Dear Chaverot,

As this edition of 'What's New in WIZO' goes to press there are so many challenges engulfing our precious little State of Israel, so it gives me pleasure to open with the good news. The first snow of the year has fallen on the upper slopes of the Hermon, the Kinneret has begun to rise slowly. A real blessing.

Together with the rest of the enlightened world, and especially the Jewish world, we mourn the cruel and senseless murders of four rabbis and a policeman in a horrific terrorist attack during morning prayers in a Jerusalem synagogue. It was therefore with pride, and emotion, that the whole country felt as if they were present at the brit of Eliyahu Sorotzkin, in that same synagogue, the very next day. “We chose to do the brit here today because of the symbolism that this place holds, especially in light of this important religious ceremony for our people. The rabbis who were here yesterday were killed in the middle of a conversation with God, we are here today, continuing that connection,” said father Dov. For grandfather Yosef, the brit mila of his grandson was a sign of faith. “We are doing what the Jewish people have done throughout history; every time there has been death and destruction, we keep moving and creating”.

Therein lies our strength. The strength of an amazing Jewish people.

With warm regards.

Prof. Rivka Lazovsky
Chairperson,
World WIZO Executive
By way of identifying with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, President Reuven Rivlin and his wife, Nechama, visited WIZO’s Shelter for Battered Women and their Children, on Monday.

They heard from WIZO staff and representatives of the Welfare and Social Services Ministry about the statistics of domestic violence; that half-a-million Israeli children live in violent home environments, that more shelters for battered women are needed, and about the type of help the women receive.

The President was touched by the personal story told by one of the victims, who was brought from abroad by her Israeli husband who almost immediately began mistreating her, isolating her from her family and virtually keeping her a prisoner in their home. During eight painful years of marriage, she had no one to turn to because she was sure that no one would believe her. She lived in a nice home, she didn’t have to work, she had beautiful children, and when she did go anywhere with her husband or guests came to their home she put on a brave face.

Finally, when it became totally unbearable, she was persuaded by a social worker to leave and go to a shelter.

Although violent men are not permitted to know in which facility their wives are being sheltered, they are permitted to have contact with their children, and the children are encouraged to telephone their fathers soon after arrival at a shelter. There are also supervised places where they can meet with their fathers, and in some cases can spend the weekend with them.
A wonderful activity involving WIZO and Artists 4 Israel, an organization of American artists that works to raise awareness of Israel via art and education, took place recently. Activities are organized by child psychologists and art therapists to heal trauma amongst children and youth. Art therapy comes in the form of a compact box filled with art therapy activities - the Healing Arts Kit. Each activity is simple enough for parents and teachers, has many activities children can do on their own. Representatives of Artists4Israel distributed the art therapy kits to children at risk, and to children in WIZO day care centers in the and in the south, who suffered from the rocket attacks during operation Protective Edge. The kits are meant to help the children heal from the traumatic influences of the missiles falling sand to give them a feeling of security. Our staff members report that the children enjoyed using the kits and had break time activities with them that helped them tremendously.
The bombing incidents in a Jerusalem synagogue provoked tension and worry amongst parents of the children in our WIZO Day Care Centers, who voiced their concerns due to the absence of guards in most Centers.

As of today, the Early Age Division has not received any instructions to behave differently than usual regarding security measures, from either the police of government. We are in constant contact with other organizations that provide child care, on the steps that they are taking. We have applied to the Mayor of Jerusalem, and the Municipality, to share our concern.

Meanwhile, extra vigilance and the following precautions should be taken.

- Check of the intercom at the entrance. Opening the door only after identification of the visitor.
- Requesting parents to close the doors after entering the DCC.
- Check the possibility of a distress button.
- To refresh and update emergency telephones of the parents.
- To refresh functions of emergency personnel.

May we soon return to more peaceful days.

