

WIZO Review



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Autumn 2014 ■ No. 335



Israel Under Attack
WIZO Stands at Israel's Side

Road Safety for Toddlers
WIZO Leads the Way

There and Back
A Story of True Zionism



Dear Chaverot,

Many of the articles in this magazine are about people, special people, WIZO people.

This summer, during Operation Protective Edge, WIZO opened its doors to give shelter and peace of mind to hundreds of families from the south of the country, while our staff and volunteers all mobilized in

different ways. Read all about it on **pages 6-11**.

Many people talk in despair of the 'younger' generation – many of whom assimilate and have no interest in and certainly don't support Israel. But, in this issue we have two most inspiring articles by young American true Zionists – both 'members' of the WIZO family.

Samuel Falic is one special young man. Son of WIZO USA Co-President Jana Falic, instead of going to college immediately after school, he chose to volunteer in the IDF. Read his emotional speech at a Campaign dinner in Miami (**page 12**).

Zohar Friedman, our Assistant Editor had been in Israel only three years when she started working for the magazine in May 2013. Wrestling with her new life and missing her family and 'old life' in the US, to our sorrow, she announced in the early summer that she would be returning to the US for further study, emphasizing how hard a decision it was to return.

Imagine our delight, when, barely a month after leaving, she contacted me and said, 'I am coming back, I just don't feel any connection any more with the country here and the people. **I miss Israel terribly!**' Read her 'Here and There' story on **page 20**.

Shula Shrem, at 1.8 meters tall, beautiful and elegant, president of WIZO Mexico reveals how much WIZO means

to her and the Mexican Jewish community, where there is virtually no assimilation; she also outlines her dreams for the future of WIZO Mexico. (**page 14**)

Miki Doron is a well-known WIZO figure both in Israel and abroad, where he often conducts workshops at conferences. How many know that he is a graduate of WIZO Hadassim, having arrived in Israel alone, as a 15-year-old from Iran. Read Miki's inspirational story on **page 16**.

It's never too young to learn about road safety. WIZO's Early Age Division has a special programme for the toddlers in our day care centres. (**page 18**.)

Many families in Israel cannot afford to give their children a bar/bat mitzvah celebration. Some of our WIZO branches in Israel try to provide parties and religious ceremonies for needy families in their communities. Others are sponsored by federations. Read one such story on **page 19**. See also a new bar/bat mitzvah scheme being offered by the Organization and Tourism Division on **page 25**.

As usual, WIZO Around the World is as fascinating as always; it is a delight and inspiration to see the diverse ways groups gather together to raise funds for WIZO projects.

In case you missed our Spring/Summer magazine, it was only 'online' so please take a look on our World WIZO website: www.wizo.org/wizo-review

Wishing you all a Happy and healthy New Year and a year of peace for the State of Israel.

Enjoy reading!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ingrid".

Ingrid Rockberger
Editor

CELEBRATE YOUR CHILD/GRANDCHILD'S BAR/BAT MITZVAH IN ISRAEL - THE WIZO WAY

To include: volunteering at WIZO projects, sightseeing (of course!) -
and special programming especially for you and your family

For further information contact your local federation or
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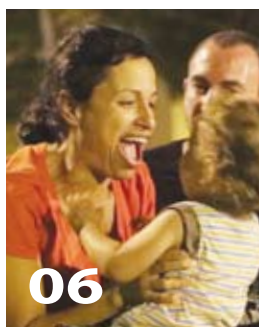
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Cover photo by Eli Dasa: Evacuees from the South at WIZO Nir Ha'emek Youth Village

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President's Desk

My Dear Chaverot



I write this column, as the proud President of a wonderful movement.

On the eve of the new Jewish year, it is time to look back on the year that has ended. It began with such promise: the national budget allocated more funds to social issues – health, welfare and education; there was hope for tax reforms that would benefit the middle class and expectations for better opportunities for first-time home purchasers.

However, the year turned out to be very different: the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority ended with no results, other than the release of Palestinian terrorists; Kassam rockets, Katyushas, stabbings and bomb attacks launched by the Palestinians continued throughout the year; the fighting in Syria spilt over to Israel's northern border, the kidnapping and brutal murders of Naftali Fraenkel (16), Gilad Shaer (16,) and Eyal Yifrah (19) shocked the nation, and finally the Protective Edge Campaign.

Security again tops Israel's national priorities and will probably do so for the next year or so, again at the expense of the social issues and the underprivileged. There is also talk of a slowdown in Israel's economy.

The Jewish world experienced a rise in anti-Semitism, anti-Israel demonstrations and BDS due to a rise in ultra-nationalist political parties and effective pro-Palestinian propaganda that worked against Israel. The past month has seen more support for Israel with Greece, France and Germany openly combatting anti-Semitism.

Throughout the year, WIZO continued with its traditional work with diligence and devotion while keeping an eye on the national pulse because when ***the going gets tough – WIZO chaverot rise to the occasion.*** No task is too big or complicated for WIZO.

When the fire on Israel's South began to intensify and the necessity for shelters and protection became evident – WIZO federations answered the call. When residents of the South needed a safe haven during the Protective Edge Campaign WIZO opened its youth villages for them. Words and praise cannot begin to describe the immediate response from the federations to the Emergency Campaign, nor the hard work of our WIZO educational staff in the villages who gave up their summer vacation to help; nor the volunteers who as always hosted families and helped the youth villages.

With the help of our devoted staff and volunteers, the protected day care centres in the South also operated non-stop and a special parents' hotline was open 24 hours a day,

Throughout the year, WIZO Israel, the World WIZO Early Age and World WIZO Education Divisions and the other WIZO departments continued their work to develop educational programmes and aid for those in need.

The evacuees are still singing WIZO's praise and it received much media coverage. You can all be proud of our WIZO movement and what it provides in days of normality and in days of crisis.

No matter what happens - one thing will never change – WIZO's commitment to make the world a better place. Yeshar Coah, Kol HaCavod. I wish you all a happy, healthy, productive and peaceful year.

Tova Ben-Dov, President, World WIZO

Affectionately,

Tova Ben-Dov
President World WIZO

Chairperson's Column



Dear Chaverot,

Summer is over. Looking at the calendar, we are already celebrating the holidays. We are already in the New Year 5775. It is autumn. Where did the summer go? Where were the leisure activities, the trips, the visits to swimming pools, the friends who planned to visit?

They did not happen - and why? Because after incessant rocket fire from Gaza, which we evacuated in 2005, and the murder of three young Israeli students, the Israeli government decided 'Enough is enough' - and retaliated.

As Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked on numerous international TV channels: "If rockets were being fired non-stop on New York, on London, on Paris, what would **you** do? Israel has the right to defend herself."

It is pretty hard to plan anything when you have only 15 seconds to get to safety. What can you do in 15 seconds? Not so much, but I'm not complaining - those who live around the Gaza periphery area have just **seven** seconds to seek safety.

I look back in wonder, in amazement and in awe at the role that we, in WIZO, played. With the opening of the Operation Protective Edge campaign, we began to provide shelter in our WIZO youth villages for the population from the South who had to escape from the ongoing rocket fire. We comforted them, nurtured them, and provided them with everything they needed.

As we in Israel were going through the physical trauma, you in the Diaspora were sharing the trauma with us. Many of the leaders of our WIZO federations, besides being WIZO leaders are also the cornerstone of Zionist and Jewish activities in their own countries. The latest anti-Semitic backlash in most of the world, especially in Europe, brought about a 'closing of ranks' amongst the federations. You shared news and experiences, your fears about the safety of the Jews in your communities.

It was a time filled with incredible emotions.

Each and every one of you joined our effort without thinking twice, and asked how you could help us in Head Office, insisting that we turn nobody away and provide shelter for whoever needs it. We can be so proud of ourselves and of one another. We joined hands, rolled up our sleeves and did what had to be done. It was one of our finest hours!

We are now in the middle of a ceasefire. Will it hold? Who knows? This war or operation, as the government called it, was one of the longest wars our country has known except for the War of Independence. Negotiations are still before us for a lasting peace. One thing is clear - the rockets must end forever.

As uncertainty swirls around us, we carry on with our lives, with our dreams and we say our prayers. Our prayers are for peace, for normalcy, to be able to continue to build up the Jewish people, the land of Israel, according to the values that have been handed down from generation to generation.

We all share a common destiny, and we join hands in hope and by giving:

מי ייתן ואלוהים ישמור על הצבא שלנו שהוא יתן המנהיגים שלנו את היכולת לעשות את הבחירות הנכונות כדי להביא ביטחון ושקט לעם שלנו

'May God continue to watch over our army and may He give our leaders the ability to make the right choices to bring security and quiet to our nation.'

With warm regards,

Rivka Lazovsky

Prof. Rivka Lazovsky
Chairperson
World WIZO Executive

World WIZO Executive Resident in Israel

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Special Projects
Tricia Schwitzer

WIZO in Israel Plays a Vital Role in **Operation Protective Edge**

Do Not Turn Anyone Away

This was the response from WIZO federations around the world to a letter sent to them by Rivka Lazovsky, Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive, explaining the high cost of WIZO's role in housing evacuees from the South in WIZO facilities

Ruth Radberg and Ingrid Rockberger



All the photos illustrating this article are of evacuees from the South enjoying peace and tranquility at WIZO facilities.

On the 9th July 2014, Tel Aviv, the city that never stops, came to a grinding halt as code red alert sirens shrieked through central Israel, alerting incoming missile fire. The sirens were followed by a number of muffled blasts, the incoming missiles being intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defence system. The rockets that had been falling for some 14 years in the villages and kibbutzim close to Gaza had now arrived in Tel Aviv, as well as Jerusalem, towns in central Israel – and as far north as Zichron Yaacov.

'Which child, out of my four children, do I grab and run with to safety?' was the heartbreaking plea of a mother torn with the decisions that she is being forced to make when the siren sounds outside her home and she has just 15 seconds to reach shelter.

Our telephones in WIZO began to ring constantly as local authorities, the Home Front Command and private citizens searched for venues to send evacuees from the areas which were under the worst rocket fire.

We began to open up our youth villages and facilities, which were not within the radius of rocket fire in order to provide shelter.

WIZO youth villages

Five hundred and forty children and staff from villages in the south, who were in summer camps, immediately transferred to WIZO Hadassim Children and Youth Village. Originally, 900 were accepted but it was decided to send the younger children home. We were given two hours' notice of their arrival.

Some of the women and their children from WIZO's battered women's shelter in Ashdod were also given shelter at Hadassim.

Late at night 20 people, from Kfar Aza, next to Gaza, which had been under continual rocket fire for weeks, came to WIZO Nir Ha'emek Youth Village for shelter, and for a respite from the tension. The next day they were joined by 100 more residents from the same kibbutz, while WIZO Nahalal Youth Village prepared to absorb 120 people from Kibbutz Mfalsim also near the Gaza border. They were soon joined by an additional 41 people from Kibbutz Erez.

Sixty people from Kibbutz Yachini were reported on their way to WIZO Hadassim.

This was just the beginning...

The walls of our WIZO youth villages seemed to be stretching to absorb all those who needed help and shelter.

WIZO opens its doors

During the following three weeks WIZO opened its doors to hundreds of residents of the South providing them with a

Sleeping and eating facilities had to be provided for the evacuees – many of whom arrived just with the clothes they were wearing. We were hosting children, babies and adults up to the age of 80 – all with their different needs.

Immediately, donations from individuals and companies around Israel came flocking in: clothing, toiletries, toys and games for the children.

We all hoped the war would only be for a short time – little did we think it would last 50 days.

When we realised the evacuees in the youth villages would be staying for some time, we started to set up activities, and counselling groups and sessions for both parents and children. In many cases, only the mother and children arrived from the families. The fathers were either fighting in Gaza, or some stayed behind to guard and care for the village and kibbutz facilities. All this, of course, added extra pressure to the mothers and children.

As more and more requests were made, mattresses were brought in and many people slept on the floor. Indeed, many took their mattresses outside and slept on the grass.



corner where they could feel safe, where they could spend their day without sirens or the sounds of falling debris, where they did not have to fear for their lives nor for the lives of their children.

But what did this mean? The schools were some three weeks into the summer vacation, when the majority of the children were at their own homes as were the teachers and other staff, some taking well-earned vacations with their own families. Summer vacation time is when all the WIZO youth villages are checked and inspected, and repairs and refurbishments are made for the next school year.

All this was put on hold; without batting an eyelid, teachers, counsellors, cooks, cleaners flocked back to the schools.

When asked why they did this, they replied that it was just so wonderful to sleep peacefully and feel the fresh air around them.

Mentally challenged residents

WIZO was approached by the Emergency Services Division of the Ministry of Education to provide shelter for 150 mentally challenged residents from the Ashkelon area. They were made comfortable at WIZO Gan VaNof in Petach Tikva.

Many of them have serious mental challenges, frequent outbursts, no self or physical control, and had to be taken by hand when the siren sounded. They were very frightened, and after they left, the youth village had to face a big clean-up and repairs to damage.

