



# INSIGHT

news from Jewish Institute For The Blind, Jerusalem

Insight – Volume 46 Number 88 Spring 2022

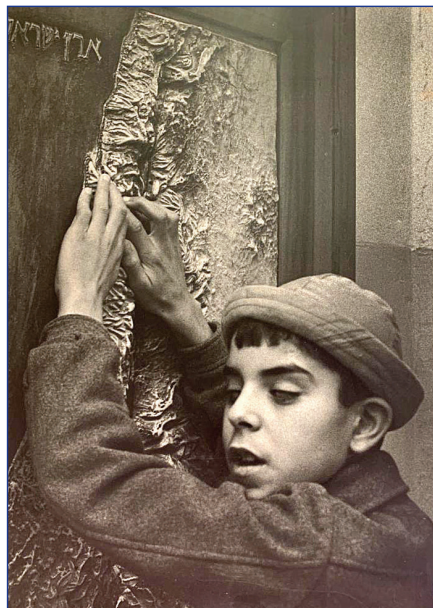
## Until 120... Looking to the Future with the Jewish Institute for the Blind

Yes, the traditional Jewish blessing for a birthday is 'until 120', a wish for longevity as well as health and strength for the year. As the Jewish Institute for the Blind reaches the momentous anniversary of 120 years of service in Jerusalem, we take this quote from Genesis 6:3 and look ahead.

Hopefully the Institute, one of the oldest schools for the blind in the world, will continue to look forward and assist Israel's blind and partially sighted for many years to come. In

addition to educating young students, the JIB offers inclusive programming as well as enriching activities for all ages today. Former students and graduates are involved in every aspect of society and contribute in every field. The Jewish Institute for the Blind had humble beginnings, and it has grown from minimal facilities in Jerusalem's Old City to a campus in the Kiryat Moshe neighborhood of Jerusalem.

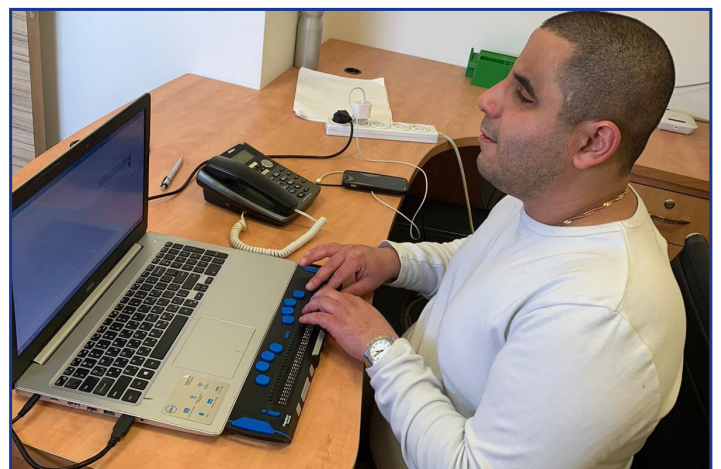
According to the history books, the Institute for the Blind was founded after Nachum Nathanson, a merchant in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City witnessed a young blind boy seriously injured in the alleys of the quarter by a camel that he could not see. As little or no education or daily programming was available for the blind, Nathanson immediately raised the question of a school and enlisted the help of the Jerusalem



*Historic photograph of student at the Institute over 60 years ago.*

scholar Rabbi Avraham Moshe Lunz who had lost his eyesight as a young man of 25. With the additional assistance of Dr. Yitzhak Krishevski, appeals were made all over the world for assistance for the establishment of an educational institution for the blind of the Land of Israel.

Years later, a large home was rented in the new city on the Street of the Prophets and blind youngsters came from all over the country. As education became more academic, and more students were attracted to the Institute, by 1936 a cornerstone was laid for the present building. Today, 120 years since it was established, the ideas of the Institute's founders have prevailed... "to instruct in appropriate skills so that self esteem will be raised so that blind youth will not depend on others for help but will themselves become helpful members of society".



*Haim Pessahov, blind since birth is director of volunteers at the Institute. He uses adaptive reading technology at work*

# Chanukkah Celebrations Kick Off 120th Anniversary

Acting within corona regulations, Chanukah celebrations were held at the Institute this year with an honored guest. Isaac Herzog, Israel's eleventh president visited the Institute with wife Michal, and jointly they lit the Chanukah candles on the fifth night of the festival with students and visitors.

In an address to students and guests, Herzog mentioned that he was proud

to be the fourth generation in his family to visit the JIB. His father, Chaim Herzog, also served as Israel's president between 1983-93 and visited the Institute, and his visit was preceded by both his father and grandfather.

Joining in this impressive evening was the Jewish Institute for the Blind Havarat Hazemer (choral ensemble) who performed with their director music instructor Aharon Deutsch.



