My dear Chaverot,

The passing of Raya Jaglom z"l, our legendary World WIZO Honorary Life President has left a void that can never be filled. She, the visionary WIZO leader, the devoted Zionist, and a role model who inspired generations of women worldwide to Tikkun Olam (Repairing of the World) was not just a strong pillar of WIZO and a wise mentor, she was also my dearest and most admired friend.

Raya supported and empowered me to become the WIZO leader that I have come to be. Her passing marks an end of an era as she forged the unbreakable link between our founding mothers and the WIZO leaders of today.

Since 1941, when she first joined WIZO, until her final day, Raya embodied the principle of leading by example. She was a formidable leader who moved mountains and crossed enemy lines to touch the lives of Jews in Israel and around the world. However hard I try, I cannot find words to encompass all she has done and achieved over the years, nor the legacy she has left behind.

Raya Jaglom z"l was a lady who would never ever take no for an answer. Nothing could ever stop her. She was formidable, following in the footsteps of our founding mother Rebecca Sieff z"” and transforming her vision into a flourishing reality.

I will forever be proud to be her protégé, a third generation of WIZO leaders who had the honor at the age of six of handing her flowers on her visit to WIZO Uruguay. I will forever be proud to continue realizing the vision that she has placed on our shoulders. As we mark the end of 76 years of endless contribution, dedication and work for the Jewish people in Israel and around the world, I would like to say a final thank you to Raya Jaglom. I would like to thank her in the name of each one of us, Chaverot worldwide, and in the name of generations of Israelis who were privileged to benefit from her efforts, and those who will in the future. Her legacy is the epitome of the WIZO Impact - by her selfless altruism she gave opportunity and hope to those who had none.

On behalf of World WIZO, I would like to offer our thoughts and prayers to her family and friends. She will be sorely missed by all of us.

May her memory be for a blessing גן עדן ברוך.

Fondly,

Prof. Rivka Lazovsky
Chairperson

Email me: rivkalaz@wizo.org

Click link below and like my page
https://www.facebook.com/rivka.lazovsky.9/?fref=ts
Raya Jaglom z"l, the highly respected and much-revered Honorary Life President of World WIZO has passed away at the age of 98. She was older than WIZO by one year, and just like the WIZO that she lived and breathed, she was a powerhouse, a dynamo. Her long record of WIZO achievements is set in stone just like the countless projects that she initiated during her WIZO tenure. And until the day she died, she would recount with great lucidity dates, names and places — and so it was a bitter blow for me to learn of her passing because our work was not finished. We had barely just begun. There was so much ground to cover, so many years to encapsulate, and so much experience to relive. Let me explain:

Raya Jaglom intrigued me. I had heard her speak at many WIZO events, listened to her anecdotes, enjoyed her quick wit and marveled at her larger than life persona that commanded the respect of the movers and shakers in high office both here in Israel and abroad. I imagined that in another life, she could have been Cleopatra or Boadicea - she certainly ruled with an iron fist and the stealth of a lion. She was the doyenne of WIZO, the driving force of the movement I am proud to serve, and I was going to interview her. It was, for me, a very thrilling prospect, a great honour, and huge privilege.

Raya had much to share, and once she began to speak, she was unstoppable. She painted in words a vivid picture of WIZO’s yesterdays, a golden age dominated by the pioneering spirit of its founding mothers. She spoke animatedly of her mentor and great friend, Lady Rebecca Sieff z"l.

"Becky (Rebecca) took me under her wing. She believed in me," said Raya. "I always wondered whether I was doing enough to live up to her expectations of me and I challenged myself to do more and more."

Raya brought with her to our first (and unfortunately our last) interview a framed picture of her and her mentor, our esteemed foremother, Rebecca Sieff. "See," she said, "how she's looking at me! I do believe that she admired me, perhaps she saw in me her own younger self."

Since her passing, I have looked at that picture so many times and wondered what I could write about Raya that has not already been said. Her legacy is well known, her WIZO and Zionist history well documented. Her exceptional business acumen and outstanding fundraising efforts coupled with an acute awareness of the needs of the citizens of the flourishing Jewish State resulted in a tsunami of support which firmly rooted WIZO into the landscape of the modern State of Israel.