Beit Heuss

Thirty-five people, who still live in 'caravillas' in Nitzanim after being evacuated from Gush Katif, were hosted at Beit Heuss over the first weekend. As they were ready to leave Beit Heuss on Sunday morning, they were rushed into the shelter following a barrage of rocket fire over the central area. They were followed by 13 single-parent families from the Ashkelon municipal area. The Ashkelon local authority then asked Beit Heuss to host an additional 39 people. WIZO Bet Heuss was at full capacity as another four people from Shaar Hanegev joined the evacuees already staying there.

Various activities were organised for the new residents of Beit Heuss, including leisure and counselling sessions. Some people stayed there for short periods of time, others for longer.



Early Age Division

Unbelievable pressure was put on the staff of the Division – with instant decisions having to be made as the situation changed daily. To cope with the avalanche of calls, the hot-line for parents extended its hours.

Day care centres within a 40 km. radius of the Gaza Strip were immediately closed, except the rocket proof centre in Sderot and the day care centres in Gan Yavne and Barzilai hospital in Ashkelon, which went over to Code Red footing so that the staff could carry on dealing with casualties without worrying about their children. Even these day care centres had to restrict the number of children, so the staff could get the children to safety when a code red alert sounded.

In other areas of the country, day care centres remained open as usual but various restrictions were put in place, e.g. the children were not allowed outside. Alternative premises were sought for those day care centres without adequate shelters.

Although all the day care centre staff were amazing, many of them had sons and other family members fighting in Gaza, and it was extremely difficult for some of them to function properly.

WIZO Israel

On orders of the Home Front Command, WIZO Israel had to close many of its branches in the South. Volunteers were mobilized all over the country to help where possible. They sent parcels to the soldiers, organised clothing from the second-hand shops for the evacuees and volunteered in the day care centres which were open, to augment the staff.

Many of the afternoon centres, operated by WIZO Israel were either closed or relocated to other premises with better security facilities.

Media

The Israeli media – radio, television, newspapers – were eager to know about the welfare of the evacuees and interviews with some of them in our WIZO facilities were constantly being broadcast.

Head Office

Those of us coming to work and volunteer at WIZO's Head Office just prayed every day that we would not be caught 'on the road' on our way to or from our homes. But, of course, this happened, and like all Israeli citizens, we complied with the orders of the Home Command, got out of our cars and took the best shelter we could find on the roadside. And when sirens went during the day, we filed down to the shelter in the basement of WIZO Headquarters. As soon as the danger was over, we quietly went back to work.

WIZO and Israel are one

Many articles have been written about how all the Israeli people came together as one during this operation, possibly more than ever before. There is no doubt in a small country as this, we are all one family – every one of us mourns the death of every soldier as if he is a member of our own family. And WIZO is part of this family – always rising to the occasion and being one of the first to react and offer help – and due to our amazing network of members and volunteers across the country, WIZO is always there: **WIZO stands at Israel's side.**

Extracts from letters of thanks received from evacuees housed in WIZO facilities during Operation Protective Edge

To the Amazing Staff of Beit Heuss from Ashkelon residents

Thank you for the moments of peace and quiet

Thank you that instead of hearing panic and fear we heard the sound of serenity

Thank you that instead of running into shelters in case rockets fall upon us we could go outside on a run with our children

Thank you that instead of hearing the cries of our children, this Shabbat the cries were of joy and happiness

Thank you for receiving us so warmly

From Yifat, Michal, Omer and Noam, Kibbutz Or HaNer

When the reality is hard, complicated and challenging- it is during these times that we discover fragments of light and of beauty. It is these fragments that enable you to rise every morning, to get yourself together, and to begin to function.

During this Protective Edge campaign, you are the fragments of light.

We arrived here 'just' for a weekend respite, to recover from the noise and the fears, we brought very little with us, as we knew that we were here just for the weekend. But the warm welcome and the caring that we received here made us realize, very quickly, that to remain here is the best thing that we could do for ourselves, and our children.

Our stay in Beit Heuss gave us, and other families a calm routine, far away from the place that they so love and miss. It gave our children the opportunity to be with other familiar faces from the kibbutz, from the kindergartens and basketball courts.

We parents had the chance to be with friends, to share, to support.

You gave us the chance to do all this – thank you.

We thank you so very much, words are inadequate to bring to you our appreciation.

Looking forward to quieter times and a quick return to routine.

Letter from Odelia Wanger, Kibbutz Or Haner.



Dear WIZO,

Seven years ago on Succot, 30 rockets were fired at Sderot and the settlements around Gaza. We had just finished our festive dinner at my parents' house, and were walking towards our home. I already felt uneasy, and I complained to my parents for making supper in the succah, which had no protection, instead of in the house.

Whilst we were walking, the siren started wailing, and we could hear the rockets in the distance. My son was in his buggy. On the fourth boom I realized how close the rockets were. I took off my heeled shoes and pulled my baby out of his buggy. I began to panic and shouted, 'help me, help me'. Everyone was in their shelters and no one heard me.

I heard a huge bang near me, my husband shouted at me to run quicker, but I stood in shock, holding the baby and the empty buggy. I then ran into the garage in one of the locked houses, leaving the buggy outside. I folded myself over my baby, holding him close to my breast, trapped between two cars.

There was a huge boom, I held my son close and saw smoke all around me. The buggy was torn to pieces, mixed with shrapnel from the rocket.

People appeared from nowhere, an ambulance arrived and they saw that my baby has blood on his legs and arms. I look at myself; nothing has happened to me, and then my father sees that blood is pouring out of Tal's arm. I realize that the blood on my baby was the blood of my husband. Tal was taken to hospital. Eventually, he would need an operation on his wrist.

During the following seven years I was treated for trauma in Sderot.

Today I am living in a home that we built in Kibbutz Or Haner. We have two children, Nehorai, 9, and Shira who is four and a half. During times of deterioration in the security situation, when the red siren alerts increase, my fears and panic increase accordingly.

When the Protective Edge Campaign began, the army set up camps around our kibbutz.

The noise of rockets increased and I could not stand it – the siren, the IDF bombing from the air, the interception of the Iron Dome, rockets that were fired without end, night and day. My panic level increased from day to day.

I was lucky that our Crisis Centre suggested that we go to Beit Heuss for a few days of respite. To me, the three weeks I have spent here, in Beit Heuss, have been a gift, a gift of calm and love.

The warmth of the staff, the hugs we received when we arrived, the wide range of activities that Beit Heuss donated to us, and to our children, all meant that we could rest from the terrible period that we have gone through and return with renewed strength.

I was not aware of WIZO activities before today and I thank you, from the bottom of my heart for the wonderful things you are doing.

May you have the strength to continue your special work.



Thank you

WIZO thanks its *chaverot around the world*

For your rapid response to the emergency in Israel. Due to your help, WIZO opened its doors for hundreds of people who escaped the falling rockets. We were empowered by your words of support on the social media and via e-mail.

WIZO thanks its *chaverot in Israel*

For opening your hearts and your pockets. For giving up your time to help families in their time of need. Thanks to your efforts, families who had no income due to the situation were cared for. You set an example of what it means to be committed WIZO women.

WIZO thanks its *staff*

For taking care, and giving love to the families. Whether hosting them in the North or caring for them in the South. Vacations were cancelled, plans changed – you all gave of yourselves beyond the call of duty. We are proud of all that you did during Operation Protective Edge.

WIZO thanks you *all*

For coming together, affirming the strength of the movement; for providing the helping hand Israeli society needed when the missiles were falling, and for selflessly giving of yourselves to those in need.

Samuel's Commitment to Israel

Samuel Falic, son of WIZO USA's Co-President Jana Falic gave this moving speech during Operation Protective Edge at a special WIZO Emergency Campaign dinner in Miami

Good evening,

My name is Samuel Falic, I am 19 years old from Miami Beach. Two months ago I completed my voluntary service in the IDF. I'm here to share some of my experiences with you and my thoughts of what is going on today in Israel.

At 18 years old rather than attend college like the rest of my friends, I decided to follow my dreams, put my years of pro-Israel involvement to action, and enlist in the IDF. I was lucky enough to enlist with my cousin from Panama, who had just completed his freshman year at the University of Miami. Together, we were both part of the 101 airborne infantry unit, better known as the paratroopers.

Towards the end of my training I hurt my shoulder during one of my jumps. Despite my injury, I successfully finished training and went on to guard the northern border with my comrades. Soon after I suffered another shoulder dislocation. It became apparent that I would not be able to complete my 14 months of combat duty that I originally had signed up for. I was honourably discharged and returned to the United States to undergo surgery.

Why enlist?

People always ask me why I decided to enlist in the IDF. For those who know my family it was no surprise. My grandmother is the Chairman of Friends of the IDF, my father and his brothers are very involved in various organisations aimed at helping Israel. My mother is the national co-president of WIZO and my sister Shena is continuing in all their footsteps and is an active member of Friends of the IDF.

My mother always jokes and asks where she went wrong. The truth is, she should ask where she went right. Every single vacation of my childhood was to Israel. Every chance we had we would visit army bases. I remember seeing my father look at every soldier who passed by him and he had this look of admiration in his eyes. He would always tell me how proud he is of all of them and how his only regret in life is not enlisting. It became a no brainer for me. For thousands of years Jews had no way of defending themselves. We went to the ovens in Europe without being able to even put up a formidable fight. With the establishment of the State of Israel and the IDF that all changed. I knew that I HAD to be a part of this.

Every mother in Israel has to send their children to the Israeli army. Every teenager has to leave the comfort of his home and fight for his country and his people. And us? We're deciding which college to attend and which beer to drink. These brave young men and women fight for us to enjoy that sense of comfort we have in the United States.

After thousands of years of being persecuted we are finally back where we belong, in our promised land, and now we have an army that protects us, an army that is one of the strongest and most advanced in the world. I felt so strongly: If they can go to the front lines to defend OUR nation, so should I. So I did. Along with my cousin, who actually finishes his service tomorrow.

Affinity with Israeli mothers

Last July my mother and my aunt were both faced with the reality that every mother in Israel is faced with. Their sons dedicated a part of their lives to Israel and the Jewish people. For the next year they barely slept. Every phone call their heart would drop. Any news about Israel suddenly had more impact. Their nightmare was nothing more than second nature to Israeli mothers who have to deal with this with every child they have. And now their nightmare is over. My cousin and I are both done. Yet now, every fallen soldier has more meaning. My entire family now realizes that for each life taken, that person has a mother, a father, friends and family. It is important for all of you to realize that every fallen soldier is your brother, your family.

I just returned from Israel on Tuesday. My friends are working night and day in Gaza risking their lives while I have that sense of comfort at their expense. I have the burning feeling that I should be in there with them. I'm wearing this uniform in front of you all tonight, while my battalion is wearing their uniforms in Gaza.

We are here enjoying that sense of comfort at their expense, and I should be in there with them. This past year, each person in my battalion became my brother, and now my brothers are exhausted in ways they have never been before; they are tested mentally and physically every instant. We worked together, sweat together, bled together, even slept together and I'm here when I should be there with them. I spent a year with those boys, and I am worried night and day because I don't hear from them. I text and call them every day, but unfortunately they can't answer now. They

are busy protecting our country. I can't sleep at night and I only knew them for a year. Imagine their families. The fear of not knowing where your child is or if he's okay is something that no mother should have to go through.

The losses

Staff Sgt Bnaya Rubel z"l was a member of my battalion. He was killed by Hamas in Gaza last week. I did not have the honour of meeting him, but I took it upon myself to attend his shivah. To my surprise hundreds of people attended his shivah.

A lone soldier from Texas First Sgt Sean Nissim Carmeli was killed in action last week as well. Worried that not many people would attend his funeral the Haifa soccer team urged fans to attend and over 20,000 people were there to mourn his death. What other country in the world reacts like this? For each life the entire country mourns and the entire country pays their respects.

Many brave men and woman gave their lives for their country and for their brothers and sisters around the world. Guys like Bnaya and Sean. And everyone else who has given their lives are heroes. Real heroes. Guys like Harel Tzvia's brother, who could be here but volunteered and is on the front lines, are heroes. Guys like Izzy, who remains fully dedicated to the Israeli Defence Forces despite what happened to him, are heroes.

And it's our job here to do what we can and pay our dues to support our army. It is our job to make sure that we, the Jewish people, stay united and strong, and make sure that the rest of the world knows that wherever we stand, we **Stand with Israel**. It is our job to make sure that our soldiers know that we stand behind them. It is important for the families of those who have fallen protecting our nation to know that we stand with them.

Thank you for being here. Am Israel chai

Samuel Falic



A Many-Faceted Mexican Lady

Shula Shrem, president of WIZO Mexico describes the unusual closeness of the Mexican Jewish community and her WIZO commitment

Zohar Friedman



When Shulamit Serur De Shrem walks into a room, you notice. And it's not just because the president of WIZO Mexico still carries with her the poise and grace of a model – a position, incidentally, that she used to fill at WIZO fashion fundraisers in her earlier WIZO career. It's more than that. She exudes an inspiring mix of qualities that are rarely found in a single person: warmth, authority, kindness, leadership, pragmatism – and it is infectious.

