A SCHOOL FOR LIFE
Graduates keep in contact

THE GIFT OF LOVE
Day care centre is home

SUSANNE OF SWEDEN
WIZO president interview
Dear Chaverot,

Here, in WIZO headquarters in Tel Aviv, we are all busy preparing for the EGM in January. This is the time, once every four years, when we have the opportunity to meet up with our friends from all over the world, match the faces to the names, and have serious discussions about the future of our movement.

We have tried with this edition, as we do with every issue of WIZO Review, to give you a broad picture and global perspective of WIZO’s numerous activities and work for the benefit of the women and children of Israel.

This is obviously the year of conferences – we interview the new chairperson of the Israel Federation, Gila Oshrat, wherein she outlines her plans for her term of office. In addition, we have given you short portraits of each of Gila’s new executive members and their visions of the tasks ahead. (pages 6-10).

The Latin American federations held their own regional conference in Uruguay, where specific subjects were discussed pertaining to their part of the world.

It is always interesting for us to learn about communities in different parts of the world and how they operate and how they relate to WIZO – see our interview with WIZO Sweden’s president (page 20) and a glimpse of the unusual Jewish community in Hong Kong (page 24).

One of WIZO’s primary goals is the education of Israel’s future generation, and we devote three articles to this subject: it is never too early to learn, and WIZO has the only pedagogic centre for early-age children in the country – read about it on page 15. The moving article on pages 16-17 shows you how these theories are put into practice in one of our multi-purpose day care centres. A portrait of the Maya Rosenberg Technological High School in Rehovot (page 12) shows just how special our WIZO educational facilities are.

It is always a big decision to come on aliyah, to leave family and friends and enter the unknown. Rolene Marks, South African WIZO activist and media specialist, and her husband, Saron took the plunge a few months ago – Rolene gives you a light-heated account of those first few months (page 23).

On page 25, Vicky Fidanque, Aviv representative to the World WIZO Executive, and member of the international Young Presidents’ Organization tells of her unusual visit to Israel where she and her husband organized a special tour for the Panama branch of this organization. Of the 20 couples in the group, 16 were not Jewish – and as Vicky says – Israel now has 32 new ambassadors!

In the WIZO in Israel section (page 30) you will see a variety of activities that go on here on a daily basis, and as usual, we end with WIZO Around the World (starting on page 34) – our link with each other!

Looking forward to seeing you in January,

Ingrid Rockberger
Editor.

Children at the Simone Berr Porge Day Care Centre in the HaTikva Quarter Tel Aviv celebrate Rosh Hashana
WIZO Review

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Rebecca Sieff WIZO Centre,
38 David Hamelech Blvd.,
Tel Aviv, Israel
Tel: 03 692 3805 Fax: 03 692 3801
Internet: www.wizo.org
Email: wreview@wizo.org

Cover: Children at the Simone Berr Porge Day Care Centre in the HaTikva Quarter Tel Aviv celebrate Rosh Hashana

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS: to make sure you don’t miss a copy of WIZO Review, please let us know any address changes by email to wrdistlist@gmail.com. Don’t forget to add your full name, mailing address, zip code and country.
Dear Chaverot,

You will receive this edition during the High Holiday period. Therefore, my column will cover some significant events that occurred over the past few months.

At the end of May, WIZO Israel held its conference that marked the end of Yochy Feller’s eight-year term as chairperson. I would like to take this opportunity to praise Yochy on her leadership, her ability to turn initiatives into successful campaigns and projects, and for her devotion to WIZO Israel and its service recipients. I would also like to praise the outgoing WIZO Israel Executive that worked as a team to take WIZO Israel from strength to strength.

The new WIZO Israel chairperson is Gila Oshrat who, prior to her election, headed the Division for the Advancement of the Status of Women in Legislation and Society, and saw it reach new levels of success in initiating laws to advance the status of women. I wish Gila the best of luck in her new position.