The last time we sat together, she was frail in body and yet still so strong. She apologized to me, and said, "You know, my legs don't work so good these days but my brain is still my best and most trusted friend." And I saw beyond the wheelchair. I saw her still dressed immaculately in haute couture fashion, erect and proud, campaigning tirelessly, passionately for the recipients of WIZO's care with a twinkle in her eyes and that wry smile upon her lips that was so very 'Raya.' And despite her frailty, she was still the strong and pertinent lady she had always been. She did not mince her words!

"You need to button up your blouse a little higher." She reproached me as we prepared to do our interview, to which I complied, somewhat embarrassed. There was no doubt that this lady knew her place as the matriarch of World WIZO.

Our matriarch has passed away. The WIZO Family has lost its last remaining foremother. We, WIZO chaverot, though orphaned by Raya’s passing, carry within each of one of us strands of her precious WIZO DNA. Together, in our silence, in the offices of WIZO House, where she once reigned, in the projects that she once called 'her babies' we mourn her death, but at the same time, we celebrate her life and her dear memory will be forever blessed.

We may have lost our matriarch, our wise and strong mother, but we are all sisters. Ours is a unique sisterhood. It is the sisterhood of WIZO.
The Smiles on Their Faces

“Our greatest reward is the great privilege of educating children and adolescents, and to see them grow and thrive, and bloom,” says World WIZO Chair Prof. Rivka Lazovsky. And so we rejoice in their delight at the graduation ceremonies of the WIZO schools and youth villages across Israel. The success of our many hundreds of WIZO graduates is a testament to the excellent educational model, which, infused with WIZO values, has shaped the young lives of those in our care. And it is those WIZO values that will continue to further benefit the citizens of Israel as so many of our WIZO graduates put to good use the life lessons they have learned as they go out into the world and ‘give back’ to support the weakest members of society and to be true ambassadors not just for our glorious State of Israel, but for WIZO too - because WIZO gave them the wings to fly. A poignant fact, particularly as so many of the youth who came to WIZO Youth Villages were themselves once extremely at-risk and vulnerable, but WIZO invested in them, nurtured them and provided them with love and understanding. For some of our graduates, WIZO provided that very last chance of an opportunity to finish high school, enlist in the army and to become contributing citizens. Our greatest joy is in seeing those once ‘written off’ youth now standing triumphant and proud in their IDF uniforms, smiling from ear to ear.

Wide smiles were also very much in evidence at a recent Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah celebration of the 31 children and their proud families from the WIZO Afula Community Centre. The children, who otherwise could not even dream of having such a glittering event held in honor of their traditional Jewish rite of passage, were dressed in their whitest finery against a festive backdrop of blue and white balloons. This crucial marker in a Jewish child’s life is the culmination of a yearlong course that encompasses Jewish education, culture and values, and just like in Afula, Bar and Bat Mitvot celebrations have taken place the length and breadth of Israel thanks to the generosity of WIZO chaverot both here in Israel and abroad.

At WIZO’s 97th birthday celebration here in WIZO House, we were all smiling as we watched and listened to students, teachers, care-givers, and the providers and recipients of WIZO care, who told their stories and explained how their lives had been enhanced and in some cases, saved by WIZO. Presentations from a cross-section of our projects taught us all that ‘there but for the grace of G-d go we’ and we were reminded of how very lucky we are to be on the side of the giving and to be a part of such a magnificent movement that moves mountains to bring peace of mind, body and spirit to those in its care.

And we smiled, our brightest and most heartfelt smiles, when we posed for a Happy Birthday WIZO photo because we know that the work we do is indeed sacred and crucial - and how happy and proud we are to be a part of this magnificent team effort of volunteers, staff and professionals who make up the vibrant movement that we call the WIZO family.

To have the ability to put smiles on the faces of those you may never meet, to bring happiness to those who don’t know you, but who have been touched by YOUR devotion to WIZO is the icing on the World WIZO birthday cake. Long may she flourish and grow, with her global sisterhood by her side. Long live WIZO and Am Israel Chai.
Dalia loves to dance

Dalia (not her real name) loves to dance. Whenever she hears music, she jumps from her chair and sways her body as graceful as a swan. “She wants to be a ballerina,” Dalia’s mother explained, her eyes glistening with pride, “And I will move heaven and earth for her to fulfill her dreams.”

