

What's New... In WIZO ?



February, 2014

Dear Chaverot,

This edition of 'What's New in WIZO' is the first since the Meeting of Representatives 2014 was held in Tel Aviv, from 19th-23rd January, 2014. The Meeting of Representatives was a golden opportunity for the leadership of the Federations to come together, with the World WIZO Executive, share successes and challenges, and to learn from one another, and from professionals.

However well informed we may be, and however many articles we read about Israel, nothing can prepare us for actually seeing everything that is being done before our very eyes, despite wars, poverty and cultural differences in our tiny country. We visited our WIZO projects, and learned about the work that is being carried out under the WIZO banner. We were invited to the Knesset, where we were addressed by the Speaker of the House, Mr. Yuli Edelstein, and heard the views of Knesset Members on the importance of women's leadership.

During these few crowded days we sat around a lot of tables, held positive round table meetings and informal meetings with the professional teams. There were many fruitful, worthwhile exchanges of views. The results of these valuable deliberations will form the basis of many of our decisions in the future.

I felt honored, proud and confident to be part of such a caring, motivated and perceptive fraternity of leaders, and knowing that the future of our amazing WIZO is in such capable hands.

With warm regards.

Rivka Lazovsky

Prof. Rivka Lazovsky
Chairperson,
World WIZO Executive



Balancing Career and Family: No Longer Just a Mother's Problem

Ahead of Family Day on January 31, WIZO held a special conference to address the difficulty of both being a responsible parent while advancing in one's career in Israel and to offer solutions to the widespread problem. The event was hosted by Prof. Rivka Lazovsky, Chairperson of the World WIZ|O Executive and attended by MK Eitan Cabel, Gil Erez of the Ministry of Economy, and World WIZO Chairperson Professor Rivka Lazovsky. The conference also featured a panel of parents from all walks of life who detailed their struggles and who expressed their frustration with the work place culture and the job market today.

Twenty years ago, the question of how to balance career and family was for the most part directed exclusively at working mothers, earning the ire of women's advancement advocates who gritted their teeth at the fact that only women - not men - were expected to grapple with the challenging work-family juggling act.

Today, the situation has changed. Mother's Day has evolved into Family Day, a change reflective of the fact that it is no longer only mothers who need a day of special thanks for the sacrifices they make for their children, but also fathers, who want to play a larger role in their children's education. While there is some cause for optimism in the fact that the challenge of balancing work and family has finally reached fathers as well as mothers, the picture of Israeli family life today is worrisome, reflecting overworked parents who can barely make ends meet, let alone be active figures in their children's lives. The conference also featured a panel of Israeli parents

Chairperson Rivka Lazovsky and MK Eitan Cabel called on the government and the public, and private market, to join forces in order to facilitate more family orientated working places. This is done by allowing more flexible working hours, as well as working from home, focusing on the productivity and not on the number of hours, not holding meetings after 1.00 pm and only twice a week so that time is spent with the children, and allowing parents to leave early.



WIZO Early Age Division

The Early Age Division is tuned to what is happening outside the gates of the Day Care Centers, especially the growing dangers on the road. Unfortunately the high number of car accidents in Israel continues to wreck families and according to data forty two children are killed every year on the roads. **The Early Age Division has developed a program in cooperation with the Green Light Association,** called " Road safety as a way of life " in the hope that we can make a difference. The program has already begun as a pilot scheme in sixteen Day Care Centers.



זהירות בדרכים



On Good Deeds Day in Britain, **six youngsters, who are spending their gap year between school and university in Israel, came to the Helene and Nadine Multi Purpose WIZO Day Care Center, sponsored by WIZO Germany, in Jerusalem** to contribute their good deeds.

They were given a review of the activities of WIZO in the Day Care Centers, describing the different types of Day Care Centers, the significance of Multi Purpose Day Care Centers, the work of WIZO volunteers in junior schools and the afternoon centers, our schools and youth villages, our activities with women, our activities in the UN, etc.