At 46 years old, Shula is not only mother to four children – three adult daughters and one eight-year-old son – but a grandmother to one, with her second oldest daughter expecting triplets later on this fall. She's a business owner of a chain of Pilates studios, an avid chef, an active member of the Mexican Jewish community. She's also one of the youngest federation presidents in WIZO history.

With her palpable love of Israel and the Jewish community, and her no-nonsense, can-do approach to accomplishing her goals for her federation, it is no wonder that the chaverot of WIZO Mexico asked her to stay on for another year as president after her term of office was due to end.

Zionist from the heart

Shula's love for Israel – and by extension, WIZO – was instilled in her at a young age. "I come from a big, traditional family," says Shula, reflecting on her childhood. "I always heard 'Israel, Israel, Israel' growing up. I'm a Zionist from the heart."

As was traditional at the time for women her age, she married young aged only 18 to Tony Shrem. Indeed, tradition is an important aspect of Shula's life, and is part of the glue that holds the famously close-knit Mexican Jewish community together. Among the some 45,000 Mexican Jews – which

includes Ashkenazim and Sephardim, as well as a significant population of Syrian Jews – assimilation rates are extremely low, especially in comparison to the rest of world Jewry.

One reason for the low assimilation rate, Shula says, is that the country's many different ethnic groups mostly keep to themselves; Mexico, unlike the United States, Argentina or certain European countries, is not exactly a melting pot. However, despite this, Mexican Jewry enjoys a strong relationship with the government, which grants them the right to practice Judaism freely and protects them from anti-Semitism, as well as prominent positions in society.

The Jewish community itself also contributes to low assimilation by offering its members rich and vibrant lives. "It's one of the most incredible communities to live in," Shula explains with palpable enthusiasm. "We have all the infrastructure to foster vibrant Jewish life. We have synagogues and Jewish schools; we have Jewish community centres and complexes. We're very close-knit; everyone helps each other." Mexico City itself boasts over 20 synagogues, a handful of kosher restaurants and a number of Jewish schools, where community members almost uniformly send their children to be educated. For those who can't afford tuition, WIZO and other communal organisations offer scholarships to offset costs.

But tradition has a price and makes many demands on its adherents, especially women, who juggle traditional domestic expectations with professional demands. "In Mexico, every Friday you eat with your family. The mother cooks for everyone. All of the family comes. Every Friday we alternate between my family and my husband's family.

"I belong to this. My mother told me, 'Baby, this is what you were born to.' But it's not always easy: I need time for everything. I stay at home [and don't work], but I don't actually stay at home. Every Wednesday, I meet with the WIZO group presidents and the former WIZO Mexico presidents. I'm a mother to my son – I go to his sports games and help him with homework. I'm very busy. There's a lot of compromise; we're very traditional. But it's nice: you're never alone."

WIZO for Shula

In some ways, WIZO represents for Shula both her contribution to the Mexican Jewish community, and arguably also her ability to carve out a block of independence in an intensely



Shula with her husband Tony

family-oriented life. "If I didn't have WIZO as a woman, I wouldn't have anything – I would be lost. I wouldn't have a purpose. WIZO for me allows me to be an innovator, a mother, a political activist, a leader, an administrator, a Mexican, and a Jew."

Shula's WIZO career began shortly after she was married. "WIZO approached me and asked me to open a group for my friends, for young people. I opened a group for recently married women and recruited 26 members."

Heading her newly formed group, they hosted parties for families and children to raise significant funds for WIZO. Spotting her leadership potential, WIZO Mexico chaverot quickly promoted her to president of the Membership Campaign, during which she launched a membership campaign for Avivs – younger WIZO women – who were not yet married. "We wanted them to know they didn't have to be married to be part of WIZO," Shula explains, "We wanted to change WIZO's image."

Her WIZO career really expanded after that, working in turn as president of the Sponsor A Child Campaign and then of the federation's Education Campaign, which raises funds for local Mexican children to go to school. Eventually, a little over two years ago, Shula was appointed as WIZO Mexico President, a position which she has served with dynamism, creativity and energy.

WIZO Mexico today

Today, the WIZO Mexico federation that Shula leads has 32 groups just in Mexico City, with other groups in Cancun, San Diego Tijuana, Monterrey and Guadalajara. Shula holds a meeting for all the group presidents every Wednesday.

Remarkably, while the Jewish community itself is split into some four smaller community groups, WIZO draws members from every community and is a unifying force, allowing women from the smaller communities to connect with one another.

However, while intermarriage and assimilation are less pressing issues for WIZO Mexico, the struggle of membership recruitment challenges the federation as it does many others around the world. "There's an empty space between 30-40 where we are struggling to attract new members. These days, everyone has a career and a job. In my day, it wasn't like that – studying was less important then. Now there are competing concerns: my career, my job, my money. And there's a lot of competition – once it was only WIZO; today there are many competitors."

Shula also recognizes, however, that many women are not able to work as full-time volunteers as she does. "I'm a lucky woman; I don't

have to work for a living. We have to find a way to make WIZO accessible for women who aren't like me."

To address this problem, Shula has adopted a several pronged approach. "We try to do culturally relevant things that young people would like. We try to learn about them and show them how important Israel is for all the Jewish people. There are many that have never been to Israel."

Shula also recognizes the importance of allowing younger women space to make WIZO their own. "We need to let go of the power a bit," she explains. "We need to give the young people the opportunity to lead and put their ideas to work."

WIZO Mexico in 10 years

When asked about her hopes and dreams for WIZO Mexico, Shula pauses and then reflects, "I hope it will be alive and vibrant and strong. I hope we'll have more members. And mostly, I want everyone – and I mean everyone – to know about WIZO. I want to see young people, children and older people all working for WIZO, I want to see school kids launching WIZO campaigns at their schools."



Shula's children

Catching Up with Miki Doron

Miki Doron reveals how his experiences as a student at WIZO Hadassim Youth Village shaped his entire life course and career

Zohar Friedman



It was 1977 and Miki Doron had only been at the WIZO Hadassim Youth Village for a few months after moving alone from Tehran when a friendly *madricha* (female dormitory counsellor) approached him and asked him if he were interested in working as a *madrich* for the younger boarding school students. All residents at the youth village were required to work weekly around the youth village, and Miki thought it sounded good – much better than working in the kitchens or cleaning up at the bio lab.

He did not realize that this would be a first of many steps to becoming one of Israel's most esteemed psychologists.

The next day, as planned, he arrived at the dormitory where the younger children lived. As he opened the door to meet his new residents, he looked up to see a bucket of water in the process of tipping over onto him, and narrowly moved out of the way to avoid a drenching. Later, he'd find out that this was a test set up by that ever-friendly *madricha* for every potential new *madrich*. As much as Hadassim was a place of opportunity, it was also a challenging place that very much encouraged learning by trial and error.

Some 50 years later at his clinic in Givat Shmuel near Bnei Brak, Miki recalls the incident well: "It didn't break me. I decided to come back again."

Early days at Hadassim

Miki arrived at WIZO Hadassim as a 15-year-old boy from Iran, with only 'bar mitzvah level Hebrew.' Catapulted into the youth village after the school year had already begun, his transition was surprisingly easy.

At the time, the youth village contained a myriad of Jews from diverse backgrounds – Miki's own class included Italians, Canadians and other Iranians; the men working in the kitchens – he recalls – had numbers tattooed on their arms. Within this bustling, multicultural environment, he got ahold of his bearings rather quickly – sure, there was the incident where his roommate stole his wallet, his initial dismay at Israeli-style cooking (*shnitzel* and liver) and other small issues, but it took only a few months before he began not only speaking Hebrew, but going out steadily with his first Israeli girlfriend.

In truth, absorbing into Hadassim was less for Miki about navigating culture shock, but more about integrating into the general attitude fostered at this budding educational community. For example, while in Iran, Miki had been something of a 'rebellious student'; at Hadassim, Miki was referred to by a teacher as an 'energetic' student. While this label greatly pleased and relieved his mother, it also bespoke the educational philosophy of Hadassim in 1977, which was to see potential, rather than problems, in its students.

Life as a madrich

After his introduction to his group of students with the water-prank incident, Miki began to invest more and more of his time and energy into the subject of counselling students. His charges gradually learned to accept him and trust him. In his second year at Hadassim, he took a special course for counsellors.

Finally, when it came time to graduate, the Hadassim director at the time, the legendary Tzvi Levy, allowed Miki to continue living at the youth village and work as a salaried counsellor. That October, Miki was to start studying at the Technion – and once again, Tzvi generously let him keep his apartment at the village. After two months of studying engineering, Miki realized this wasn't the path for him and left the Technion. Once again, Hadassim was a haven for him and allowed Miki to resume his old job as a *madrich*.

The next year, Miki began studying a more suitable subject, psychology, at Bar Ilan University. Meanwhile, he continued to work as a counsellor parallel to studying – which eventually included a masters in Psychology from Tel Aviv University.

"It was Tzvika's idea that *madrichim* shouldn't be only

madrichim – they should have jobs, adults with real lives who can be examples to the children,” Miki explains.

After he finished his studies, Miki would go on to join the army, where he’d begin a career that lasted nearly half a life time, working in mental health and trauma in the IDF and Ministry of Defence. “Hadassim influenced me and all of my peers on a really special level,” Miki says today, “especially in terms of our desire to be connected to the country, to donate. Who I am today comes from what I learned at Hadassim – the values I learned at Hadassim have stayed with me for my entire life.”

The Army and afterwards

After receiving his introduction to the world of counselling and mental health care at Hadassim – and finishing his two degrees – Miki enlisted into the IDF on a permanent basis, where he worked as a mental health officer. He then stayed on as Chief Mental Health Officer, presiding over other officers in the field.

After leaving the army at 43-years-old, he went on to work with the Ministry of Defence, working with army veterans suffering from PTSD. [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder]

Today, Miki teaches at the university level, practices psychotherapy at his clinic and has authored several books, making him a leading mental health care expert in Israel.

Thoughts on WIZO

Today, after benefitting from a WIZO product and also representing and volunteering for WIZO all over the world – including recently at the WIZO Latin America Conference –

and working in mental health, Miki has gained considerable insights into the nature of volunteering – especially in the WIZO framework.

“I was recently at the WIZO Latin America Conference, where I met the chaverot of WIZO Chile and Latin America. I was so moved to see these women who are busy with WIZO activities – and even more moved to see that they do not only donate to Israel but to social welfare services in their home countries.

“There is something very special about the nature of this kind of work – this kind of volunteerism. When I help someone else, I also receive something. I am much more connected to what I have. These women – they not only help others, they strengthen their own resiliency and that of their families. In anxiety treatment, we teach people with social phobias that when he/she feels bad to find someone who is in greater anxiety than he/she is and to help them. This is the reality of happiness: If you give to others you are richer. To see WIZO women contribute to Israel and their home communities – it’s amazing and moving – but they also nourish their own souls through the work.”

Furthermore, Miki sees WIZO chaverot as both historically and contemporarily important members of the Zionist movement, even if they cannot physically be in Israel to help achieve the Zionist dream. “WIZO is unique in that it has been able to invite Jewish women – especially mothers – to donate something very special and very unique to Israel. They are a kind of ‘overseas mother’ to the children and the vulnerable society in Israel – and though they are not able to be there to physically hug the children themselves – they set up the framework to absorb them.



From Tehran to Israel

Miki Doron was born to a Jewish family in Tehran as one of four children. His two younger brothers followed in Miki’s footsteps and eventually came to Israel between 1978-81, studied at Hadassim and afterwards joined the army. He also has an older sister that moved to Israel. His mother eventually left Tehran in 1986 and his father followed suit after many hardships, in 1991.

Although the situation for Iran’s Jews began to deteriorate after Miki made aliya to Israel, his memories of his early life are positive. “I remember celebrating the holidays as part of my big family, our trips and vacations. Regarding Judaism, we were largely secular, so the expression of our Judaism was mostly limited to holidays. You rarely saw

anyone walking around in public with a kippa – only in the synagogue.”

Miki also had a positive relationship to Iran. “As a boy, I saw myself as a Persian boy, proud and connected to the Iranian culture, history and tradition, even though I was Jewish. I learned in a non-Jewish – although non-religious – school. It’s worth noting that two of my good friends from my studies led the strikes and riots two years after I’d left Iran.”

Miki sometimes wonders what might have happened had he not made the move to Israel and enrolled at Hadassim. Today, however, he is enjoying the fruits of that decision, with two daughters of his own. His oldest is studying medicine and the youngest just finished her service in the IDF and will soon travel to London to study and work.



A Green Light on Road Safety

WIZO Early Age Division teams up with the Green Light organisation to launch innovative road safety educational programming for two-year-olds

Zohar Friedman

The children listen enraptured. On a warm June day at the Wajdengard/Schweitzer Feldmand Day Care Centre in Raanana, sponsored by WIZO Germany, Lilia, their teacher, is guiding them through their weekly road safety education programme. Equipped with props, songs and story books – as well as that special ability of early age education teachers to infuse everything they do with excitement and animation – Lilia begins a very important lesson: that road safety is no game. Indeed, while it's not said outright to the children, traffic related injuries are one of the leading causes of death and serious injury in young children.