It was not so long ago that such aspirations would have been unthinkable. Dalia’s mother looks wistful as she recalls how she had wrapped her petrified six-year-old daughter and her two-year-old son in blankets and bundled them into the taxi in the middle of the night. A social worker accompanied them on a long journey to the WIZO women’s shelter in Ashdod, far away from her violent husband’s reach and far away from their home, which had become the unhappiest, most dangerous place on earth.

For long days, Dalia cowered in the corner of the room she shared with her mother and brother at the shelter, her body shaking in fear. In the middle of the night, the screams of her nightmares pierced the silence as the women in the shelter who had been released from their own nightmares finally slept soundly in their beds.

The trained child psychologist who worked with the children at the women’s shelter was very gentle in her approach to Dalia, letting the child open up to her at her own pace. She worked with Dalia on a one-to-one basis, quietly encouraging her trust. The breakthrough came when Dalia timidly reached out and took the cute little teddy bear that the child psychologist offered her. Dalia hugged it tightly to her chest, and asked timidly, “Can I keep it?”

As the psychologist explained, “Of course, we treat the mother and her children. The children generally cannot process the atrocities that they have witnessed, particularly when one loved parent attacks the other. We, as grownups, cannot accept it, so can you imagine the emotional damage this has on an innocent child?”

With patience and sensitivity, Dalia’s fragile confidence was restored by the child psychologists and the social workers who drew out painful truths and encouraged the child to focus on what she liked to do, what made her smile. Through music and movement, Dalia was able to express her feelings, and this paved the way for the soothing therapies that empowered this little girl to let go of her fear and the dark emotions that had always clouded her young life.

After their time spent in the WIZO women’s shelter, the family have healed and moved on. Dalia’s mother has returned to work equipped with new skills and new self-worth, her little boy is in WIZO Day Care and Dalia attends school. Every week, Dalia attends ballet class, and according to her tutor, she has real talent.

Dalia is just one of thousands of children who, along with their mothers, have been both protected and empowered by their time spent in WIZO shelters. These are all children who have either witnessed or been subject to a variety of damaging behaviors and abuse, resulting in deep-seated psychological and emotional trauma. The main goal of the shelters is to provide a safe haven where they prepare the mothers and children for an independent and violence-free life. To this end, the shelters provide group and individual therapies as well as tutoring to assist in any lack in studies. Mothers receive legal aid, therapies for mind, body and soul as well as crucial job training - and the children receive what every child deserves - a childhood far removed from harm.
Hugs for Rosa

It is 7 am on a spring Sunday morning in Tel Aviv and Rosa (not her real name) can hardly wait to be unbuckled from her buggy to be swept up into the arms of the *metapelet* (care giver) in a warm hug at the Raya Jaglom Multipurpose Day Care Centre sponsored by WIZO Australia.

Over the weekend, Rosa has missed the closeness of her warm and welcoming caregivers. She has missed climbing upon the knee of the nursery assistants and playing closely with her little friends. Over the weekend, Rosa had sat alone, mostly watching TV. Sometimes, she looked out of the window and saw other children and their parents playing in the park, but Rosa’s mother did not approve of that.

It was only at the day care centre that Rosa could be totally at ease sitting on the floor, picking up her toys and playing with the puzzles because no one there insisted on wearing plastic gloves when they picked her up or took her by the hand. And as a two-year-old toddler, Rosa was entitled to be messy and she needed to touch.

But home is fraught for Rosa. Despite the pleas from her husband, Rosa’s mother refuses to get treatment for her obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), which has had an adverse effect on her daughter’s wellbeing. Rosa’s mother will not hug her daughter for fear of germs, nor will she brush Rosa’s beautiful blond hair because she says she ‘might catch something’. She insists on covering the handles of the buggy with plastic bags and she pushes her daughter away when she tries to hold her hand. Rosa’s mother cannot bring herself to have any close physical contact with Rosa. Typically, her OCD manifests itself as a fear of contamination by dirt and a compulsion for extreme order and tidiness. One time, Rosa arrived at the day care centre with red, sore hands when her mother had scrubbed them too vigorously to ‘get rid of all the germs’ after Rosa had stroked the neighbor’s dog. Rosa’s mother often sends Rosa to the day care centre wearing dirty clothes, as she believes there are also germs lurking in the washing machine.

