



26<sup>th</sup> June (210) No.4

# What's New... In WIZO ?



Dear Chaverot,

As the school year comes to an end, I want to share with you a story that I heard during the course of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for **WIZO Nachlat Yehuda, sponsored by WIZO Switzerland**. This story highlights the human side of our work, each pupil -with his or her own story, each story weaved in our rich history.

At the table for the graduates, Miriam Perl, was approached by a fellow graduate from 1946, who threw her arms around Miriam and said, 'I have wanted to speak to you for so many years, I want to apologize for the way we pupils in Nachlat Yehuda, treated you. We were not interested in your stories. Over time I realized what you had gone through before you arrived at Nachlat. Please accept my apology, it is from my heart'.

Miriam explained her background. She was rescued, together with her siblings, from Romania. They would never see their parents again. Eventually they arrived, orphans and confused at Nachlat Yehuda, where the children who were already there did not exactly welcome the immigrant children, with open arms. When asked how old she was when she came to Nachlat, she was nineteen, but said that she was 17, as she was scared that she would not be accepted to the youth village.

Miriam sat at the table during the reunion and said, 'I owe everything to WIZO Nachlat Yehuda. And my revenge over the Nazis are my **fourteen grandchildren, and eleven great grandchildren**'.



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### *Breakthrough Legislation*

One very important facet of WIZO's work to advance the status of women, and to help women who are the victims of abuse, is our lobbying in the Knesset for changes in legislation for women. WIZO also fights hard for the implementation of the existing laws. Too often laws are passed, but not implemented.

We have been successfully introduced many important laws. Just last month the first reading of a law allowing victims of abuse to appear before a judge behind closed doors was passed. encouraging women who are victims of violence to come forward and testify without fear.

We are also awaiting the result of an appeal that we made to the Supreme Court of Justice, after the government added conditions to a ruling of the courts that women who are living in the shelters for battered women should receive benefits while living there. Let me explain the background to you.....

When a woman, with her children , escapes to a Shelter, the last thing on her mind is her bills. She just wants to stay alive! After months of rehabilitation and therapy, she leaves the Shelter to begin an independent life.

However, on leaving she is often confronted by a whole list of bills, mortgages and other debts that have mounted up while she was in the Shelter. Once again desperation sets in. She cannot cope with the debt together with the costs of trying to support her family alone, trying to find work, and settling her children in new schools. Through the lack of any other option, she goes back to her violent husband - all our efforts down the drain., and again she is in danger. If our appeal passes in court, the woman can continue paying her bills while she lives in the Shelter, and has a better chance of making it alone on leaving the shelter. Kol Hakavod to all those involved in this important undertaking.



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## WIZO Early Age Division

Within the framework of a scheme to enhance the **Rebecca Sieff WIZO Center in Bet Hakerem** parents and grandparents celebrated **Shavuot** in the Center. The grandparents were especially delighted with the festival of the first fruits which was a pleasure to see. This ceremony, which is held every year, connects the children and their families with Jewish tradition and is especially appreciated by the grandparents.

'**Nutrition**', the theme subject in **WIZO's Day Care Centers this year** was discussed at an assembly of directors from the Day Care Centers at the close of the school year. Each Day Care Center spoke about the emphasis that it had placed on the issue, and the **importance of health from an early age**. Assemblies such as these are pivotal in the work that is being done in the Day Care Centers. They bring together the Directors, social workers, project managers, and staff from Head Office. Everyone learns something new about the **different facets of WIZO's work for children**, including 'outside the home' frameworks for children who cannot live in their own homes. Those who participated spoke about the pride that they felt on learning about the scope of WIZO's work.

Staff from the Day Care Centers also attended a series of three training courses, held in seven locations, which was organized by **WIZO together with the Joint**. The courses also dealt with the subject of nutrition at an early age. A suitable program was presented to the caregivers, **each suited to her particular Day Care Center**. The courses are given to all **3,000 caregivers** in WIZO's DCC's.

The results of a questionnaire which was distributed to the parents of all children who attend WIZO's Day Care Centers were processed, giving each parent the opportunity to express, with complete anonymity, his or her views on the services that are provided in our Day Care Centers. 80% of parents answered the questionnaire, which gives us the chance to draw conclusions and make changes if necessary.

We are happy to report the following conclusions:



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- ✚ Most of the components in the 'Basket of Services' which is offered were awarded high scores of 9 on a scale of 1-10.
- ✚ Another three components were awarded an 8.
- ✚ Over 60% of the parents notice an improvement in the services provided as compared to the previous school year.
- ✚ The parents reported that they highly recommend the WIZO Day Care Centers to others.