The boys and girls then joined the children in the kindergarten class, and it was here that the fun began. As the kindergarten teacher said, 'Play knows no language', The Director of the Day Care Center explained that for most of the children, this opportunity to see the youngsters, especially the males amongst them, was very special. They rarely receive any attention from the men in their lives, many of whom are non existent, and others who are short tempered. They hung on to the visitors, not wanting to let go of them.

At the end of the visit one of the Volunteers wrote the following:

'This afternoon has opened my eyes to many different organizations around Israel that help children to achieve more than they would have otherwise. It makes me proud of this country that brings out the potential of all the children we met this afternoon. I also noticed the different ethnicities within the classroom, showing that Israel is really making a step towards co-existence from an early age.'

On 21:11:12 an exercise was organized by the Home Guard, **on coping during an earthquake**, which, can occur at any time in Israel, with little or no warning. The countrywide exercise also included educational institutions. WIZO Day Care Centers participated in the exercise at the national level, making use of the conclusions that were learned after the Lebanon war. **Although, as opposed to an emergency situation involving war, an earthquake comes as a surprise, without warning.** Conclusions are being drawn up from the exercise.

Each night, on its money program, Channel Two sends out a well known personality, Menachem Horovitz, to visit an aspect of Israeli society. **Menachem visited a WIZO Day Care Center**, to find out more information on the subject of carers in Day Care Centers in Israel. He interviewed the staff in the WIZO Day Care Center in Kiryat Bialik, and learned about the values and professionalism in the WIZO Day Care Center.

In an atmosphere of Tu B'Shvat vegetables which are familiar to children and can be used in a salad, were planted, so that the children could watch them grow and eventually eat them, thus encouraging the children to eat vegetables.





WIZO Education Division:



WIZO School and Youth Village, Hadassim, sponsored by Canadian Hadassah WIZO, received a letter from the Ministry of Education, Department of Science and Technology, congratulating the school on its high results in the Art and Design Matriculation Examination. Whereas the country average was 73.57, the students at **WIZO Hadassim achieved an average of 87.5. Kol Hakavod!**

The WIZO Youth Center in Afula, sponsored by WIZO Holland and WIZO uk, is a vibrant center! 50 young individuals from across the country came to perform in a long action-packed musical event. During the day they played together, attended lectures, performed and took part in special workshops, on subjects such as composing and writing. One of the shows was dedicated to the fight against drugs in Afula, planned in cooperation with the Israel Anti-Drug Authority. Over 40 musicians and singers appeared in eight groups; the bands worked extremely hard to perform a show of original songs in different musical styles: middle-eastern, rock, jazz and hard rock. Despite the rain and cold weather conditions over 150 youth enjoyed the show.





For the fourth consecutive year **the numbers of students from WIZO Nir Haemek, sponsored by WIZO Argentine, and WIZO USA, enrolling into the Israel Defense Forces, has reached 100%**. This is the result of the efforts of the school over a long period of time. The school has been congratulated by the Enrolment Office of the IDF in Tiberias, the Afula Municipality and the Gilboa regional authority on the high standard of the enlisting soldiers from the youth village.

The Minister of Education in Congo, and his wife came to WIZO Nir Haemek to get to know and learn about a youth village with a farm. They visited classrooms and were very impressed by the mechanics and electricity classes, as well as the dairy.



A moving ceremony was held to affix the mezuzah at the Mahut (Empowerment and Insight) Center in WIZO Nachlat Yehuda, sponsored by WIZO Switzerland.

The Mahut program has been adopted by educational divisions in Municipalities and local authorities, throughout the country, in a number of schools. World WIZO encourages the opening of Mahut centers for students with ADHD . The Mahut Center operates according to a holistic approach aiming for excellent achievements, on the one hand, and realizing one's personal potential, on the other.

Also in **WIZO Nachlat Yehuda**, a **swearing in ceremony** took place for all seventh grade students in both the dormitory, and the school. Since the seventh grade is their first year in the youth village, the seventh graders were sworn in to the State of Israel and the values of the youth village: work, studies and a good society. At the end of the swearing in the students saw themselves as part of the WIZO Nachlat Yehuda family.