A unique project, which includes plans to provide employment opportunities, amongst vulnerable populations, has begun in which suitable candidates are being trained as Carers (metaplot) in WIZO Day Care Centers. This project incorporates professional training and the opportunity to complete studies, as required in order to continue onto higher education. The program is in conjunction with the Gross Foundation, the army, and the Bat Ami organization. It also aims at easing the situation involving a shortage of professional staff in WIZO’s Day Care Center.

It is an excellent example of a program that was developed by WIZO and is promoting women in society, at the same time opening up a future for them in child care.
Now that winter is setting in, jumping rope - skipping rope – is a great way to work out while playing and enjoyment. Along with enjoying the game, jumping rope helps improve coordination and healthy activities. You can skip inside the House, so it is suitable for winter days when it’s dark early. Since this is a great way to work out, to strengthen the arms and legs, improve agility and coordination it is ideal to teach children to jump in early childhood. When the kids are younger, we recommend parents to jump rope and invite children to join in.

**Legoland**

Activities using Lego, for the early age group, contribute to the sensor-motory, language, emotional and social development of young children and they learn how to work with the pieces. They also feel the special importance of changing the routine from their regular classroom to the activities in the Lego room. After receiving a sizeable donation from the Lego company in Denmark, some years ago, we set up Lego Rooms in our WIZO Day Care Centers and activities are under the guidance of the staff of the Day Care Centers. The activities enable children and staff to work together in small groups and encourages creativity, motor and language development. Lego activities during the afternoon hours gives the chance for the DCC to open its gates to the public and improves relationships with the community.
Pupils in WIZO Nir Haemek, took part in a ‘Youth Groups Day’ in which representatives of four youth movements, spoke about their movements and the ideology behind them. They also organized activities which were a great success.

The agricultural sector of the youth village has introduced 3 beehives, and hopefully, in April, we should see the first results in the form of honey, to make the youth village even 'sweeter' than it is already.

If you arrive at Canadian Hadassah WIZO Nahalal, during the course of the year, you will hear not only Hebrew, but also Russian, and other languages. These are the participants in the Naaleh Program and in the Naaleh Anières Program. Naaleh Anières in Nahalal is a unique program that absorbs children from challenging backgrounds in Israel, as well as students from the Diaspora who choose to be educated in Israel. It provides them with a high level education in engineering and technology. It is combined with studies at the Technion in Haifa, followed by a Bachelor’s degree and professional service in the army. And mainly, it saves many youngsters from assimilation, distress and disadvantaged surroundings, and paves their way to a good future as scientists and contributing citizens.
The WIZO Municipal Technological High School in Rehovot, sponsored by WIZO Brazil and WIZO France, is undergoing change. Many of the students in the school were ejected from other educational frameworks, and WIZO Rehovot was their last hope for a meaningful education. Over forty percent of the pupils are of Ethiopian backgrounds, and still going through the hardships relating to immigration to Israel. This year has seen a marked increase in the number of students who are eligible for matriculation certificates. It is clear to see the transformation that has taken place in the students, thanks to the devotion of the teaching staff. Parents often approach the staff with the words, ‘You have saved my child’ Could we ask for anything more??
CHW Hadassim marked the 19th anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the 5th Prime Minister of Israel, with a ceremony at the CHW Hadassim Children and Youth Village, to commemorate his life and legacy. The Mayor of Even Yehuda, Avi Harari, made a special appearance to thank CHW Hadassim for hosting such a meaningful ceremony.

A Mahut Center, for students suffering from learning disabilities and ADHD, was opened at the WIZO Vocational School in Bet Hakerem, Jerusalem, sponsored by WIZO uk, on 16.11.14. The program is now in its second year in the school and the students spoke of their pleasure in the program. They spoke about the different methods of learning and new strategies which increase self confidence, and how their grades had improved as a result of the Mahut system. We wish the staff and students of the Centre much success in the future.