Special road safety programme

Lilia's work is part of a special WIZO pilot programme, launched together with the NGO 'Green Light,' to teach young children about the importance of road safety. While 'Green Light' specializes in educating Israelis of all ages on road safety, typically, their programming only begins at the ages of three or four. Given the pressing nature of the issue, WIZO collaborated with Green Light to find a way to adapt this programme to the earliest age group possible.

Adapting the programme to such an early age group was challenging, says Nona Lehavi, the WIZO Early Age Supervisor who was charged with finding a way to adapt and implement the Green Light educational model in WIZO day care centres. To begin, Nona and her team identified five suitable educational goals for this age group: the importance of wearing a seatbelt, familiarity with the red coloured stop symbol, the importance of wearing a helmet when bike riding and understanding basic direction symbols (straight, and left and right arrows).

There were certain subjects that Nona deliberately avoided. "We didn't want to work on things like crossing the street. Children should never cross the street alone, without their parents or an adult, so we didn't even want to put the idea into their heads. It's like explaining to someone how to use an electrical outlet if you never want him to touch it at all." [Ed note: Israeli law states that children under the age of nine may not cross roads alone.]

Enter 'Lela'

Lilia, along with other day care centre teachers, received special training on how to educate young children on road safety. Today, she puts that training into effect, with the aid of a very special prop – a green doll named Lela. Why and what is Lela? Arguably one of the most important parts of the programme, the doll (whose body is a round green



Lilia introduces Lela and the road safety programme to the children

circle, like a green light), guides the children through all the subjects and helps make it accessible to them. Furthermore, in Hebrew, the doll is an acronym to help the children remember the rules of road safety, all verbs begin with the sound for 'leh' or 'la' in Hebrew: to listen, to look, to stop, to give your hand to an adult, to fasten seatbelts, to wear a helmet. Thus, the doll's name is the combination of 'leh' and 'la': Lela.

The children are crazy about her. Lilia takes out the box that houses Lela, and begins to ask the children where Lela is hiding. Bursting with excitement, the children all point to the box, encouraging her to come out.

After Lela makes her sleepy debut, the real lesson begins, which includes a story about buckling up, songs (the children already know all of the words) about road safety subjects, a review of road symbols, and interactive props.

Good results

The programme is achieving its intended results. Ecstatic parents report that their children are not only more agreeable to safe road practices such as buckling up, they routinely remind everyone else to practice the same safe habits.

This year, the results of the Green Light-WIZO partnership has seen the programme launched in 18 WIZO day care centres; next year, it will be run in some 80 centres, and in the third year, it will cover all WIZO centres. Future plans include fine-tuning the programme and then implementing it on a national level to help children build early literacy in road safety customs and practices.

An Experience That Lasts a Lifetime



Bar/bat mitzvah celebrations at WIZO Afula Community Centre

For children of families who cannot afford to make a bar/bat mitzvah celebration – WIZO saves the day

From the day a child is born, Jewish parents look forward to rejoicing at their child's bar/bat mitzvah. Unfortunately for many Israelis, providing this rite of passage is beyond their financial means. For families suffering from chronic poverty and social isolation, WIZO's bar/bat mitzvah programmes make dreams come true.

At WIZO, we believe that every Jewish girl and boy deserves an equal opportunity to experience their Jewish heritage. Due to worldwide support and an ongoing campaign, hundreds of youngsters all across Israel in our youth villages, schools and community centres have the opportunity to enjoy this significant milestone.

For the past nine years the WIZO Afula Community Centre/Edersheim Levenbach Youth Club sponsored by WIZO UK and WIZO Holland has been offering outstanding bar/bat mitzvah programmes for disadvantaged children. What makes this programme shine is its ability to provide in-depth Jewish cultural studies in a warm, enjoyable and supportive environment. Girls enjoy learning the basics of challah making under the supervision of the local Rebetzin, while boys are paired with local yeshiva students who help them learn their Torah portion. Parents take an active role in supporting their children's participation, which culminates with a joint community project. Activities are designed to stimulate learning. Youth are guided in preparing crafts and musical presentations. Weekly educational outings to sites rich in history highlight this outstanding programme.

Activities generally take place over a three-month period every spring, and culminate with a festive group celebration filled with surprises. This year, the children entered the hall to the music of 'Fiddler on the Roof' accompanied by

human size Hasidic dancing dolls. Noga* a 12-year-old Ethiopian visually impaired bat mitzvah girl captivated the audience with a short speech that she had written especially for the occasion. Brimming with tears of happiness, the proud mothers participated in a moving gift exchange ceremony. Greetings by World WIZO President Tova Ben Dov, Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive Prof. Rivka Lazovsky and Yitzchak Miron the Mayor of Afula completed the afternoon.

This year, due to a shortfall in funds, the programme was postponed and took place over the summer in the form of a bar/bat mitzvah camp. According to Dudu Moatty, the community centre's director, "this was a blessing in disguise", as it kept the children off the streets and occupied them with the best that WIZO has to offer.

The bar/bat mitzvah celebrations in Afula may be over for this year, but the impact on the children and their families will last a lifetime.

Kudos to WIZO Holland who has been supporting this programme for many years. Special thanks to WIZO UK who generously sponsored this year's programme and to Loraine Warren President, Michele Pollock Vice-Chairman and Linda Boxer Executive Director, who especially travelled to Israel to participate in the festivities.

* not her real name

For further information on sponsoring WIZO's bar/bat mitzvah activities, joint celebrations, or opportunities to meet our special youth, please contact World WIZO Fundraising Division.

There and Back: Is the USA or Israel the Place for Me?

After three years in Israel and much soul-searching I decided to return to the States this summer. Two months later I have returned to Israel. Why?

Zohar Friedman



For a single olah [new immigrant] from the States, without any family in Israel, can Aliya be for life? That is my dilemma

One of my good friends in Israel once told me that she could never visit Israel as a tourist again. There'd be something heartbreaking about it. We were talking about the possibility of leaving Israel to return to North America – me to the States and she to Canada.

Two secular twenty-somethings who lived challenging but fulfilling lives in Tel Aviv – the city affectionately referred to as the New York of the Middle East – our days were filled with sun, beach, good company, fresh food, laughter and happiness. I can tell you without a doubt that the past three years in Israel have been the happiest of my life. Then why did I ever want to leave?

Life is hard here, and without families, we won't be able to make it, everyone seems to tell us, probably not financially, certainly not emotionally. While Israelis are intensely welcoming and the sincerest people I have ever met, we have mothers and fathers back home who miss us dearly and tell us often.

While the statistics are hard to measure, they seem to support my observations: Most estimates peg retention rates around 50%. According to a Times of Israel op-ed, 60% of Western immigrants return to their home countries within three years, and 80% within five years. I was on that three year mark when I decided it was time to face the facts: I was alone in this country and getting to that age where I needed to think about my future family and career.

Going back

After being accepted to a masters in education programme in New York, I was suddenly faced with the prospect of leaving Israel. I agonized over the decision non-stop. Suddenly, my life in Israel seemed fleeting: riding my bike down tree lined Rothschild avenue, taking my dog for an evening walk on Tel Aviv's promenade, sitting in cafés on bustling city streets, celebrating Independence Day in blue and white or Holocaust Remembrance Day in white, I suddenly found myself at a

crossroads where I might have to remove myself from all of this. I would become a tourist to Israel again. Finally, after agonizing with myself what to do, I settled on going back.

Enormous mistake

After one month in the US, I came to the realization that I'd made an enormous mistake leaving Israel. Partially it was watching this summer's Operation Protective Edge raging on American media; it didn't help when a man who accosted me at a bar and asked me with disgust if I supported "what's happening in Gaza." Partially it was the realization that as a secular Jew in the States my Jewish identity would be watered down at best and completely lost at worst. Partially, it was how unsafe and alienated I felt walking around in New York.

But it was more than all of that. I missed the connectivity that pulses between people here. I missed the warmth. I missed the spirit of togetherness and living for the day. I missed the Shabbat shaloms and chag sameachs exchanged casually on the street. I missed the way Israelis value relationships and togetherness over money and career. I missed the Israeli spirit, generosity, liveliness, rambunctiousness and impulsivity.

I missed the magic that defines every day life here.

I missed the magic.

Some thoughts

We are brought up with the notion that we can have it all. Over the past few years, I've realized we can't; but it's true. You can't live in two places at once. Adjustments must be made. You have to make very hard choices, and give up certain dreams in favour of others. I have made friendships of a lifetime, and people care about me here – and allow me to care about them – in a way that I've never experienced before.

For now, I'm staying. I still don't know if this – realistically – can be my home forever. But today this is home, and as my mother says, our family needs at least one representative in Israel. And as another girlfriend similarly told me – one who is contemplating a similar dilemma – maybe we have to become that aunt, sister, cousin or grandma that builds a life here that will make future aliya for our loved ones a little easier.

The Friends behind the Home of Dreams

'Friends of WIZO' are dedicated to improve the lives of Israel's youngest citizens

Tricia Schwitzer

Friends of WIZO was founded in 2004 to raise funds for toddlers and children at risk. Its annual Sponsor A Child luncheon and fashion show attracts high-profile women from Israeli society. This year, the 11th Sponsor A Child luncheon was held in the courtyard of Rosemarine Court in Herzlia Pituach around the azure blue swimming pool. Guests enjoyed a fabulous lunch and watched a catwalk show of stunning gowns by leading Israeli designer Yaron Minkowski. Such opulence is a far cry from the impoverished neighbourhood of Kfar Shalem in South Tel Aviv but every lady who lunches in Herzlia Pituach holds the children of Kfar Shalem close to her heart.

The love story began when executive members of Friends of WIZO went to view a possible site to adopt as their very own project. World WIZO Early Age Division Chair Hassida Danai took them to see 'Biranit' (the name of the street) – an unsponsored WIZO day care centre, which was rundown and badly in need of repair. Toddlers were playing in sand playgrounds that were frequented by stray cats, posing a serious health hazard. After two hours viewing the facilities, seeing the children and talking to Rikki, the dedicated director of the day care centre, the group was completely smitten.

Total refurbishment underway

The ten-strong committee, headed by the indomitable 'fairy godmother of fundraising' Betty Crystal, quickly set to work on a renovation and refurbishment plan that began with the total overhaul of the three classrooms and outside play areas, new washrooms, new windows, and a new acoustic roof – all adhering to the high standards demanded by WIZO. Every stick of furniture, piece of equipment and toy has been replaced, transforming a previously unloved day care centre into what Betty Crystal described as 'the home of dreams.'

The day care centre director, Rikki and her team of caregivers are delighted with the transformation, as are the parents and little ones, aged from just three months to four years, who attend. The Friends of WIZO Home of Dreams Day Care Centre can now boast, for the first time ever, a waiting list. Twenty-five percent of the toddlers who attend the day care centre, have been referred by the welfare authorities. The local population is of a low socio-economic background



The Home of Dreams road safety playground

and the neighbourhood suffers from drugs, violence and unemployment.

A gift list for every pocket

The 200 strong members of Friends of WIZO look upon the day care centre as their very own. They are encouraged to visit and are able to choose what they want to buy for the centre from a gift list which caters to all pockets.

Last year, Friends held a Chanukah party at the day care centre where members enjoyed brunch and a show from the children and were delighted to witness the transformation made possible by their generosity. Just before Shavuot, the children once again welcomed their benefactors. At this event, Friends joined Betty and Jack Crystal in the dedication of a renovated and refurbished motor-sensory room in the name of the Crystal Family.

Educational road safety playground

The Friends of WIZO Home of Dreams Day Care Centre also boasts an educational playground, one of only two in WIZO's inventory of 190 day care centres. In this playground, mapped out with roads and roundabouts, road signs and road markings, the toddlers learn crucial road safety through play. They can direct the traffic, ride their pedal bikes, fill up their cars at the petrol station, manoeuvre their trucks and stop at red lights to let the pedestrians walk across the road.

With all the challenges that many children face growing up in Israel today, particularly children from low socio-economic areas, WIZO's educational enrichment programmes bring added quality to enhance their early age education. Friends of WIZO are introducing these benefits to the Home of Dreams to ensure that the children of Kfar Shalem get the same quality of education as would their own children.

Friends of WIZO has created a haven of learning, creativity and care, and the Home of Dreams Day Care Centre has become a jewel in the crown of WIZO day care centres – a model to be emulated. Betty Crystal's fundraising prowess and the total devotion of her committee to every one of their 80 'adopted' toddlers is proof, if proof were needed that 'if you will it, it is no dream'.



DIARY OF MY TRAVELS IN WIZO Laurienne Baitz

25 - 31 May 2014: Santiago, Chile

I was thrilled to find myself the guest of Agnes Mannheim, the lovely president of WIZO Chile and her wonderful dedicated team (Yael, Dalia, Vivi and many others), to attend and address the Latin American Congress 2014. It will be remembered by all of the almost 400 delegates for its outstanding programme and magnificent attention to detail. It was my privilege to address the congress (a first in Spanish) alongside esteemed guests such as the legendary Dr. Jorge Bucay, Dr. Miki Doron, the Israeli ambassador, psychologists, journalists and our own WIZO President Tova Ben-Dov and Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive Rivka Lazovsky.