The responses, which are the result of intense work on a daily basis, and concern amongst the staff both at Head Office and in the Day Care Centers, are a source of satisfaction to all involved.



## WIZO Education Division:

Participants in the Judo classes at the WIZO Community Center in Afula, sponsored by WIZO Holland and WIZO uk, competed in the Israeli championships which were held in April. Three pupils from the Center were awarded prizes in their categories - first place in the Israeli championship for 10 and 11 year olds, Second place in the Israeli Championship for 10 and 11 year olds, and third place in the 8-9 year old category.







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The Center also offered a course on **how to balance the family budget**, which, in these hard times, is a very sought after course. Fifteen volunteers are trained to work with families, to help them with their individual problems, and to keep in contact with them on a long term basis.

**Tomer Pratkin**, is a very talented young artist, aged just 11. The public library in Afula exhibited her works and visitors were surprised at the artistic standard of her talent. Tomer is a student at the **WIZO Community Center in Afula**, and we expect to hear far more about her in the future.

The **WIZO Community Center in Afula** served as a polling station, for citizens of France who live in the north of the country, and had the right to vote in the last election for the new President of France. This is the first time that a polling station was set up outside the French consulate in Haifa. Hundreds came to vote and it was an excellent opportunity for the Center to become known amongst a wider audience.



**Shavuot** is known as the festival that pays tribute to the converted Jew, The Afula Community Center hosted the Head of the Beth Din for Conversions., Rabbi Yosef Avior, who spoke about the different aspects of **conversion to Judaism, according to Jewish law.** Rabbi Haim Anazi also conducted a tikun leil Shavuot and enriched all those present with his knowledge.

**WIZO Nachlat Yehuda**, sponsored by **WIZO Switzerland**, celebrated its **90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** with an event which appealed to all ages, Thousand of village graduates, their families, teachers, students and employees past and present participated in an Alumni Gala on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.



Ahead of the ceremony was a nostalgic tour of the village farm including the barn, chicken coop, animal corner and the new site for the production of organic fertilizer. An exhibition of images depicting village life - "**From then until Today**" was a tribute to staff and graduates who contributed to turning the village a thriving educational institution.



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The climax of the evening was a spectacular laser show with performances by the youth village song and dance troupe and a festive Shavuot first fruit ceremony. Amongst the special guests were **Anne Argi, Ruth Dreyfus and Lucie Gideon**, from the sponsoring federation, Switzerland, who have played a huge role in the development of the youth village over the decades.

The **Helena Kagan Community Center for Youth and Communications, in Jerusalem**, sponsored by **WIZO uk**, held a reunion of graduates in the Center, to which were invited graduates from throughout the years of the Center, which was founded 50 years ago. The graduates shared their memories with one another and a film was screened showing the early years of the Center. The graduates also chatted with those of **Ethiopian** descent who frequent the Center today, and who are preparing a 'Journey into their Past'.

**WIZO Nir Haemek School and Youth Village**, sponsored by **WIZO Argentina and WIZO USA**, which sits in the heart of the **Jezreel Valley**, is finely attuned to the agriculture and scenery in the area. Shavuot was therefore a reason to celebrate agriculture with Jewish heritage, as had done generations previously. After discussing the meaning of **Shavuot**, the importance of agricultural produce, and the reasons behind the dairy produce that is consumed on Shavuot, hundreds of pupils took part in a procession, headed by the bicyclists from the **bicycling course**, and the **police academy** pupils, followed by the horses from the youth village, and all the other branches of the youth village, proudly displaying their produce. The cowshed boasts the 19<sup>th</sup> place out of 423 cowsheds in the country, which are seen as the best in the world. **Five pupils were also awarded certificates for their work in the farm during the current school year.**



A graduation event was held on 31<sup>st</sup> May, at the police headquarters in Kiryat Ata, for the students who learn in the **Police Academy at WIZO Nir Haemek**.. The event was attended by parents, visitors and of course, the pupils, who joined other pupils from two similar police academies in youth villages. The ceremony was in the presence of high ranking police officers.



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The pupils learn for a full matriculation and study criminology as one of their subjects. The group is accompanied by a police officer, the pupils wear police uniforms, learn about the world of the police, are given reinforcement and personal attention. A group of counselors work with them, giving them support, warmth, together with a group of social workers, a psychologist, mediator, national service girls and boys and soldier teachers. Most of the pupils apply to serve in the police force when they join the army, and are highly praised, with commendable marks.