'Jeruchess', the largest chess club in Jerusalem, is located at WIZO Haberer Community Center, sponsored by WIZO Switzerland, in Jerusalem. The club is open on Mondays and Thursdays, starting from 6PM. Mondays are usually for individual tournaments, and Thursdays are usually for league games, and short individual tournaments. The club is a member in the Israeli chess federation. Its teams participate in the Israeli chess league.
A groundbreaking exhibition, which is the result of community efforts in the WIZO Afula Community Center, sponsored by WIZO uk and WIZO Holland. A delegation with 23 participants visited the city of Mulhouse last week for the opening of an exhibition of drawings and paintings by 40 Jewish and Arab women from the city of Afula and from the Arab villages around. The exhibit - known as the Olive Tree Exhibition, was displayed in the main church which is located in the central square of the city, Hundreds of people were present at the opening ceremony of the exhibit, from various nationalities and religions, The exhibition is indicative of the work in our WIZO Community Center in Afula.

I participated in the opening of the 'Olive Tree' exhibition and was so impressed that we recommended it to our federations in Europe as well as to the Presidents of the eight WIZO Federations in partnership on the project. The exhibit will also be displayed in Belfort, and in Paris on the night when the second candle of Hanukah is lit. Another eight exhibitions are planned in different cities. The value of this exhibition to Israel's 'hasbara' efforts are immense.
WIZO in Nes Ziona has set up an empowerment group for Ethiopian women in the community. The branch took upon itself, with the help of its loyal volunteers, and after being asked by the welfare authorities in the city, the task of teaching Hebrew, and dealing with the special needs of the Ethiopian women. 16 women participate in the effort, often bringing their children with them to the meetings, where interesting, and creative individual programs, are designed for each one, teaching them about Israeli culture and customs. The women are highly motivated to become absorbed in Israeli society.

WIZO Israel revealed that every day an average of 65 cases are reported involving violence in the family. In the past year more than 7,000 women who dared to complain, opened files with the police or authorities. There is also an increase of 200% in the number of women after childbirth who suffer from violence. WIZO Israel, confirmed that there is stagnation in systems treating the phenomenon.
The former head of the IDF Manpower Division, Major General Orna Barbival, has agreed to be Chairperson of WIZO Israel’s Fundraising Campaign for 2014-2015. She will be assisted by a committee specifically established by WIZO, which comprises public figures and past and present senior managers from the Israeli economy and society. Orna said that during all the time she was serving in the IDF she was aware of the social gaps existing in Israeli society and today she is very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to reducing this gap. “It’s a great privilege to be involved in fundraising for an organization that is working for education and equal opportunities for children and youngsters, and assisting underprivileged sectors of our society. I am completely dedicated to this task with a sincere intention to help as many people”. We wish her every success!

Famous women and artist enrolled to help WIZO’s efforts to combat violence in the family, and painted upon plates that will be displayed upon a wall in an exhibition that the major non-profit organizations hold every year, in Israel. Artists included Ruth Dayan, wife of past Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan, z"l, Yael Dayan, their daughter and past Member of Knesset, Gila Almagor, actress from the national theatre, 'Habima', Miri Navon, wife of past president, Yitzhak Navon, artist Miriam Bernhardt, Daniella Sheinman, Behira Wax, Mira Kislev and other well-known artists and television personalities. All the proceeds from selling the plates were donated to treating battered women, and their children, in WIZO shelters for battered women, and the centers for the treatment and prevention, of violence in the family.
In Conclusion:

HAPPY
CHANUKAH

Chanukah celebrates the miraculous triumph of good over evil, light over darkness and spirituality over hate. We all have the power to bring the miracle of Chanukah into our daily lives, and into the lives of others, through WIZO.

Even when we are separated by distance, we are together in spirit.

Together let us light up the darkness during Chanukah, the Festival of Lights.

חג שמח!

Prof. Rivka Lazovsky
Chairperson
World WIZO Executive