Although I was disappointed by how few Latin American presidents had the foresight to bring their young leadership to experience the congress, I felt encouraged by their reception though and hope that they took some of my enthusiasm home to their Avivs!

Personal highlights were a one night mini congress for local Avivs and interested potential young members with an international panel, goody bags and a light supper, an authentic Chilean luncheon in Valparaiso with an enthusiastic group of young and lovely Avivs who are reviving their WIZO group in their historic town.

A memory I will treasure forever was the private performance for our congress by the Chilean Philharmonic Orchestra, accompanied by two of the country's finest tenors and a soprano. But that was not all! Also performing that evening were other international artists. What a privilege to be part of WIZO!

I will especially remember the hospitality of the wonderful WIZO Chilean ladies!

4 - 6 June: London, England

Wonderful time spent brainstorming and collaborating in the WIZO UK office with Ronit, Lauren and the team. Such professionalism and generosity is a great trait of our WIZO family.

9 - 10 June: Athens, Greece

Heather Nahmias, president WIZO Greece took the shortage of young interest in WIZO very seriously and decided to bring me to Athens to 'ignite' and inspire local ladies.

I had two opportunities to speak to different groups of young Jewish ladies who were mostly not involved in WIZO until these events. Both were warm gatherings in lovely homes and on both occasions the enthusiastic, energetic ladies immediately began to plan WIZO events for the near future. I am VERY proud to share the success of these evenings.

11 - 12 June: Vienna, Austria

The creative and energetic Daphna Frucht and her team designed an intriguing 'Secret Event' in a stylish new restaurant/bar in a contemporary area of Vienna. The young ladies who attended were treated to an adventure in WIZO complete with cocktails, designer food and a brainstorm session with the opportunity to select the Young WIZO event they would like to make happen! The stylish event is surely still the talk around town!

Every opportunity to visit an Aviv group expands my overview of our wonderful warm international WIZO family. It creates new stories for me to share between our groups that link us, and understanding that our hopes, challenges and motivation, no matter where, are mostly the same.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the International Aviv Seminar in Israel November 2-6th



Women's International Zionist Organization
for an Improved Israeli Society



NOVEMBER 2-6, 2014

HILTON, TEL AVIV

The WIZO AVIV International seminar will include top level speakers and unique workshops on Israel Advocacy, Zionism, Motivation, Community Building, while visiting and volunteering in WIZO projects.

The seminar is intended for WIZO members up to the age of 45.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND, 2014

Getting to Know Each Other

- 12:30–14:00 - Registration
- ▶ Getting acquainted with WIZO
- ▶ Building WIZO AVIV Together
- ▶ Festive Opening Dinner

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD, 2014

The Power of WIZO

- ▶ The Power of Creating a Worldwide Community
- ▶ Visit to a WIZO project in Jerusalem
- ▶ Meeting with Women's Leadership in Jerusalem
- ▶ Machane Yehuda Market – A culinary experience

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH, 2014

How to Have an Impactful Role in WIZO

- ▶ Crowdfunding as a tool to making a difference
- ▶ Friendraising & volunteer management
- ▶ Selling WIZO in the Digital Era

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH, 2014

Building the Future

- ▶ Building WIZO's Future Together
- ▶ Public Speaking & Israel Advocacy
- ▶ Exposing Israeli Society to WIZO's work

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH, 2014

Hands On!

- ▶ WIZO AVIV making the difference – Volunteering at a WIZO Project
 - ▶ Festive Luncheon with World WIZO Executive
 - ▶ Next Steps and Conclusions
- 14:30 – End of the program

*Program subject to change

To register for the 2014 AVIV Seminar please visit: www.goo.gl/Qbr5ir
For more information please contact: wizo@wizo.org

Just do.....something

In today's world, organisations have to find a different approach to attract sustainable members

Rolene Marks

A famous sporting apparel company once told us to 'Just do it'. Sounds a bit cryptic when you think about but it certainly issues a challenge: just dosomething.

This started me thinking about the something that I could do. In today's busy world, it is becoming more of a challenge for women to balance career, motherhood and day to

your current members and ask them what they want – within reason! Great speakers are attainable – unless they are Oprah!

Know your product

Know your product and why; in my opinion WIZO is one of our best kept resources. WIZO offers women a chance to be involved and engaged in a multitude of projects and activities that suit their interests. There is so much to choose from and the best advocates or sales people are current WIZO members. Nothing sells WIZO more than someone who can talk about what we do and our projects with passion and conviction.

Sell solidarity- the global climate for Jews is becoming more and more hostile. In many parts of the world it is not safe for Jews to be so easily identifiable. An organisation like WIZO provides a safe haven for Jewish women to express themselves and be part of the greater global community. At a time when Israel is increasingly marginalised, this offers an opportunity to show solidarity, engage in stimulating and fun activities, all while ensuring continuity of the Jewish people.



day life. Finding the time to volunteer or give back to the community is falling lower and lower on the list of personal priorities for many. This is coupled with many organisations competing with each other to get as many members to join as possible.

How to attract members

So what does an organisation have to do these days to attract membership? Many organisations are struggling to attract the membership they want and it is not because they do not have something attractive to offer. In today's ever changing world where information is available at the click of a button, younger women may not feel the need to 'become a member.' So, what does an organisation have to do to attract sustainable membership?

Offer something different – the key to attracting dynamic, committed members is to offer them something they will not get anywhere else. This requires understanding your target market very well and anticipating and adapting to changing ideas and climates. When the same mechanisms do not yield the same results as before, it is a sure sign to change tactics. The best way to do this is to engage with

Make it fun – some say that you can measure the level of success of your business or organisation by how much fun you are having. While we raise funds and speak about serious issues and challenges, this can all be done while injecting a little bit of fun and good energy to the mix.

Use your members

Treasure and utilise your members – they have given their time, make sure that they know that they are appreciated. Listen to them and keep the lines of communication open. Feeling appreciated will motivate them to do more, give more and bring their friends.

Keep on evolving – trends and seasons change – make sure you stay current and abreast of new technologies and mediums so that you remain attractive to your community.

WIZO offers women a smorgasbord of exciting things to do and projects to support. We all want to create a better future for Israel's children and by joining an organisation like WIZO, you will be doing that "something" that changes lives – and don't forget to tell your friends!

Bar/Bat Mitzvah and WIZO

Celebrate your child's bar/bat mitzvah in Israel with a tailor-made WIZO package

Beto Maya



Sammy Aschendorf's bar mitzvah celebration at WIZO Nachlat Yehuda Youth Village sponsored by WIZO Switzerland

Bar and bat mitzvah are the most important ceremonies in Judaism aimed to introduce youngsters into Jewish life. For boys, the bar mitzvah ceremony was developed as a public recognition of a legal and religious status, attained with or without the ritual. In other words, a Jewish boy of 13 years and one day automatically became a bar mitzvah even if no public ceremony took place.

While the beginnings of the modern bar mitzvah ceremony appeared as early as the sixth century C.E., it was not until the Middle Ages that a fully developed ritual emerged. By the 13th or 14th century, the custom of calling a boy up to the Torah was established as the way of recognizing entry into manhood. The bat mitzvah ceremony which seems to appear in the second or third century C.E., encouraged Jewish girls at age 12 to take on legal responsibility for the performance of the *mitzvot*. As with age 13 for boys, 12 probably corresponded with their onset of puberty. However, girls were subject to far fewer commandments than boys. Today, liberal Jews affirm the total equality of women in terms of religious privileges and responsibilities.

Bar-bat mitzvah today

In the 21st Century, the bar/bat mitzvah is much more than just a religious ceremony, it's a moment of reflection, of introspection and of implementing the values that the child has been taught during his/her development years.

WIZO, as an ideological movement, with important values such as meaningful impact, voluntarism, and mutual

responsibility is highly interested in incorporating the bar/bat mitzvah experience into the services we offer you, our federations over the world.

Our goal is to create a meaningful WIZO experience, including an element of voluntarism for the bar/bat mitzvah child, while exposing him/her to the impactful work WIZO does in Israel and a close encounter with Israeli society.

The Organization & Tourism Division offers a variety of packages to celebrate this important milestone in each child's life; from a few hours of programming at one of our WIZO projects, via a full day of voluntarism and up to a full multi-day WIZO programme according to the specific needs and interests of the bar/bat mitzvah child and family.

We also offer "Community bar/bat mitzvah tours" where we can offer mother/daughter tours or father/son tours that will be planned in full cooperation with the local community/federation.

These tours can be also organised as a cooperative effort for people from all over the world (minimum number of participants required).

Connect to your WIZO values and help us spread the word on this outstanding opportunity.

Let's all together engage in an effort to expose WIZO's work and values to all those families that decide to celebrate a bar/bat mitzvah in Israel.

Organization and Tourism Division



Zilla Shoham

Not 'The Sister of'

Fiercely independent, **Zilla Shoham** was determined to make her name in her own right – not only be known as 'His sister'

Adapted From the book "WIZO – The stories behind the Story", published in honour of World WIZO's 90th anniversary.

Zilla Shoham was present at the establishment of World WIZO in London in 1920. She returned to Palestine in 1921 and in 1925 joined the Executive of WIZO Haifa as Head of the Organization Department. She was elected to the World WIZO Executive as Deputy Head of the Agricultural Education Department in 1951, and served as its head from 1954 to 1970. In that year she became an Honorary Life Member of the World WIZO Executive.

The Nili connection

She lived on the edges of the myth. She even cultivated it, but refused to live in its shadow. Zilla Shoham was the sister of Avshalom Feinberg, founder of the *Nili* underground organisation.

Her children grew up on the stories of *Nili*. The *Nili* episode, a painful segment in the history of the *Yishuv*, was part of the family heritage. The members of *Nili* saw the continuation of the Turkish regime in the Land of Israel as a catastrophe for the future of Jewish settlement, and cooperated with the British in order to bring it to an end. *Nili* established contact with the British command in Egypt and Avshalom was their liaison. When the connection was cut off, Avshalom went to the Sinai with his friend Moshe Lishansky, but was attacked on the way by Bedouin and murdered.

Avshalom loved his younger sister very much, and the bond they shared was very close. Pictures of Zilla in her youth reveal the strong resemblance between them.

In 1913, with the conclusion of her studies in the first graduating class of the Herzliya Gymnasia, Zilla wanted to continue to study at university. Since there were no institutes of higher education in the country, she registered at the University of Berlin to study agriculture and botany.

Abroad during WWI

During the First World War, Zilla was abroad. When the war broke out, she destroyed her Russian passport and asked that she be sent a Turkish passport from home. During that same period she was nourished by scraps of information about the *Nili* underground movement. Sensitive material would be written under the stamp.

When she received her Turkish passport, she was hired to work in the field of military censorship in Berlin, without the secret police suspecting that she was the sister of the spy Avshalom Feinberg, who had disappeared.

She only received the full picture about the activities of *Nili* when Aaron Aharonsohn, who was a member of the underground movement, passed through Germany on his way to Denmark. Zilla wanted to return home immediately, but this proved impossible.

Zilla married Ze'ev Shoham, a young lawyer she first met in St Petersburg. The couple married in England in 1919, where Aaron told her everything about the demise of *Nili*. She took the news about the death of Avshalom as a true Feinberg daughter. In their family, one did not cry. Only at night, when no one heard, was it possible to shed a tear.

While in England, a son and daughter were born to the couple. Their daughter, Tamar Eshel, after an extensive public service career was a Member of Knesset for the Labour Party from 1977-1984.

In 1921, Ze'ev and Zilla came to live in Palestine, where Zilla joined her father's citrus-growing business and eventually became a leading member of the Citrus Growers' Association of Palestine.



Zilla and husband Ze'ev

Everything viewed through Avshalom

Rivka Aharonsohn, who was Avshalom's fiancée, was Zilla's close friend. David, Zilla's son, recalls that they were like sisters. "When they met, they would talk a great deal about Avshalom. They would sit and reminisce and suddenly you would see how the years would fall away as they went back to that period in their lives. When Mother would remember a piece by Beethoven, Rivka would be able to say something like: 'Yes, but Avshalom preferred Mozart.' Everything was viewed through the prism of Avshalom."

However, in spite of the fact that she was his sister, Zilla never wanted people to see her as such. She wanted them to see her as an independent personality; and so it was.

Sources:

Sarah and Rami Ben-Reuven, *Hebrew Women in Damascus: 1917-1918*. Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 2005.

Ruthie Gardel – Keren, *His Sister*, *Yediot Aharonot* newspaper, 1988



AUSTRALIA

Perth

Gift of Quilts

When they visited Ahuzat Yeladim, WIZO's special school in Haifa, children of the Carmel Shorashim Group took with them quilts made lovingly by Annabell Samuell and her friends in WIZO Ilana for the disadvantaged children resident at the school. It was a wonderful visit and the Carmel kids enjoyed spending time with the children and seeing for themselves the results of their fundraising efforts.



Carmel Shorashim group presenting quilts to the children at Ahuzat Yeladim

WIZO WA Mah Jong Club

A new WIZO group has been formed – the WIZO Western Australia Mah Jong Club. This innovative idea has been a huge success with a regular weekly attendance of WIZO women and others from the wider community. Esther Finkelstein a dedicated worker, is the teacher, helped by long standing chaverot Fay Hyman, Leah Gunzburg and Ruth Cohen who guide the new members in the intricacies of the game. There is a waiting list of members wishing to learn Mah Jong and it has proved to be a fun way to support our projects.