In Israel, the July/August period is known as the “cucumber season,” because usually during these summer months hardly anything happens. However, July 2011 will go down in history as the month when the Israeli middle class took to the streets all over the country. Tent encampments appeared in every major city, inhabited by young middle class families and students demanding “Social Justice” - that the Government take steps to implement a more balanced national budget in favour of education, health and welfare. They vowed to demonstrate until there is a change.

For the sake of accuracy, Israel’s economy is stable and recovered from the global economic crisis of 2008/9 much quicker than many other countries. In fact, unemployment is now at its lowest in the past 20 years, and growth is promising - many say due to the drastic steps taken in 2003 that saw the end of the social and welfare state era and a shift to the free market approach.

However, the public is unable to enjoy the fruits of this stability as it has had to pay a high price for the new concept through the continuous cuts in the education, health and welfare, national and municipal budgets and privatization of related and auxiliary services.

You may also recall that at the 2008 EGM I expressed my concern that Israeli society faces polarization and an increase in the social gap. I also pointed out the increase in the number of middle class families seeking support and assistance from WIZO.

This summer they snapped. Despite both spouses working, they are unable to make ends meet due to high housing prices, the extremely high cost of living, the national tax policy, and privatization of government services.

The government established a committee to examine all the demands and concerns and to recommend various solutions. After nearly a month of demonstrations, a coordinated terror attack outside Eilat, followed by over 100 rockets that placed the lives of the one million residents of Israel’s southern region under existential threat, served as a stark reminder that security is still our top priority. But even in the South, the demonstrations continued. Thus was summer 2011 in Israel.

In the meantime, here at WIZO we look to the future with hope as we prepare the day care centres, the youth villages, youth clubs and branches for the coming year’s activities that begin at the start of the new school year. Preparations continue for the 25th World WIZO Conference that will take place from 15-19 January 2012 at the Hilton Tel Aviv. I look forward to seeing large delegations from all our World WIZO Federations.

Maybe it is fitting to end this column with an old Jewish blessing that is appropriate in view of the current events and the new year on the way – “May the current year and its tribulations end and may the new year with its blessings begin.”

Shana Tova to all our extended World WIZO family and to their dear ones.

Yours sincerely,

Helena Glaser, President, World WIZO.
Dear Chaverot,

On Rosh Hashanah it is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed: Who shall be tranquil and who shall be harassed; who shall be at peace and who shall suffer; who shall become poor, and who shall become rich.”
From the New Year prayers.

Every year the relevance of this timeless prayer has an awesome effect on each and every one of us. As Jews, we greet the year with reverence and prayer, sober and grateful for all that we have and for all those who surround us. We pray for our immediate loved ones and for the wellbeing and peace of our fellow Jews, both in our immediate communities and in Israel, our beloved homeland.

Israel faces the New Year with an added feeling of trepidation. We face the unknown as the Palestinians plan their independence which, in the absence of a formal peace agreement, can once again lead to bloodshed on an unknown level, both in Israel and on our borders. The army and the security forces are preparing for the unknown. Just recently, we suffered vicious terrorist attacks, and I am sure you all join me in sending condolences to the families of the victims. There are continuous warnings being circulated of further terror attacks.

Another unknown is the precarious financial situation existing in many countries around the world. Knowing that our basic economy in Israel was fairly stable, we had thought that the discontent that was sweeping much of the world would pass us by, but over the last few years the large gaps in the population - social educational and financial - have been growing larger and larger, with the middle class struggling to keep its head above water. Just one example, which has had a deep effect on WIZO, are governmental demands for higher standards in the day care centres, which will be very costly, and without providing any form of funding for the changes that they are demanding. This includes reducing the number of children per class despite a desperate shortage of places. The right of women to work has been, and will always be, part of the WIZO vision: to extricate women from the cycle of poverty and to be independent rather than reliant. We will continue to fight for this right.