*Israel President Isaac Herzog and wife Michal visit the Institute and light Chanukah candles with pupil Adi*

## *A Glimpse at One of the Institute's Employees*

### **= Aharon Deutsch = Music Instructor and Director of JIB Havarat Hazemer**

Teaching at the Institute requires a great deal of patience as well as love and dedication. Aharon Deutsch's love of music as well as his understanding of the students is visible to anyone that enters the music room at the Institute. Deutsch, himself a musician, plays piano and guitar, and his appreciation of his pupils has helped to create the talented and heartwarming chorale ensemble of the JIB. The three Institute students, Natan Yonaiyev, Uriel El-Necaveh and Angel Gadala sing and harmonize beautifully together and bring a spiritual touch to their newest recording 'Emunah' or faith. Certainly we will hear many more songs from this ensemble.



*Aharon Deutsch*

# Spotlights

❁ In honor of the Institute's 120th anniversary, a large Israel Independence Day happening at the JIB will include students and their families as well as many graduates who want to visit the Institute and catch up with old friends.

❁ A three-day tandem bike ride took place this spring as dozens of couples (including a sighted rider teamed with a blind rider) biked from Netanya on the Mediterranean coast to the Institute in Jerusalem.



*Tandem bikers at the starting line*

❁ Initiatives are being made for both Moroccan and Jordanian Paralympic Committees to host Israeli sports facilitators to learn and work together to further sport for the blind. We will welcome the cooperation and hope it will bring light to all of our neighbors.

# Director's Corner



We are excited as we enter our 120th year to report on developments at the Institute despite the hardships of corona. Now that spring is in the air in Jerusalem, outdoor activities are beckoning, and while the students are preparing for outings, we are welcoming more tourists to visit us at the Institute. Not only are Israeli as well as foreign visitors interested in the technological advances that we utilize here to help combat blindness, but they are also touched by the rich experience and dedication of our excellent staff. In late June the Institute will honor one of our former graduates, Israeli poet Erez Biton. Not only is Biton renowned as one of the country's outstanding poets, he talks about his blindness and education at the Institute as one of the focal points of his life. Biton will be presented with a letter of appreciation in our auditorium by Israeli Minister of Education Yifat Shasha-Biton. As we conclude this festival of Pesach, may I remind you that independence is one of the ideals that we remember from this holiday. The Jewish people moved from slavery to freedom, from a state of dependence to independence, the same independence that we are aiming for at the JIB. May you and your family have a wonderful holiday season.

*Shabtai Deutsch*

Shabtai Deutsch, Director

# Tradition of Dugo's Falafel

David (Dugo) Leitner was 14 when his town in Hungary was occupied by Nazi Germany and he was sent to Auschwitz. In 1945 as Auschwitz was liberated, he began the Death March with no food and freezing weather, walking for three days and fantasizing about his mother's Hungarian rolls.

Dugo survived, made it to Israel and years later tasted his first falafel. With its small, circular shape, it reminded him of his mother's rolls, and he began eating falafel yearly on January 18, commemorating the date he was freed. Dugo's story has been publicized in Israel, and the students of the JIB are proud to eat falafel with him on January 18 to honor him and so many other Holocaust survivors.



*Students at the Institute eat falafel to commemorate Dugo's liberation from Auschwitz*

# A letter from Sarah Felsenthal, new Executive Director of the U.S. office:

I am excited to have recently joined the team at Jerusalem Institute for the Blind/Beit Chinuch Ivrim, as the Executive Director of the U.S. Office. It is a great honor to work for an organization that has a 120-year-old track record of educating, enriching and empowering visually impaired children, teens, and young adults.

Everyday we successfully redefine blindness as a challenge that can be overcome and cultivate a world of acceptance and inclusivity in which all blind people can be equal and active members and participants.

Our impact is transformative and reflected in the confident and happy demeanor of our treasured students. Most children when they first enter our school are fearful, insecure and totally dependent on others for their survival. They emerge confident, hopeful and independent and ready to pursue a meaningful



*Sarah Felsenthal*

occupation and become contributing members of society. We believe that life is more than just mere existence, which is why we elevate and empower our dear students to dream big and reach for the stars.

It goes without saying that we could not achieve any of this without the strong partnership and continuous support of our generous benefactors. Your commitment and devotion to empowering visually impaired children is inspiring.

We are deeply grateful for your support and could not do this without your partnership. We look forward to continuing to work together to make a transformative

impact on the lives of visually impaired children, teens and young adults.

Wishing you every blessing and good health in the year ahead  
Sarah Felsenthal

## 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



*Musical director Aharon Deutsch*

*accompanies the choral ensemble at the Institute*

*(left -rt: Deutsch, Angel Gedala, Uriel El-Nacaveh and Natan Yonaiyev)  
Shachar at the Institute*

With great sorrow, the Jewish Institute for the Blind  
announces the death of

## Leo Brandstatter

Executive Director of Jerusalem Institute for the  
Blind in the U.S.A.

Leo gave untiring support for the Jewish Institute for the Blind  
and served as a dedicated Executive Director for many years.

We send condolences to his dear wife and family.



# 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@ivrim.org.il

www.jewishblind.org