Away from the day care centre, Rosa’s father is the only stabilizing factor in the little girl’s life and he works closely with the social workers and support staff at the Raya Jaglom Multipurpose Day Care Centre but his work requires him to often spend time abroad. Sigal, the WIZO social worker, explains:

“I always know when Rosa’s father is away, because we see a regression in Rosa’s responses and behavior. I am in close contact with her mother, I invite her to therapy sessions, and she is always happy to comply. I bring her into my office with Rosa and talk to her while Rosa plays with the toys on the floor and we chat, completely at ease. It is important that Rosa’s mother sees that it doesn’t bother anybody for Rosa to roll around on the floor and pick up toys from the floor. There have been breakthroughs. Rosa’s mother has opened up to me. She admits she has a problem and she wants to make life easier for her daughter. In fact, we have seen a great improvement since Rosa first came to the day care centre just one and a half years ago. She was such a closed, introverted baby, so unused to physical contact. We have shown her that it is natural to touch, to hug and to share. She responds so well now.”

Rosa attends the multipurpose day care centre from seven in the morning until seven in the evening. She receives all the basic physical, emotional and developmental needs as well as nutritious home-cooked meals. Her parents are grateful to the day care centre staff for their professional and holistic care of their daughter. They have benefitted greatly through therapy and parenting courses.

Rosa’s mother had suffered post natal depression soon after Rosa’s birth, which resulted in her OCD. She says she does not know what she would do if it were not for the love and support of the WIZO staff.

“I do try but I find it so difficult to respond in the way that Rosa needs me to. My heart breaks when she puts her arms up for a hug and I can’t give it. I want to but then my OCD takes over and I just cannot bear to touch her.” Rosa’s mother confided. “One day, I know I will but for now, I can only thank WIZO for providing my beautiful daughter with the hugs and love she so deserves.”

EARLY AGE EDUCATION

THE WIZO IMPACT ISSUE NO. 6

Photo for illustration purpose only
Cannonball Tal

From the moment he was born, Tal (not his real name) suffered the agony of narcotic withdrawal. His mother had used Heroin all through her pregnancy and Tal displayed classic signs of NAD (narcotic abstinence syndrome). His symptoms included tremors, poor feeding, breathing issues, irritability, fever, low muscle tone, and stiffness. At the age of four months, Tal was referred by the welfare authorities to the WIZO Neve Nof Day Care Centre in Lod sponsored by WIZO Belgium. He had severe mental and motor development issues.

Tal was a very sad baby. In the early days in WIZO’s care, Tal would lay rigid in his cot with a pained expression. Tears ran down his cheeks and yet he barely had the strength to cry. Unlike the other babies, he did not kick his legs or arms. He did not respond to heat, cold or hunger and no matter how much the caregivers tried to raise a smile from him none was forthcoming, and as the other babies began to sit up, and to crawl, Tal lay still.

The day care centre director, Meirav, nursed Tal and he began to eat. She spoke softly to him, and carried him around the nursery pointing out everything in an attempt to coax a reaction. She said that he was just like a rag doll in her arms. Meirav explained:

“Tal required a comprehensive treatment regime to stimulate his cognitive and motor senses. It is between the age of four months to 12 months that mental and motor-sensory deficiencies surface and this is the time when treatment becomes crucial. We worked tirelessly, together with WIZO therapists, to stimulate movement and strengthen his flaccid muscles and bouts of limb stiffness. You would always find me sitting in my office massaging his little arms and legs while doing other jobs. Tal taught me to multi-task!”

Eventually, the weak and fretful baby began to put weight on. He started to respond to treatment and caught up with many of the other babies. The perseverance of the day care staff paid off. When Tal took his first steps, the entire day care centre erupted in applause. Tal’s grandmother who looks after him witnessed that memorable event.

“When he toddled towards me, with a big smile on his face, it was the happiest day of my life. I have endured so much heartache with my daughter in and out of rehab, I volunteer at the day care centre, helping to feed the babies at meal times. It keeps me from thinking about my own problems, and now, for the first time, I can see that Tal has a chance to look forward to a happy and healthy future. I have WIZO to thank for that.” Said Tal’s grandmother.

