

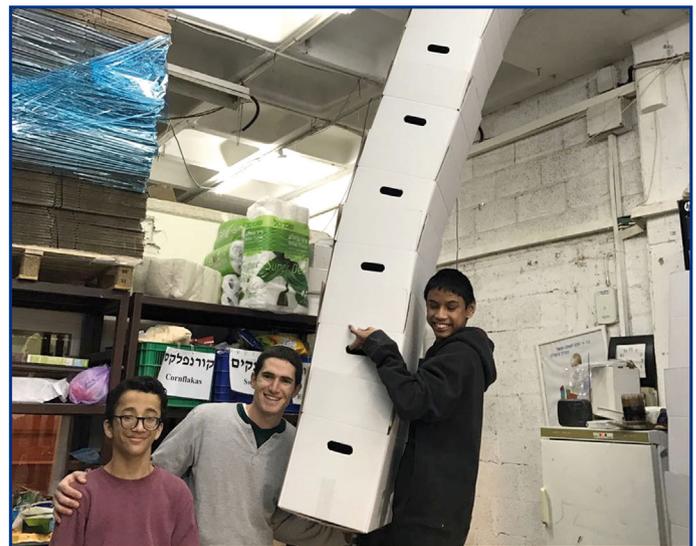


INSIGHT

news from Jewish Institute For The Blind, Jerusalem

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Community Involvement Grows at the Jewish Institute for the Blind



Students enjoy packing boxes for the needy, as part of their community service at the Institute

The importance of each individual's role in society is emphasized at the Jewish Institute for the Blind, and every student is encouraged to reach out through volunteer work or personal involvement in the community.

"Charity begins at home, and we try to ensure that every student is involved in the community of his peers at the Institute, as well as in the greater society in general," explains Rachel Skrobish, school principal at the JIB. "We believe that even our youngest pupils can learn to assist others and feel a part of the greater community." Regardless of whether a pupil helps a teacher in classroom activities or volunteers in the afternoons by packing and distributing food for the needy, they definitely feel a part of the community in which they live.

The Rambam, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, one of the most important Jewish scholars of the middle ages,

expounded greatly on charity. He explained that one of the most important ways to help the poor or needy was to assist them to become self sufficient. He also taught that the benefit of giving to others is so important that oftentimes the giver benefits even more than the one who receives. The students at the Institute are internalizing these precepts daily in their interactions with others and in their volunteer work at the Institute.

"S", a 16-year-old student at the JIB, loves her volunteer work at Chasdei Naomi, a non-profit organization in Jerusalem which distributes food to the needy. She joins classmates from the Institute in warehouses to pack food products weekly, and she is sometimes present for distribution. "I know how important our work is to the community, and I am glad we can help," she says. "Our volunteer work is my favorite activity of the week."

Jerusalem Day Celebrates Fifty Years of City's Reunification

This year on May 24th, Israel will celebrate fifty years since the reunification of Jerusalem. Yom Yerushalayim or Jerusalem Day observes the difficult battle in the Six-Day War which took place on June 5th, 1967, and the reunification of the city of Jerusalem which had been divided since 1948. (The holiday is observed on the 28th day of the Hebrew month of Iyar which falls this year on May 24th). Not only will our students enjoy tours of Jerusalem sites this spring, but they are already decorating the classrooms and hallways of the Institute with a Jerusalem motif, and they are busy studying about the city's history.

As part of the curriculum, students will learn about the connection of biblical and historical figures to Jerusalem, and a quiz will be held testing their knowledge of their capital city.



The Tower Of David

A Glimpse at One of the Institute's Employees Ortal Mahlouf

Noar Yachad, or Youth Together, is a national Israeli organization that unites blind and partially sighted young people from all over Israel. Most of these young people are quite independent despite their visual handicap, but they love the courses, seminars and tours that are offered, bringing together the visually handicapped from all over Israel. These young people are divided into two groups and include over 100 participants from 10 - 21 years of age, and they meet regularly for social and recreational activities.

