



# INSIGHT

news from Jewish Institute For The Blind, Jerusalem

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## Sport as Therapy at the Jewish Institute for the Blind



*Climbing the wall at the therapeutic sports center*

Athletics as well as sports activities are extremely popular at the Jewish Institute for the Blind, and now that every student is taught swimming lessons, the pool is a well sought after venue. "We emphasize the importance of sports for all of our students, and they get a well rounded sports curriculum," explains Shabtai Deutsch, Director of the Institute's Department of Community Services. Regardless of a child's tastes or physical abilities, sports seem to be popular with one and all. The newly refurbished 5,000 meter sports center is utilized all day and every evening with not only the students but also adults that come for sports, exercise and physical fitness programs. In the afternoon hours, participants of all ages enjoy intramural sports and pool activities, goal ball, judo, exercise and fitness classes.

"My pupils suffer from a variety of limitations and impaired muscular power as well as co-

ordination," explains sports teacher Michal Eldar. "Oftentimes, their visual handicap is only a small part of their physical problems." With her experience of thirty years teaching sports at the Institute, Eldar appreciates the fact that almost every pupil has an individually tailored regime of sport and exercise, and every girl or boy can develop at their own pace.

The competition and excitement of team sports are wonderful for many of our students, and individual work at the sports center is also possible. In the newly equipped sports therapy room, mats and large balls help kids work on spatial concepts, and as they tumble and execute gymnastic moves, they also learn to fall correctly, very important for a visually handicapped child. "We constantly remind them to utilize both sides of their bodies, and they strengthen all of their muscles in physical education class. These classes are also complemented by individual occupational therapy instruction twice weekly.

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*Students get good exercise while having fun*

## New Snoezelen or Multisensory Room at the Institute

A newly adapted room in the sports center at the Institute offers visitors a safe and comfortable environment to explore their own senses. This Snoezelen room can be instrumental in exploring a person's visual possibilities; moreover, the room employs the latest in technology to assist our students in their development with stimuli of light, color, tactile senses, aroma and



*Snoezelen room for multisensory stimulation*

movement. In this room, the Snoezelen concept (the name comes from two Dutch words for 'explore' and

'relax') can help the blind learn how to maximise residual or peripheral vision.

The stimuli in the room can also help a person to relax or alternatively be stimulated to his environment. It can promote relationships and communication between a client and caregiver while stimulating conversation. The room can help a child understand cause and effect as he or she controls the environment around

themselves. The newly refurbished room will be utilized to assist many students at the Institute.

## A Glimpse at One of the Institute's Employees Ariel Fuerte

Born in Buenos Aires, Fuerte studied sports training at the Wingate Institute, and began working at the JIB eighteen years ago as a life guard. His rapport with the students was immediate, and today he is a sports' educator for students and adults, and the Institute's sports co-ordinator for the visually handicapped. Fuerte's motivational skills are excellent, and he spends a good deal of time coaching the teams that will represent Israel all over the world.



*Ariel Fuerte*

"The Jewish Institute for the Blind is a wonderful organization with a dedicated staff that always puts the pupils first," Fuerte acknowledges. "It is an inspiring place to work, and I see a big emphasis on sport and self improvement here."

Fuerte notes that the young people at the Institute are very motivated, and over the years this enthusiasm has led to participation in sports activities that will represent Israel abroad in the paralympics.

Perhaps competitive sport for the blind grew out of rehabilitation, but today sports are not only for leisure but also enjoyment and physical fitness.

According to Fuerte, Israel's female goal ball team is ranked fifth place in the world, and "we hope to defend this position and even improve it in the upcoming games in South Korea in May". In addition to goal ball, Israel will also participate in judo, soccer, powerlifting, ten pin bowling and chess tournaments.

# Spotlights

## 🌸 Goal Ball team to South Korea for Championship Games

The International Blind Sports Association world games are being held this spring in Seoul, South Korea and Israel will be well represented. Thirty-eight participants will be representing Israel in May of 2015, and we wish them all luck. The female goal ball team is today ranked fifth in the world!

## 🌸 Purim activities

The festival of Purim involved a lot of costumes and masquerade this year. Students volunteered with seriously challenged children at ALEH in Jerusalem, and by giving to others their holiday was immensely improved.

## 🌸 Multisensory Playground Opens

A newly refurbished playground helps stimulate senses for children of all ages at the JIB. Our new playground provides the stimulus for all kinds of physical and sensory experiences, plus it is a great play space for young people of all ages.

## 🌸 Commemorative Book

Israeli author and journalist Menachem Michelson is working on a book that honors the first century of the Jewish Institute for the Blind. We look forward to the publication of this historical and interesting volume in the coming year.



*Enjoying musical activities at the new playground*



## Director's Corner

Just as the Institute is helping to put sports for the blind on the Israeli map, the Israeli delegation is making a splash on the international level. We are proud that Shabtai Deutsch, our Director of Community Services at the Institute, today represents Israel on the International Blind Sports Association, IBSA advisory committee, and our teams are represented in games all over the world. Decades ago, sports activities for the blind was given a push by Israel's Ministry of Defense, as many combat soldiers lost their sight in military operations. Fortunately, today eye injuries are much less common with the excellent equipment used by the Israeli military. The Jewish Institute for the Blind has picked up the reins for sports' education and excellence for the visually handicapped in sports today, and students are succeeding in raising the level of sports as well as their own self esteem.

We are proud to be able to further sports activities for the visually handicapped all over the country, and we see how sports can provide team spirit as well as great individual work. Regardless of whether we provide assistance for our blind and multi-handicapped population or sightless kids from all over the country, we are helping to form a social network as well as to promote independent skills.

May you and your family enjoy a beautiful spring and a happy and kosher Passover.

Chaim Reshelbach, Director

# Recent Visitors to the Institute



FRANCE

Mrs. Myriam Nathan, LaVarenne



UNITED STATES

Mrs. Judith Jelen and daughter, Connecticut  
Mr. Matthew Meisels, California



MEXICO

Mrs. Esther Cojab, Edo



PANAMA

Mr. Isaac Tarazi, Panama

## 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: 02-6599501/511



Enjoying Purim with school principal, Rachel Skrobish

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"It is important to repeat a routine many times so pupils understand what is expected of them," explains Eldar. In sports training, self discipline is learned, and the students strengthen their muscles while increasing their flexibility. The sports center is also open to the general public which helps to defer expenses while helping the pupils to be integrated into society. "Exercise builds strength, posture and good balance, and our visually handicapped students, as well as adults love the freedom of running

on the treadmill or working at their own pace".

In the afternoons and evenings the sports center is oftentimes utilized for practice sessions for the team sports that will represent Israel in the paralympic games. Not only is the equipment state of the art, but the educators work with all their heart as well as their personal dedication. It is this personal 'touch' that helps make the Jewish Institute for the Blind a one-of-a-kind educational institution.



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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

Summer vacation projects for the blind enable over 200 participants to enjoy vacation time profitably. Last summer, young people traveled to Israel's Galilee and Jezreel Valley as well as the Golan Heights for summer camp activities. These summer camp activities were made possible through the generous donations in memory of Mrs. Ilse Katz, by Advocates Robert Equey and Alain Köstenbaum, both of Geneva, Switzerland. Over 180 young people enjoyed summer activities and another group of 55 people celebrated their summer retreat at the campus of the JIB in Jerusalem.