Caregiver Sigal added, “Oh but you should see him now! We call him ‘Tal hatotach’ (Tal the cannonball). He never sits still; he is full of energy. He is such a bright, inquisitive child.”

Meirav adds, “I am often asked if it is difficult to work in a day care centre where the needs of the local population are so great, as they are here in Lod. It is true to say that we fight a battle for the children in our care on a daily basis but I would not have it any other way. Seeing Tal, and the other little children like him running around the playground laughing and smiling makes it all worthwhile.”

Tal is not the only baby at the WIZO Neve Nof Day Care Centre whose earliest years have been blighted by circumstances and the life choices forced upon them by their parents. He is one of many who have been referred by the welfare services.

“We don’t differentiate.” Said Meirav. “It doesn’t matter how difficult their backgrounds are. What matters to us is that these children get the same start in life as every other child so that they are equipped to face whatever the future holds. Here in Lod, life is not easy but why should they suffer? In our care, they thrive, they get home cooked nutritious meals, they play, they learn and they are safe. They get remedial treatments when needed and of course all the love and hugs that every child deserves.”
From Zero to Hero - Nathan’s Story

Nathan (not his real name) was referred into the care of the WIZO Nir Ha’Emek Youth Village by the welfare authorities at the age of thirteen after he had witnessed the shocking and sudden death of his father from alcoholic poisoning. Nathan, of Ethiopian descent, has many brothers and sisters and his mother does not work. The family lives on welfare benefits.

Before coming to the youth village, Nathan rarely attended school. With his father so often in a drunken stupor, Nathan regularly missed school to help his mother with his younger brothers and baby sister. His education suffered. His dysfunctional family background also had an adverse effect on his emotional state.

Nathan settled in well at WIZO Nir Ha’Emek, with the help of professional counselling staff and a structured program of tutoring to bridge his educational shortcomings. He responded well to the supportive environment of the youth village, by the social workers, counsellors and the warmth and compassion of his dormitory housemother. Nathan felt, for the first time in his life, that he had space to breathe, to study, and to enjoy the life that every teenager deserves, with a host of leisure pursuits to choose from such as horseback riding, swimming. Within the youth village framework, and helped by the Mahut program to enrich his learning capabilities, Nathan was able to close the gaps in his education. He also showed great aptitude in computer studies.

Nathan passed his matriculation exams and enlisted into the army, volunteering in the Oketz (dog) Unit. He took part in many highly successful operations, for which he was awarded with the Outstanding Presidential Award for Soldiers in 2014 from the President of the State of Israel. During his IDF service, he was sent to very prestigious course of cyber and data protection, and went on to serve as a liaison officer in the Israeli Air Force.

Nathan now studies for a first degree, financed by donations. Nathan often visits the youth village, sharing his story with students living in the dormitories. He tells them how important the stability and nurturing environment of living in the dormitory was for him.

Nathan says, as he stands before the students, “We all think that it is easier to fail than to succeed, and I did, too. I did not have much to look forward to. Then I came here to the youth village, and among the things I learned was that they (the staff) don’t believe in failure. They believed in me and they believe in all of you, too. I can honestly say that living here gave me all the motivation and resources I needed to realize that a meaningful army service was within my reach. It is within your reach, too.”
Yuliana Styles for Success

Yuliana (not her real name) came to the Rebecca Sieff Centre for the Family Vocational School in the tenth grade after she was expelled from her previous school for truancy.

Despite the fact that she was a very intelligent and bright young lady, her level of education was severely lacking. Her mother, Paulina, who had brought Yuliana to Israel from Russia when she was a small child, worked as a manicurist. Almost all her clients are Russian.

Paulina does not speak Hebrew very well, and Yuliana translated for her at the first interview at the school. Paulina became quite emotional as her daughter spoke for her in Hebrew:

“I came to Israel because I wanted a better life for my daughter. It has been hard for me to find work in my former career (as a pharmacist) because I struggled with the Hebrew and I blame myself for Yuliana’s educational shortcomings because I just could not help her with her homework. In the end, she stopped asking me to help her and she did not even discuss school with me, so I was not aware that anything was wrong. I feel as if I have failed as a mother.”

Yuliana admitted that instead of going to school, she would go into the city, and spend time walking around the fashion shops, and stare into the hairdressers’ windows longing for a purpose to her life. At the Rebecca Sieff Centre for the Family Vocational School, she found that purpose and more.