Ortal Mahlouf participated in Noar Yachad as a young teen and has been an active member of the organization for over a decade. Born with albinism, she is visually impaired, but has an inner strength that constantly pushes her to new goals. The relationships she has



Ortal Mahlouf

developed through her years as a participant of Yachad have helped to shape her career. After graduating from high school, she served in the army with an intelligence unit, and upon completion, she studied social work at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. After graduation, while Ortal was looking for employment, she realized that working with Yachad could combine her newly acquired professional skills with an organization that she truly believed in.

"On my first Yachad seminar in Jerusalem I realized that socially as well as educationally, this was an organization that would help me to meet people with whom I could identify and understand," explains Ortal. "I made true friends from all over Israel, and now I am happy that I am able to give back to society as a co-ordinator for Noar Yachad."

Spotlights

♣ Paralympic Sport

The Paralympic Games were held in Rio de Janeiro in early September 2016, just as the summer Olympics ended. The blue and white flag of Israel flew proudly for the thirty athletes participating in eleven sports activities in Brazil. The Israeli women's goal ball team, including our graduates and Noar Yachad participants had an incredible showing, and they are ranked seventh place in the world. In a recent match with a Finnish team last month, the women's goal ball team reaffirmed their success and today are ranked fourth place in the European championship games.



Fast-paced action at goalball tournament in Rio de Janeiro at Paralympic games as Israel is ranked 7th place

♣ Tandem Biking in the Hills

In an exciting tandem bicycle competition, 40 cyclists with a sighted rider in the front and a blind or partially sighted rider in the rear recently tackled trails in the Judean Hills this spring. Not only was the bike ride exciting, the sports men and women were of top caliber and they had a great day in the beautiful spring weather.



Tandem cycling in the Judean Hills

♣ Chanukah Vacation at the JIB

Although the students leave the campus for a well earned vacation over Chanukah, this year the Institute was filled with activities. Not only was there a retreat for Noar Yachad participants, sportsmen and women also utilized the JIB's facilities for a chess tournament, goal ball playoffs and a coach's workshop.

Director's Corner



As I began my career at the Institute over forty years ago, the Jewish Institute of the Blind was in the throes of change. Not only did a new Israeli law provide for the integration of the blind and partially sighted into mainstream education, but the number of children affected by blindness was also decreasing through medical advances.

The Institute jumped at the challenge, forging a path to community involvement. It was decided that we will help those young people that come to us for their education and rehabilitation, and we will also bring our services to those that study and live at home.

Blind children and adults from all over Israel today are involved with programming, sports, seminars and learning experiences at the Institute in Jerusalem. Our students here do not sit in an ivory tower, but they are part of the greater community in every aspect.

In addition to the blind and partially sighted students who live and study at the JIB, students come to the Institute daily for after school activities, and the Institute serves as a hub of activity for the visually impaired throughout Israel who utilize the facilities. May we continue to serve this population to the best of our abilities.

Wishing you and your Family a happy and kosher Pesach Holiday.

Chaim Reshelbach, Director

Recent Visitors to the Institute



CANADA

Leslie & Sara Breiner, Ottawa



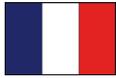
GERMANY

Mr. & Mrs. Ekkehard Fobbe, Berlin



UNITED STATES

Stan & Dianne Bekritsky, New York
Mr. Zev Berman, New York
Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Blatt, New Jersey
Mr. Leo Brandstatter, New Jersey
Mr. David Jelen, Connecticut



FRANCE

Mrs. Myriam Natan, LaVarenne



Purim at the Jewish Institute for the Blind

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



INsight

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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

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Meaningful Voluntary Service

Shaham is an acronym for Meaningful Voluntary Service, and that is the goal of dozens of young blind and partially sighted adults who are preparing now to volunteer for their military or national service in Israel. The Jewish Institute for the Blind and Noar Yachad have begun a partnership with the Ministry of Defense to create a program that helps to prepare young people for the trials and tribulations of army service.

According to co-ordinator Adva Huri, there may be obstacles along the way, but with the preparation they are given by Shaham, hopefully, these young people will have a rewarding military experience.

Huri herself is partially sighted, and not only did she complete her army service, but she was awarded Presidential recognition in 2004 on Israel Independence Day. We are now hoping to hear good news about more new recruits and their service they can contribute to their country in the Israeli Defense Forces.