WIZO Israel



An unusual activity took place in the **WIZO Shelter for Battered Women** prior to the **International Day for the Prevention of Violence** against women when an Israeli website dedicated a special section on their website for publishing letters written by domestic violence victims to their abusers. The victims - who are women residing in WIZO's battered women's shelters - found comfort in writing these letters to their abusers, not only for the opportunity to confront the men who wreaked havoc on their lives and the lives of their children, but for the opportunity to shed light on the larger issue of domestic violence. Here is a translation of one of these letters.

To the Father of my Children:



When I first met you, I thought I'd met a beautiful angel and I fell in love in an instant. There was magic in you that I hadn't ever seen in other people.

The weeks passed and I was blind with love, I thought you were my entire world and I didn't notice any of your faults. I became pregnant and I hoped that together we would start a small loving family, and all of this despite the fact that you left me until I was nearly six months pregnant, confused, and not knowing what to do. A few more months passed and suddenly out of nowhere you said to me, "Come on, let's get married". It all happened so fast.

The most difficult moment was after the wedding, when I gave birth to our son and brought him home. You decided he wasn't your son and that I was just trying to force you into fatherhood. Then the violence started. And after two difficult years of this terrible violence and a lot of thought, I decided that I don't have anything left to lose and the life I'm living isn't normal. After suffering all kinds of violence and abuse at your hands - physical, financial, emotional, verbal and even sexual - something inside of me told me, 'You don't deserve this. You have to get out of this.'

And really, in that instant, I didn't see anything but my children, and I said to myself that I don't want to leave my children as orphans, so I forced myself to get up - despite the fear and the difficulty - and I went to the police. A week later you went to jail.

It was really hard for me to do this, but I knew that if I didn't get up and leave, most likely I would never have lived to have this opportunity to write this letter.

Today I'm in a different place, a place that helps me and protects me. And despite everything, I wish you luck.

Women residing in WIZO's battered women's shelters experienced a day of beauty and pampering at WIZO House in Tel Aviv. The day included manicures and pedicures, as well as individualized style and fashion advice from a famous stylist. Not only did this day offer these women some distraction from the daily challenges of starting over after escaping from domestic violence, it gave them an opportunity to invest in themselves as individuals and build self-confidence.



WIZO Israel held a fundraising event at the Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv with the showing of the premiere of the musical "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to



WIZO has introduced an initiative in the Knesset to launch a special, designated court for domestic violence. For women escaping from the vicious cycle of domestic violence, facing a convoluted court system and a protracted criminal process against their abusive partners is nothing short of a nightmare. Unfortunately, as it stands today, this is exactly the reality in Israel.

WIZO hosted a special 'One Family, One Judge' initiative in the Knesset. The proposal seeks to launch a single, designated court for domestic violence to streamline the legal process by integrating the various parties and courts involved - under the supervision of one judge. Furthermore, judges presiding over these designated courts will receive special training on the nature of domestic violence.

In Conclusion:



We often complain that the media focus on Israel is too negative, always concentrating on conflict and conquest. But we spend so much time playing defense that sometimes we fall into the same mindset. It is when we are in Israel, that we are made aware of full context of the country's daily life—the joy as well as the sorrow, the accomplishment as well as the conflict.

Consider that Israel has more companies listed on the NASDAQ than all of the European countries combined. Consider that in the recent global financial crisis, Israel has fared especially well—and that Israelis already have universal health insurance.

Consider that universal military service in Israel fosters a sense of national belonging and also gives young people heavy responsibilities that most people their age around the world never have to shoulder. Delaying university until after army service means that students are more mature and better able to take advantage of their education. Israel views immigration as the highest value and a boon to the nation. The value of questioning and debate in the army, the university, business and politics are deeply rooted in our Jewish culture.

The story of Israel's miracle is intertwined with the story of WIZO. We have played, and will keep playing, a major role in the nation's growth and development.

When you see nothing but headlines with bad news, make sure you look beneath the surface at the full picture of daily life in Israel. Remember the role that WIZO is playing - that is the real headline.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rivka Lazovsky". Below the signature is a horizontal line with a small upward curve at the right end.

Prof. Rivka Lazovsky,
Chairperson,
World WIZO Executive