With a tailored program of one-to-one tutoring and remedial learning and the academic support of the Mahut Centre, the gaps in Yuliana’s education firmly closed. As a vocation, she chose to study in the hair design track and showed a remarkable flair for styling and cutting under the excellent guidance of hairdressing teacher, Chana Golev. Members of the public who came to the salon at the Rebecca Sieff Centre to be models for the students to practice upon always sought out Yuliana and were delighted with her work. Yuliana did not miss one day of school and always arrived with a smile on her face.

“I cannot begin to tell you how much I hated school then and how much I love it today. I just could not find the motivation to learn because I could feel a rift growing between Mum and me when she was no longer able to help me with my homework because of her Hebrew. Yet, here at the Rebecca Sieff Centre Vocational School all that has changed. One of the school social workers even visited us at home and persuaded my mother to continue with the Hebrew Ulpan, so now I practice my hairstyling on Mum, and she practices her Hebrew on me. We are just so much happier! Said Yuliana.

Yuliana achieved full matriculation and a diploma in hairdressing studies. After completing her national army service, she looks forward to working in one of Jerusalem’s top hairdressing salons – the same one she used to stare through the windows at when she was playing truant from her former school.

“Who would believe it? Now I have a future working there. For that, I must thank Chana who put her heart and soul into my hairdressing studies and all the staff at the Rebecca Sieff Centre for the Family Vocational School. At last I can look back and say, school days really are happy days!”
EDITOR’S MUSINGS

Steering the Good Ship WIZO

On the good ship ‘WIZO’, it is not always plain sailing - sometimes our WIZO ship must pass through stormy waters, navigate through rough patches and steer carefully to avoid the undercurrents that threaten its stability. WIZO as a movement is more akin to a super-liner, carrying on board hundreds of thousands of passengers, who rely heavily on its services and safe passage through the turmoil of their lives. To captain the WIZO ship is no easy task. It takes ability, determination, knowledge and courage to weather the storms and it takes the full support of a dependable crew – a team of chaverot who, above all, put the interests of WIZO before their own and who pull together.

We are the chaverot who say, “Ask not what WIZO can do for you, but what YOU can do for WIZO” and we are the chaverot on whom our leader can depend, to whose opinions she listens, and together we help our captain to steer WIZO on her blessed journey.

I am chavera, a member of the crew, a part of the team and I rejoice in the accomplishments of my leader who works tirelessly for WIZO. She walks the walk on behalf of Israeli society and proves by example that a captain’s job is not just to pose for photographs with the passengers but also to provide opportunities for the greater good of those we serve and to implement strategies and reforms for the long-term stability of the good ship WIZO - and all who sail in her.

Last month, our leader, Prof. Rivka Lazovsky appeared before the Knesset’s Education Committee to urge the Ministry of Education to increase the funding our schools receive for pupils with special needs so that it is in line with that of state-run schools. Rivka reports that some of her key demands, including salary increases for teachers and paramedical personnel were accepted.

She also played an active part in drafting a ground-breaking bill and campaigning for its acceptance to introduce wide changes in early childhood education – The National Early Age Council Bill. The Knesset approved this bill in the second and third readings. This puts the important issues of early-age education firmly on the government’s agenda, increasing national awareness - indeed a great achievement.

These endeavours on behalf of the children of Israel are, to my mind, a true testament of the leadership that we enjoy here at WIZO. As Rivka says, “WIZO will continue to advance the rights of children, women and youth through legislation, campaigning and above all – through the sacred work we carry out each day in all of our WIZO projects.”

And so, our captain steers the WIZO ship on a steady course to build a meaningful, successful and happy future in our State of Israel, promoting landmark legislation and other vital campaigns for the benefit of our children.

“There is still so much to do,” She says, adding “but I will never give up on this. Education is at the core of Israel’s wellbeing.”

Not for the glory, not for the applause. She is simply doing the job that she knows is incumbent on her as leader, as captain, of WIZO because the citizens of Israel deserve nothing less.

Written & Edited by
TRICIA SCHWITZER
Email me: trishas@wizo.org
Tweet to @WIZOimpact
Instagram @WIZOimpact
www.facebook.com/WIZOimpact/