(l to r) Ruth Cohen, Fay Hyman, Leah Gunzburg, Esther Finkelstein

Queensland

Pearle Saragossi's 90th Birthday

Pearle Saragossi's long-time links with WIZO began as a young girl, when her mother became the inaugural president of WIZO Queensland. Thanks to the generosity of her loving family, Linda Briner presented Pearle with a certificate commemorating a Gold Brick engraved with her name in the 'Road to Hope', preserving her legacy to Ahuzat Yeladim in Israel forever.



Linda presents Road of Hope Certificate

Surrogate Savta

On a sunny Sunday, nearly 20 oldies enjoyed a lovely lunch with approximately seven young families. The children discovered surprises in their treasure hunt, the adults enjoyed stimulating conversations and all enjoyed the scrumptious lunch provided by the members of WIZO Aviva in Queensland. Friendships were renewed, bonds were formed and everyone found a family to adopt.

Monday Morning Cooking Club

Over two days in June, some of the ladies from the Monday Morning Cooking Club joined the Brisbane community to celebrate the great Jewish love of eating. Lisa Goldberg, Jacqui Israel and Merelyn Frank Chalmers shared their tales of sisterhood, family, and their love of cooking.



(l to r) Linda Briner, Jacqui Israel, Susan Segal, Lisa Goldberg, Evelyn Charles (President WIZO Queensland)



Sydney

Sydney Launches Sponsor A Child

WIZO in Sydney joined the elite group of WIZO women worldwide who have taken on the responsibility of sponsoring a child in Israel, providing the extras that can make all the difference to their lives. A Sponsor A Child Luncheon was held as a tribute to the ladies who generously participated, with elegance and style as staples of the day.



(l to r) Simonne Abadee, Sara Gresham, Mary Emanuel

Bat Mitzvah Girls Shine for WIZO

Forty-nine girls from Moriah College in Sydney participated in a project to raise Tzedakah for WIZO this year. The girls, guided by dedicated WIZO member Jackie Gluck, divided into groups and worked tirelessly and passionately over a three-month period. Each group presented their project to the school as well as to Jackie Gluck and WIZO NSW president Gloria Newhouse.

A tremendous effort was made by all the girls and WIZO NSW proudly watched on as the next generation of young women learnt about and supported WIZO's vital work in Israel.



Moriah College 2014 Bat Mitzvah Girls

'The Feast Goes On'

The girls from Sydney who produced the wonderful Monday Morning Cooking Club cookbook in 2011 have just published their second book, *The Feast Goes On*. This features more of the best-loved, delicious recipes and stories from the heart and soul of Australia's Jewish community. The cook books are being sold in Australia by WIZO with The Monday Morning Cooking Club girls giving their time, energy and passion by attending events and launches.



The Monday Morning Cooking Club new book 'The Feast Goes On'

Victoria

WIZO Kids Bounce for Israel

WIZO Kids, WIZO Victoria's latest group, held its first event at 'Bounce' indoor trampoline centre, where over 120 children along with their parents jumped on trampolines while raising money for Israel. The launch party celebrated more than 100 children becoming members of the group, educating them to be involved in charity work from a young age.

Aimed at children from ages six to 13, future events will be organised solely by kids for kids.



(l to r) Lani Kurc, Ronit Better, Libby Kurc, Ariella Waters, Jessie Katzen

BOLIVIA

Dwindling Community

In a small Jewish community such as Bolivia, every loss is felt as if a close family member has passed away. In the 1950s, the community numbered in the thousands, had dwindled to only several hundred by the 1980s, and today has only approximately 150 members. As with most small communities, those remaining struggle fiercely to maintain their Jewish life and traditions.

In the past few years WIZO Bolivia has lost many members, including two of their founders, Honorary Life President Liselotte Weiss and Past President and longtime Treasurer Anita Bursztyn.

WIZO Bolivia pays tribute to these two ladies:

Liselotte Weisz Susz (known as Lotte) was born in Vienna. Shortly after the annexation of Austria by Adolf Hitler's Nazi party in 1938, she immigrated to England, and in December 1939 she traveled to La Paz, Bolivia to reunite with her family.

Lotte's father Francisco Susz was the first Israeli consul in Bolivia. After his death in 1954 Lottie, together with her husband, took over the running of his business. She was also a successful sportswoman, excelling in swimming, ping-pong, track and field and mountain climbing. Lotte joined WIZO in 1964 and was active in the organisation until her final days. She served as president on two occasions, her last term being from 1994 till 1998, and after that as Honorary Life President. She participated in the Latin American WIZO Congress in Buenos Aires and in two World WIZO Congresses in Israel.

Lotte passed away in September 2013.

Ana Mandelmich de Bursztyn was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1934. She joined WIZO at the early age of 18. She settled in Bolivia in 1959 after she married, living in Cochabamba for some years and then in La Paz. Ana continued to work in WIZO throughout her life serving as secretary, social events convener, long time treasurer and finally as president. She passed away in November 2010.

Both women dedicated their life to WIZO until their final days. They are both greatly missed by all that knew and were inspired by them. May their memories be blessed.



Lotte Weisz



Ana de Butsztyń

BRAZIL

Brazil Delegation at Congress

Some 40 chaverot from WIZO Brazil - the largest delegation - attended the 14th Latin-American WIZO Congress in Chile, in May. Proudly led by their president Helena Kelner, the chaverot displayed their commitment and solidarity. WIZO Brazil wishes to congratulate WIZO Chile on an outstanding congress.



WIZO Brazil delegation with Tova Ben Dov and Rivka Lazovsky at the 14th WIZO Latin American Congress in Chile

Brasília

Yom Ha'atzmaut at the Embassy

Several chaverot from WIZO Brasília and WIZO Brazil President Helena Kelner attended a Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration at the Israeli Embassy. A samba school was the surprise entertainment in honour of the State of Israel. Rafael Eldad, Israeli Ambassador to Brazil thanked WIZO for taking part in the celebration.



(l to r) Helena Kelner, Comte Lavi from the Brazilian Navy, chavera Luciana Katz



Minas Gerais

Former Presidents' Hall Opened

WIZO Minas Gerais opened its 'Former Presidents' Hall', with honoured guests and representatives from Jewish organisations, among them Rabbi Leonardo Alanati, Tilah Cohen, president of the Minas Israeli Congregation and Ana Zarnowski, president of Na'amat Pioneer Women.



Chaverot Aviva Avritzer, Ada Mandil, Margarida Kraiser, Helena Berger and WIZO Minas President, Maria Auxiliadora Buelli with guests

Paraná

50th Anniversary Celebration

Clara and Jaminho Grimberg celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a wonderful party filled with emotion. The couple requested that all gifts should be donations to WIZO Paraná, showing their commitment to WIZO. Mazal Tov!



Jaminho and Clara Grimberg celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. Mrs Shoshana Antar, WIZO Paraná President is behind the couple, in the centre

Pará

A Double Celebration

Once again, Purim was joyfully celebrated by WIZO Pará. This year, the new Queen Esther was young Myriam Aben-Athar Unger, daughter of chavera Deborah Unger and granddaughter of two former WIZO Pará presidents, Nahon Aben-Athar and Esther Unger.

On the same day, to celebrate International Women's Day, WIZO honoured Mrs. Maria Clara Penna de Carvalho for her devoted volunteer work.



Myriam Aben-Athar (centre) with WIZO Pará chaverot

Pernambuco

Celebrating Pesach

WIZO Pernambuco took part in the Pesach Seder at the Moisés Chwartz Israeli Centre in Recife, where 220 people attended. Students from the Jewish school gave a song and dance performance. WIZO Pernambuco Aviv groups are succeeding in bringing in new members.

Rio Grande do Sul

Celebrating Yom Haatzmaut

WIZO Rio Grande do Sul, together with the Rio Grande do Sul Israel Federation and other Jewish organisations celebrated Yom Haatzmaut together at the Hebraica club. WIZO Rio Grande do Sul Acting President Malvina Dorfman was very happy about the number of WIZO chaverot attending. At the end, everyone joined together for some rousing dancing.



Elaine Unikowsky (l) and Malvina Dorfman at the celebration



(l to r) Lúcia Balassiano, Israeli Ambassador Rafael Eldad, Daniel Kolbac, head of the Israel Economics Mission in Rio de Janeiro.

Rio President Honoured

Initiated by Congressman Gerson Bergher, WIZO Rio de Janeiro president Lúcia Balassiano was honoured with the Pedro Ernesto medal by the Rio de Janeiro City Hall. The medal was awarded in acknowledgement of her outstanding volunteer work as president of WIZO Rio de Janeiro. Joining the celebration were Lucia's friends and family, chaverot from her Executive and the Executive of WIZO Brazil and representatives from several WIZO groups. Bravo Lúcia !



(l to r) Rio de Janeiro Assembly woman Mrs. Teresa Bergher, Rio de Janeiro Deputy Mr. Gerso Bergher, Lúcia Balassiano

Rio de Janeiro

Celebrating Israel's Independence

Happiness and friendship, commitment and responsibility were the themes at an event for Israel's Independence Day organised by the Israeli Federation of Rio de Janeiro, attended by the Israeli Ambassador to Brazil Rafael Eldad. WIZO Brazil President, Helena Kelner, WIZO Rio President Lúcia Balassiano and Na'amat Pioneer Women President Sonia Lisker were invited to light the third candle.

WIZO chaverot showed their unity by wearing their signature black and gold WIZO t-shirts.



WIZO Rio president Lúcia Balassiano with her Executive and WIZO Brazil president Helena Kelner.



São Paulo

Celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut All the Jewish organisations in São Paulo came together to celebrate Israel's 66th year of independence, with a programme that also included a segment to remember Israel's fallen.

The entertainment programme included a performance from the Sharsheret choir and singer Regis Karlik. Emotions were high as Chazan Marcio Besen read memorial prayers and the prayer for the welfare of the State of Israel.



Representatives of 11 São Paulo organisations celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut together

Educationalists Meet

World WIZO Education Division Chairperson Carmela Dekel accompanied teachers Roseli Ventrella, MariaLuiza Ferreira, Maria Silvia Sanchez Bortolozzo and Ivani Martins Gualda, from the State of São Paulo Education Department to several WIZO educational projects. The group visited WIZO Hadassim School and Youth Village and a multi-purpose day care centre which caters for children from diverse backgrounds, staying open for longer hours to help the families. Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive Professor Rivka Lazovsky warmly welcomed the group at World WIZO Head Office.



The delegation from São Paulo with Carmela Dekel (3rd from left) and Rivka Lazovsky (5th from left) at WIZO Head Office

International Women's Day

Unibes President Célia Kochen Parnes was honoured by the community on International Women's Day at an event organised by the Chana Szenes group. Group president Rebecca Rosenberg praised Célia saying: "Celia, a successful businesswoman who still finds time to care for those in need. She is a true example to all in the Jewish community and society in general." WIZO São Paulo President, Iza Mansur sent a warm message saying this is truly a deserving honour.



Celia Parnes (centre in white dress) is welcomed by the Chana Szenes group

CANADA

CHW Montreal Walk in the Park

Members and friends of the Anna Zaitchick Chapter of CHW Montreal took part in their 3rd annual fundraiser for CHW projects in support of Children, Healthcare and Women in Israel. Participants walked 5km on a scenic tour of Outremont and Pratt Park in solidarity with Israel and CHW. Each member set a minimum fundraising goal of \$400 for themselves and most surpassed their goals! The walk was followed by a luncheon for all the walkers to celebrate their unbelievable success.



CHW Montreal Anna Zaitchick Chapter Walk in the Park group photo

CHW Vancouver Walk in the Park

CHW Vancouver Centre hosted its first ever 'Walk' fundraising event. Based on CHW Montreal's Walk in the Park, CHW Vancouver's event was a great social and financial success. The Vancouver participants are delighted with the results and are very proud of their accomplishments. Long standing member Maureen Glaisher Sanders was one of the biggest fundraisers, and is pictured here with her walking companion who garnered more attention than the other walkers!



CHW Vancouver's Walk. Maureen Glaisher and her four-legged walking partner

CHW Ottawa: Annual Spring Tea

Over 150 CHW Ottawa Centre members and friends attended the Annual Spring Tea hosted by the Amit, Ina McCarthy and Mollie Betcherman Chapters. Held at the home of Marcia and Barry Cantor, the event honoured journalist, teacher, community volunteer and philanthropist Barbara Crook. CHW National Executive Director Alina Ianson was on hand to bring greetings on behalf of the organisation and to thank the members for their continued support and dedication to CHW.



CHW Ottawa Annual Spring Tea honouree Barbara Crook

CHILE

Latin American Congress

The 350 delegates from seven countries were overwhelmed by the great success of the 14th Latin American WIZO Congress recently held in Chile. Under the leadership of WIZO Chile President Agnes Mannheim, delegates attended a variety of meaningful and practical sessions over several days.