A moving remembrance ceremony was held at the **WIZO Maalot Tarshicha Music Center**, sponsored by **WIZO Switzerland**, in memory of the victims of the terrorist attack which took place on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1974 when a group of terrorists came over from Lebanon, arrived in Maalot, murdered the members of a family there and continued from there to the **Netiv Meir school in Maalot where they took the pupils hostage**. The attack ended with the murder of another 21 pupils, and a soldier, with 68 injured. Every year a memorial service is held in their memory on the 15<sup>th</sup> May in the presence of dignitaries and the bereaved families.

On Jerusalem Day, young musicians from the **WIZO Maalot Tarshicha Music Center**, sponsored by **WIZO Switzerland**, played in the Cultural Hall at a prestigious ceremony awarding the **Honorees of Maalot**. The Music Center is a melting pot for pupils from all backgrounds, Jewish and Arab.

Nineteen pupils from **WIZO Nahalal**, sponsored by **Canadian Hadassah WIZO** and **WIZO uk** were awarded certificates from the Authority for Rural Education for distinction in their individual projects for matriculation. One pupil was also awarded a prize in the **Life Science** category.





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215 pupils, who graduated from the school, continued a decades long tradition and held a **rondo (dance)** on the road between the youth village and **Moshav Nahalal**. Pupils from the settlements and the moshavim in the area decorated carts, each settlement choosing a different theme.

Pupils from **WIZO Nahalal** hosted for five days pupils from the Nir School for deaf children, within the framework of the **Israel Youth Award**, contributing towards society. They organized activities and visited patients in the local hospital in Afula. The visitors were very happy and said that the visit had helped to bring down barriers between those who cannot hear, and those who can.



On 19<sup>th</sup> May 29<sup>th</sup> pupils, and members of staff, from **WIZO Hadassim**, sponsored by **Canadian Hadassah WIZO**, took part in a bicycle race called '**Wheels of Hope**'. They met up with 5,000 cyclists from the whole country, including cyclists with disabilities, families of parents and children, celebrities and others. There were three routes, and the pupils from **WIZO Hadassim** took part in the 10 km. ride. The aim was to introduce the disabled to sports activities. After they completed their route professional



cyclists held competitions, some on tracks with obstacles, and prizes were awarded. At the end a breathtaking show of performing cyclists took place. It was a very special experience for all those who took part.

Forty three pupils from **WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim**, sponsored by **WIZO Australia**, took part in a four day hike on the **Golan Heights** under the framework of the Silver and Gold stages in the **Israel Youth Award**. It took them four days to complete the 79 kilometers.





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## WIZO Israel



The **WIZO Israel Conference** took place in the presence of over 300 members of WIZO Israel from around the country. The day was full of activities and a learning process for all those who attended motivating them to continue with their sacred work.

On Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2012, WIZO Israel held a **Fair for Creative Women**, in which 30 women, from around the country, artists in different fields, displayed their work.

**Drawings, photography, ornaments, jewelry and accessories, cuisine, and other forms of handiwork** were displayed at the fair, which is the initiative of the Division of Training, Development and Culture in WIZO Israel.

According to Mali Harel, Chairperson of the Division: The purpose of the fair was to encourage women to create, and initiate, and to give these women the opportunity to display their talents before a large audience. 'There are so many women who, besides working and raising children, develop additional enterprises and this is our chance to enable them to express themselves through their work.'

The cooperation between **WIZO Tzfat** and the local Municipality has led to **two new frameworks opening up in the branch**. A new 'warm home' was opened for girls in distress. A **Center for Single Parent families** also opened. As well as the volunteers in the branch, these projects are operated by students in the Faculty of Social Work in the Tsfat College. 60 women took part in the opening of the Center and an **explanatory leaflet** was distributed to the families.



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Hundreds of children are celebrating their **bar and batmitzvah** in celebrations that have been organized by WIZO branches around the country. Devoted volunteers collect donations from the local communities, buy gifts for the celebrants, and organize a party which is attended by a Rabbi and other dignitaries. **The celebrants are from single parents families, or families in distress, and this is their only chance to celebrate their bar or batmitzvah.**



### *In Conclusion*

As the summer holidays approach, we are seeing the results of our efforts over the course of the year, and this report, detailed as it may seem, only reflects a small percentage of what is being achieved.

Sadly, as this report goes to press, we are again seeing an escalation in the situation in the south of the country so I end this edition of **'What's New in WIZO'** with those eternal words:

עושה שלום במרומיו הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל עם ישראל ואמרו, אמרו אמן  
May He who makes peace above make peace for us and the whole of Israel.

With best regards,

*Rivka Lazovsky*

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Chairperson,  
World WIZO Executive