all of the friends of the Institute abroad as a representative of the JIB. She has always been a full partner in her husband's devotion to the Institute and the blind and partially sighted of Israel.

Condolences to Chaim Reshelbach as well as children Aviva, Avraham, Orit, Noam and Shlomi and their families on their tragic loss.



Institute Director Chaim Reshelbach and wife Miriam (z"l) at the Institute's campus



INsight

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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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Insights from Abroad

The Jewish Institute for the Blind was proud to observe the first year memorial service of Rabbi Avraham (Albert) Messas of La Varenne, France at the Institute. In attendance were family members as well as Israelis who had great respect and admiration for Rabbi Messas. The esteemed Rabbi was son of the former chief rabbi of Jerusalem, and he served the community of La Varenne for many years. Participating guests of honor at the JIB included Rabbi Eliyahu Abergil, the leading dayan of Jerusalem's rabbinical court and Rabbi Chaim Gazit, the rabbi of the Institute's synagogue.

The Los Angeles Group for the Blind of Israel honors long time president Jeannette Cameron Nadell on her 90th birthday this spring. Their annual brunch will highlight all of her activities for the many years she has supported the JIB. Mazal tov!