Messages were received from President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who thanked WIZO for its important contribution to Israeli society, and its initiatives in promoting projects that impact the quality of life of many Israelis. With high education on its agenda, WIZO provides a key element for a better tomorrow.

Present from Israel were World WIZO President Tova Ben-Dov and Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive Professor Rivka Lazovsky, both of whom outlined WIZO's work in Israel and the importance of belonging to this important movement. By doing so, chaverot are forging an unbreakable link with Israel and the Jewish people.

Adding spice to the event was South African Laurienne Baetz, WIZO's dynamic Aviv representative to the World WIZO Executive, who spoke to the hearts and minds of the younger generation.



Delegates at the XIV Latin American Congress

Meaningful Shavuot

WIZO Chile held a warm and meaningful celebration for Shavuot, which was attended by Rabbi Alexander Bloch who delivered a profound message about the importance of the holiday. Lidia Bohorodzaner and Leah Rachim of the Eshet Jail WIZO group gave a moving presentation about the meaning of Shavuot.

A special part of this celebration was the recognition made to Israeli Ambassador David Dadonn and his wife Karen for their continued support and commitment to WIZO during their years in Chile.

As is traditional, the WIZO gifts for the holiday consist of contributions made by our chaverot, which are delivered to one of the schools of the 'Republic of Israel' sponsored by PASI-CEFI (The Jewish Welfare Program of the Jewish



Women Organisations' Committee).

WIZO is very grateful to all the WIZO chaverot and supporters who donated hats, gloves, parkas and scarves to be delivered to the Las Dunas School in the Bio-Bio region.



(l to r) Ambassador David Dadonn, WIZO Chile President Agnes Mannheim, Karen Dadonn

These Shoes are Made for Walking!

WIZO Chile President Agnes Mannheim and Vice President Yael Hasson, delivered a gift of shoes for all the children at the David Ben Gurion School in the city of Valparaiso on behalf of WIZO Chile and PASI-CEFI.

Fortunately, the school itself was not severely damaged by the fierce fire that ravaged the area, but all the children and their families were affected.



Agnes Mannheim and Yael Hasson delivering shoes to the children of the King David School

DENMARK

Jewish Culture Festival

Nobody could be happier about Israel's many successes as a Start-Up Nation than those of us who are involved in fundraising for Israel; however we also face frequent difficulties explaining why such a successful country needs help from abroad.

The Danish branch of Keren Hayesod, the Society of Danish Jewish History and WIZO Denmark therefore joined forces and invited Rabbi and former Israeli Minister of Social and Diaspora Affairs, Michael Melchior to The Jewish Culture Festival in Copenhagen in June. Here he eloquently spoke

to an interested crowd of 200 people and explained about the uneven distribution of wealth, the low salaries for a huge part of the work force and about a kind of poverty that Israel hasn't seen before, namely the kind of poverty that sends children to bed hungry.

We are very grateful that Michael Melchior came all the way to Copenhagen and shared his vast knowledge with us and with the audience.

During the five-day festival, which attracted around 3,500 people, WIZO Denmark operated a booth selling various items of Judaica and engaging women in conversation about WIZO's work in Denmark and in Israel.



Board Member Monica Salimanov in the WIZO booth at the Jewish Culture Festival in Copenhagen

ECWF

ECWF Conference

Amsterdam was the venue for this year's European Council of WIZO Federations (ECWF) conference, hosted by WIZO Holland. Delegates from 12 European countries gathered together for several days of meaningful and stimulating lectures, visits to places of Jewish interest in Amsterdam and some joyful touring, wining and dining.

Welcoming the delegates on the first day were WIZO Holland President Joyce Numann-Durlacher, and WIZO Austria President Dr. Hava Bugajer-Gleitman, member of the ECWF Executive. Lectures were given on such subjects as gender equality, children's rights, women's empowerment, the status of women in Israel and how Israel is covered in the Dutch media.

All agreed that one of the most positive features of the conference was the harmony and sisterhood that prevailed amongst the chaverot. All are looking forward to next year – in Paris.

FINLAND

World Village Festival

For the first time WIZO Helsinki participated at the annual World Village Festival held in Helsinki for two days in May, and ran a booth together with the Jewish Community, the kosher shop Zaafran and KKL.

The aim was to promote and support Israel, show that there are Jews in Finland and convey the wonderful work WIZO does for children, youth and women's rights. At the same time chaverot tried to get some new supporters and sponsors for WIZO Finland.

As this was the first time WIZO had participated in the festival, it was a learning experience, and the chaverot know how to prepare better for next year. Although the Israeli Embassy provided publicity material, WIZO will need more brochures and perhaps some giveaways.

The festival exceeded all expectations with over 80,000 visitors, and included a varied programme of events, exotic food and examples of ethnic cultures from around the world.

GERMANY

Berlin

Celebrating Mother's Day

WIZO Berlin decided to hold an event for Mother's Day this year to honour their mothers and with all the proceeds going to help children in Israel celebrate their bar and bat mitzvah.

Held in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Berlin, the 150 tickets were soon sold out.

The children of the chaverot rehearsed for weeks for their singing and dancing performance, which contributed to an unforgettable event. German actress Susan Sidropoulos moderated the afternoon with great enthusiasm, charmingly engaging with the children.

Finally, a great surprise! Rita, the finalist of Voice Kids Germany 2013, came on stage and gave an outstanding performance to the delight of the entire audience.



Delightful WIZO Berlin children!

WIZO Berlin's Ladies' Night

A vintage clothing sale, fashion show, delicious food and good music - who could ask for more?

These were the components that made WIZO Berlin's Ladies

Night, held in a night club in Berlin, such a great success. More than 80 women enjoyed an entertaining evening in a relaxed atmosphere with great music, homemade pastries and a fashion show organised by the WIZO ladies.

The evening's highlight was the vintage shop which had been stocked by WIZO's generous business and private donors.

Proceeds from the evening were dedicated to the Pilavin Day Care Centre in Rishon Le Zion, which is sponsored by WIZO Germany.



The elegant invitation to WIZO Berlin's Ladies' Night

Frankfurt

Non-Stop Young WIZO Frankfurt!

Full of energy, Young WIZO Frankfurt held a variety of socially and financially successful events over a short period of time.

Starting off by adhering to a quote by Goethe: 'Life is too short to drink bad wine,' the young women held a wine-tasting event at a smart venue. Set in a cosy ambiance with a warming fire, the evening also included light snacks from an up-and-coming catering company.

Shortly afterwards the chaverot participated in a first-time



event: 'PuriMasquerade Frankytown,' which included a late-night raffle. Among the main prizes that awaited the lucky winners was a stay in a five-star hotel in Berlin.

With hardly a pause for breath, the girls were anxious to shed the extra pounds they may have gained over Pesach, so at the beginning of May a 'Let's Dance Hip Hop' session was held under the expert supervision of DJ Sivan Neumann. The girls sweated off those pounds dressed in jogging pants and of course, Young WIZO t-shirts.

And last, but not least the girls sold homemade cakes at a popular street festival in Frankfurt. In a short time the 50 cakes were sold and funds raised surpassed that of last year.



Young WIZO Frankfurt chaverot selling their homemade cakes

Munich

Traditional Family Brunch

WIZO Munich once again held its popular annual family brunch at Käfer's famous restaurant. While eating the delicious and opulent buffet brunch, parents met together and mingled while the children were cared for and entertained by professional staff. All proceeds from the event go to WIZO Germany-sponsored Marie Sternberg Day Care Centre in Bat Yam.



A glimpse of what is in store at Munich WIZO's Family Brunch

PARAGUAY

An Enriching Experience

WIZO Paraguay experienced some enriching moments at the Latin American Congress held in Chile. The chaverot learned from each other and felt the congress was an opportunity to discuss all the projects and activities undertaken by the various federations. Despite being such a small federation and a small Jewish community, the chaverot realised they can still carry out varied and meaningful activities to further the noble objectives of WIZO.

SOUTH AFRICA

Successful Campaign

WIZO South Africa's Campaign left many households talking about WIZO and its guest speaker Dr. Bernd Wollschlaeger who filled halls to capacity when he spoke in five cities in five days country wide.

In a whirlwind visit Dr. Wollschlaeger's riveting and admirable personal story of courage and conviction as a young man to seek change from the values and ideology he felt were wrong, touched everyone who attended. Born in Bamberg, Germany, the son of a former Nazi tank commander, Wollschlaeger's family hid their past from him. Only as a teenager and young adult did he find out the truth about Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, and completely changed his life's path including eventually converting to Judaism and living in Israel for some years.

Having such large captive audiences, which consisted of both men and women, enabled WIZO South Africa to promote WIZO's work and the projects the federation supports in Israel and to raise much needed funds.



WIZO Johannesburg members

Cape Town

BZA WIZO had a packed auditorium with people who came to hear Shani Krebs' riveting life story. After years of addiction, Shani, who was sentenced to death (then reduced to 100 years) in a Thai prison for heroin trafficking, put drugs behind him, and began a life-transforming engagement

with art and his long-neglected Jewish faith. After surviving 18 years in prison - the longest-serving westerner in a Thai prison - he was released and returned to South Africa a free and changed man.



(l to r) Suzanne Luck, Felicity Isserow, lucky book winner Gill Raphael, Shani Krebs

Johannesburg

WIZO Forum hosted Naomi Dinur, a graduate from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, a translator in Hebrew and English and an active member of WIZO, to share the amazing story of the Dura Europos Synagogue in Syria. The synagogue, one of the oldest in the world, was preserved virtually intact.

The beautiful murals, which covered the walls of the synagogue and are housed in the Damascus museum, depict colourful scenes from the Bible. Through her slide presentation, Naomi gave the rapt audience a peek into the life of Jews at the time, as she explained the history of the synagogue.

While everyone enjoyed refreshments, Naomi showed general slides of Syria revealing the beauty of the country.



Naomi Dinur (l) and Andrea Wainer

WIZO Turns Lives Around

The Sandton Synagogue youth hall was filled with women eager to hear the powerful story written by Anne Lapedus Brest: *Catastrophe Oy Vey. My Child is Gay (and an Addict)*.

The audience listened to the moving story of a mother and daughter's relationship through a very trying time. Both Anne and Angela spoke about Angela's addiction to drugs and alcohol and the long road to recovery, as well as Anne's acceptance of Angela's sexuality.

A question and answer session followed the presentation. Both Anne and Angela have turned their lives around and helped WIZO turn lives around by giving their time to tell their story and contributing to a very successful fund raiser.



Anne Lapedus Brest (l) and daughter Angela

Remembering the Holocaust

WIZO Johannesburg held their Yom Hashoa commemoration service at Beyachad. Survivors lit the six candles and Chazan Chilly Chrysler intoned the memorial prayer, bringing tears to everyone's eyes. The film, *The Flat*, was screened, which is the story of a young man who goes on a journey of discovery after his grandmother passes away and finds information linking his grandparents with a Nazi couple. After the film, Don Krauz related three short stories from his experiences during the war. Tea was served while the chaverot discussed the very dramatic and poignant film.



Raya Ravid (l) lights a memorial candle



Port Elizabeth

Organising Par Excellence

Michelle Brown is one of those lucky people who had a dream which came true: working for Colin Cowie's world renowned events organising business. Her entertaining talk, which centred on her experience working for Colin and many hilarious moments, delighted, enthralled and totally absorbed the audience.

One of the events which involved Michelle was a birthday party arranged by Oprah Winfrey for a dear and close friend of hers in Santa Barbara. Many celebrities attended, and Michelle got to meet Oprah and some of the guests.

Harriet Berkowitz, Laura Charlewood, Val Cohen, Carol Kahn and Nadine Lang were all part of a great organising team. Val's information and introduction regarding WIZO was most informative and was commented on especially by non-members, who had very little knowledge of WIZO's wide range of activities.



(1 to r) Harriet Berkowitz, Carol Kahn, Laura Charlewood, Val Cohen

Documentary Screened

WIZO Pretoria recently screened the documentary *Ghosts of the Third Reich* to a large crowd, followed by a discussion with the Israeli DMC, Michael Freeman and Tali Nates, Director of the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre.



(1 to r) Elayne Ossip, Tali Nates, Michael Freeman

SWITZERLAND

Bern

WIZO Shop Celebrates 25 Years

The WIZO Lädeli shop has reported good sales figures. Among other things, this is due to the vast and varied selection of donated goods, - but especially to Nelly Gechter, the long-time extremely successful business manager.

Nelly and her volunteers were delighted that so many customers - friends from Bern's Jewish community and Bern's WIZO group found their way to the second-hand shop to celebrate its 25th anniversary and encourage its continued existence.

Fribourg

WIZO Fribourg organised a trip to Eendingen and Lengnau, where Roy Oppenheim, historian and president of the "art-tv.ch - culture, television in the network", shared his vast knowledge with the participants.

They visited the two beautiful synagogues, the mikvah, other sights of the two villages and the oldest Jewish cemetery (Eendingen).

The chaverot will remember the wonderful time they had together and the history that connects them.

Zurich

Keep Fit with Young WIZO Zurich!

For their new project for children in Israel, Young WIZO Zurich organised a "Fit for the Summer" workshop in the ICZ community house in Zurich.

Sabina Pernet reported: "Two health workers, Finnish Teresia Björnberg (Pilates Coach) and Swedish Christine Primmer (nutritionist), both volunteered their expertise and revealed professional tips and tricks.

Christine encouraged the chaverot to 'replace everyday temptations by eating healthy food on a continuous basis.' Teresia showed how important it is to move your body and do the exercises properly. The 30 participants showed great interest and hopefully they are now ready for the Fall!

UNITED KINGDOM

Commitment Awards

"Inspiring," "humbling," "moving" and "nourishing for the soul" - these are just a few of the words that the WIZO UK Commitment Award winners used to describe their visit to Israel as part of the new initiative to honour individuals who display excellence in one of four fields: women in the workplace, corporate social responsibility, entrepreneurship and commitment to Israel.

Awardees visited WIZO projects, the i24 news channel, Peres Centre for Peace, El Al Control Centre and Independence Hall. They were also present at the Knesset for UK Prime Minister David Cameron's speech.

Karen Mattison, MBE said, "First the passion felt by WIZO staff, lay leadership and volunteers for the work that you do. This is a humbling thing to witness. Second, wherever we went we were told, 'To give is to receive'. This powerful message is at the heart of the drive to do good and is a message we need to convey to younger potential members." Fellow awardee David Altschuler added, "I was impressed by the amazing work of WIZO as part of the fabric of Israel and safety net for the social needs of its children."



(l-r) Maureen Fisher, Chas Newkey-Burden, Karen Mattison, Rivka Lazovsky, Yosi Saragossi, Alex Gold, Joel Minsky, David Altschuler, Janine Gelley, Jackie Ellert, Loraine Warren

Natasha Impresses Stanmore Ladies

A capacity crowd attended the annual Stanmore WIZO summer lunch hosted by Gena Turgel MBE and WIZO UK Honorary Vice-President. It was at a reception at 10 Downing Street that Gena first met guest speaker, broadcaster and journalist Natasha Kaplinsky. Natasha captivated the audience with an insight into her professional life and moved everyone with her journey of discovery of Holocaust horrors suffered by her father's family through the TV show, 'Who do you think you are?', which became the impetus for her involvement in the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission.



(l to r) Natasha Kaplinsky, Ruth de Kare-Silver, Debra Marchant, Gena Turgel, Nikki Marks

Rebecca Sieff Day Awards

WIZO UK's annual Rebecca Sieff Day, where key volunteers are rewarded, was held in the summer. Guest speaker Chas Newkey-Burden spoke about his recent visit to Israel as winner of the WIZO UK Commitment to Israel Award, where he was 'overwhelmed and humbled' by the WIZO projects he visited. Dudu Moatty director of the WIZO Community Centre in Afula (sponsored by WIZO UK) addressed the crowd together with graduates from the 'Women's Empowerment Programme'.

The Rebecca Sieff awards were presented to Marilyn Burchell, Bromley and Valerie Spilfogel, Wembley and the Lily Sieff award was presented to Lady Beryl Steinberg, Manchester.



(l to r) Gina Monty, Marilyn Burchell, Valerie Spilfogel, Michele Pollock, Chas Newkey-Burden, Lady Beryl Steinberg, Jill Shaw Chairman WIZO UK

A Tory Point of View

Jo-Anne Nadler, author, political journalist, former Conservative councillor and unofficial biographer of William Hague, was the guest speaker at Kingston WIZO's annual Summer Luncheon. She described various aspects of her life, which included visits to Israeli relatives of her late father, her BBC career, her years as a Councillor in Wandsworth, and her experiences as a Conservative Party activist, with particular reference to her two books: *Too Nice To Be A Tory* and *William Hague - In His Own Right*.

A lively Q & A session ensued in which Jo-Anne gave her views on a wide range of contemporary issues including the benefit system, education, immigration, the Arab Spring, Iran and the possible outcome of next year's election.

Earlier, Anne Lyons paid tribute to Jackie Gordon who is leaving Kingston, for her many years' work as Chairman of Kingston WIZO. The event, attended by over 40 Kingston WIZO members and spouses, was hosted by Shoshana and Steven Carson.



Nostalgic Return

Holocaust survivor and Kindertransport child Chanita Rodney was recently honoured by the Liverpool City Council at the National Holocaust Memorial Day service at the local town hall.

When Chanita arrived in Liverpool in 1939, after being abused by Hitler Youth, she was adopted by WIZO activist Dolly and her husband Leo Levy. After war's end, being the only survivor of her family, Chanita immigrated to the new State of Israel in 1949, where she soon married Bob, another immigrant she had met in England.

Chanita and Bob did not have it easy in the new State, starting life on a kibbutz in the north and then moving to a moshav in the south of the country. Here, she became active in WIZO, helping women in the surrounding villages for over 20 years. The couple had four children, the oldest of whom was eventually diagnosed with schizophrenia. This led Chanita to found Enosh, Israel's premier mental health association. This past summer, Chanita received an Honorary Doctorate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to recognise her work with mental health in Israel.

Back in Liverpool, Chanita also addressed Liverpool City Schools Children's Parliament and was guest of honour and keynote speaker at the Jewish Forum Dinner, where she nostalgically reunited with many people from her childhood in Liverpool.

Today, Chanita lives in Kfar Saba and is still active in WIZO, regularly attending the Veterans' Forum meetings in Tel Aviv. She has recorded her fascinating life story in her book *Life is a Gift*.



(l to r) Chanita Rodney, Lord Mayor of Liverpool Gary Miller, Sonia Strong (Liverpool WIZO, Hon. Vice President WIZO UK)

USA

Florida

Atid Chapter Reaching New Heights

WIZO Florida's Atid Chapter is on the move! A new group of youngsters in their twenties have taken hold of the group and plan a whole year of exciting events. WIZO Florida Chairperson Ruthy Benoliel hosted an informal get together to inspire and guide this blossoming chapter.



Raring to go! Atid Chapter's 20-somethings

Yonit Chapter Makes Jewellery

A private home was the venue for a creative event organised by WIZO Florida's Yonit Chapter's Chairperson Sandra Kaplan. Guided by artisan Esther Soued, attendees learned to make beautiful necklaces – being given the choice to work with amethyst or onyx stones.



Yonit ladies using their creative skills to make jewellery

Volunteer Recognition Dinner

WIZO USA Co-President Jana Falic and WIZO Florida Chairperson Ruthy Benoliel, hosted the 2014 Volunteer Recognition Dinner to honour the incredible hard work of WIZO Florida's devoted volunteers. Each WIZO Florida Chapter Chair named a volunteer of the year to recognize those women who have truly gone above and beyond in their volunteer work. Those honoured were: Susan Sperling, Sharon Redensky, Amy Costo, Sara Elnecave, and Ruth Warat.

Also honoured and thanked were Carol Fischzang and Keila Stiberman, outgoing chairs of Simcha and Ilanit-Tikva Chapters respectively, for two incredible years of leadership.



Dinner Honorees Keila Stiberman (l) and Carol Fischzang

Holocaust Memories in the Living Room

The saying 'from generation to generation' truly came to life when Holocaust survivors shared their histories and experiences with the next generations. The event, organised by Simcha and Ilanit Tikvah Chapters took place over the course of a few weeks and was hosted in more than ten homes, with a special night held just for teens.



Holocaust survivors share their memories with WIZO Florida members

SAC Lunch and Fashion Show

WIZO Florida celebrated its annual Mother's Day Sponsor A Child Luncheon and Bazaar honouring Temy Muchnick Kreutzberger and Rebeca Schapiro for their lifelong commitment to WIZO. Over 300 chaverot attended the extraordinary fashion show event featuring world-renowned designer Angel Sanchez's new collection. Thanks to the dynamic leadership of Co-Chairs Mary Bendayan and Sara Kanarek, Vice Chair Melania Benlolo, the Event Committee and WIZO Florida Chairperson Ruthy Benoliel, the occasion was a great social and financial success.



Designer Angel Sanchez with WIZO Florida Event Committee

New York

Children for Our Children Fashion Show and Luncheon

Over 300 guests joined WIZO New York for their 17th annual 'Children for our Children Fashion Show and Luncheon', chaired by Samantha Podolsky. The event at The Pierre hotel in New York City brought great awareness for WIZO's critical work in Israel.

Moving testimonials were read, some personal, some on behalf of WIZO's children under the title "I am WIZO" – what WIZO means to me.

The fashion show featured children of WIZO members parading down the runway in high fashion clothes in support of the children in Israel. Samantha spoke about the critical services WIZO provides to the neediest sectors of Israeli society. Ambassador Ido Aharoni, Consul General of Israel in New York also addressed the guests.

Michael Perl, son of WIZO USA Co-President, Daniela Siegal, granddaughter of WIZO USA Co-Founding President Evelyn Sommer and daughter of Jackie Siegal, WIZO USA Executive Board Member, Audrey Wisch, and Sydney Silverstein were recognized for their involvement in WIZO's B'nei Mitzvah Campaign. These young philanthropists chose to donate their gifts to WIZO, and for this were given special awards. WIZO New York Board Members Erit Cohen and Mona Gora Sterling were presented with the 'Diamond Forever' brooch.



(l to r) Brenda Abuaf, Samantha Podolsky, Victoria Sakhai, Evelyn Sommer, Erit Cohen, Liza Berman, Gail Perl

WIZO Young Leadership's Annual Party

WIZO New York's Young Leadership hosted their annual party at 55 Gansevoort in NYC's Meatpacking District. Nearly 200 young professionals gathered to party to support WIZO. The high energy evening was enjoyed by some of New York City's most up and coming young philanthropists, creating a very positive momentum for the next generation of WIZO supporters. The event's success is credited in part to the efforts of many of the sponsors and host committee members, and especially the new leadership: John Argi, son of WIZO Switzerland President, Ann Argi, as well as Tanya Low and Arielle Himoff who worked tirelessly to attract a new crowd to hear about WIZO's immeasurable work.



(l to r) Arielle Himoff, Tanya Low, Anna Stein, Genevieve and John Argi

Fly for Israel

During Operation Protective Edge, WIZO Westchester, chaired by Deborah Cherki, Angela Retelny and Deedee Cohen gathered at the Flywheel studio in Scarsdale for a charity FlyBarre event in honour of WIZO's Emergency Campaign. Each of the three chairs raised much-needed funds through their friends and families and recruited participants to register for the class and work out for a cause!

The participants not only enjoyed a tough workout, they were also informed about the importance of WIZO's work during this war and the critical services being provided by WIZO to families from villages and kibbutzim in the south who were given shelter in WIZO's youth villages.



Tough workout! WIZO Westchester chaverot raising funds for WIZO's Emergency Campaign



(l to r) WIZO Westchester Co-Chairs Angela Retelny, Deedee Cohen, Deborah Cherki

Solidarity Shabbat Dinner

Friends of Board Members Haley & Jason Binn and Jamie & David Mitchell held a solidarity Shabbat dinner at the Mitchells' summer home in the Hamptons to raise critical funds needed to sustain the families from the south evacuated to WIZO's youth villages during the war. Several hundred thousand dollars were raised through the generosity of WIZO members and new friends to WIZO who were only too willing to give donations after hearing the inspiring speech given by WIZO USA Co-Founding President, Evelyn Sommer.



(l to r) Co-Hosts Jason & Haley Binn, WIZO USA Co-Founding President, Evelyn Sommer, Co-Hosts Jamie & David Mitchell

Turn a Life Around

Providing the building blocks for a new life

Entering a WIZO Youth Village means a second chance for Israeli youth at risk. This home away from home provides the warm, nurturing support they need.

No matter how disadvantaged or troubled your background may have been,
You can turn your life around –
That's the WIZO way.

WIZO
Sponsor a Youth

For further information and to make online contributions, visit our website:

www.wizo.org

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Women's International Zionist Organization
for an Improved Israeli Society



www.wizo.org

WIZO *Facts and Figures*

50 FEDERATIONS WORLDWIDE
250,000 MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- **14,000 children** (3 months – 3 years) in more than 180 day care centres
- **1600 children** in 19 multi-purpose day care centres (open from 7am -7pm)
- **285 children** (6-9 years) attend after-school programmes
- **166 children** (6-18 years) live in WIZO foster homes
- **32 children** (4-18 years) In four Neve WIZO homes, therapeutic residences
- **5,220 youth** (12-18 years) attend eight WIZO schools and youth villages
- **1,060 at-risk youth** (12-18 years) live in the youth villages' dormitories
- **27 centres** cater for 380 teenage girls at risk
- **30 subsidized legal advice bureaus** service thousands of women annually
- **80 women and 100 children** at two WIZO battered women's shelters
- **5,340 women** participate in back-to-work programmes
- **4,500 single** mothers in 86 groups participate in special activities for single parent families
- **10,000 women** participate in enrichment and empowerment programmes at WIZO centres
- **WIZO early age hotline** (only one in Israel) to tackle parenting difficulties
- **WIZO hotline for abusive men**
- **Treatment and support centres** for families of the mentally ill
- **Support groups** for the elderly
- **Support and integration programmes** for new immigrants
- **45 second-hand stores**

and more...