Three hundred thousand people joined a single protest march and demonstration in Tel Aviv. But these are ‘normal’ problems.

Maybe one of the biggest miracles of the State of Israel is our ability to carry on ‘as normal’ despite the ongoing threats to our existence. We are still moving forward, still inventing ground-breaking technology, still entertaining tourists from all over the world, still sitting and discussing life in the thousands of cafés around the country, still believing in a future that will be good for all of us.

In our WIZO world, we continue our work with enthusiasm. After sprucing up our facilities during the summer break, everything is looking bright, clean and new. We have welcomed thousands of children into our day care centres, and I am sorry that we had to turn down so many children due to lack of space. The WIZO schools and youth villages opened on the 1st September, and it was a joy to behold the pupils happily joining their friends in the classrooms.

Together we all look forward to the New Year - Shana Tova

Affectionately yours,

Tova Ben-Dov,
Chairperson
World WIZO Executive

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**Chairperson’s Column**

**Dear Chaverot,**

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Chairperson
World WIZO Executive

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**BY VIRTUE OF THEIR OFFICE AS PRESIDENTS OR CHAIRPERSONS OF FEDERATION**

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Gila Oshrat Elected WIZO Israel Chairperson

Newly elected WIZO Israel chairperson
Gila Oshrat speaks to WIZO Review’s Sima Borkovski

Gila Oshrat describes the experience of running for election as an interesting lesson in democracy and a fascinating four months.

“It was the first time that free democratic elections were held for the chairperson’s office and heads of departments of WIZO Israel. There were four candidates for chairperson from various WIZO branches and each one ran her own campaign. I think it was an empowering experience for each one of us,” Oshrat says with a smile.

Oshrat, former head of the department on the status of women, and an enthusiastic fighter for the advancement of women also brings with her 30 years of professional experience in the field of welfare. As part of her campaign, Oshrat visited half of WIZO’s 60 branches throughout Israel, where she presented her vision and her plans for the future.

When asked how much of her time is devoted to WIZO her answer is “23 out of 24 hours because WIZO is present in my dreams as well.”

“I think that there is a process of growth and change that WIZO is going through, and these democratic elections expressed this change. In the past, the chairperson came directly from the WIZO Executive, and this change gave every WIZO member the opportunity to stand for office and make a difference,” she explains.

Future plans
As the new chairperson, Oshrat has many plans for the years ahead; her most important goal is to strengthen WIZO’s status as a relevant organization that adjusts its causes to the changing needs of Israeli society:

“WIZO needs to be more attentive to the needs of our society in order to direct its efforts to the right objectives. For example, the protest for social justice was started by women who, in general, are more aware of the injustices in society. WIZO as a social organization needs to be part of this fight. In Israel, women are still on the weak side of the equation and they are not represented fairly in the places where decisions are made. I believe that WIZO should do more to empower women and place them in influential positions so they can make their influence on society, and advance a more social agenda.

“I believe that WIZO as a large national organization with branches all over the country can actually make an impact. Since I have always been a fighter for women’s rights I think that WIZO should not always just respond to certain...
situations and conditions but also take the initiative to bring about a change in the image of women in Israeli society.

**Changing the Image of WIZO**

“Nowadays, WIZO is perceived by the public as relating to day care and ‘old ladies.’ In order to strengthen the organization, we need to change that image and make it more appealing to young women. It is not enough that a woman has a WIZO membership card. We need to find ways to bring these women to the WIZO branches and get them involved in WIZO’s activities,” she emphasizes.

“The whole perspective towards our volunteers needs to be changed and we need to manage them in a more professional way: to learn how to match each individual with the right task for them. The volunteers are the essence of our organization – but you can only act when you have the ideology to drive you. In addition, one of the most important things is to put more emphasis on the branches and find ways to strengthen them. I believe that in order to grow, every WIZO branch ought to be the centre of activity and empowerment for the community where it is situated.

**Optimistic**

Despite all the difficulties and the hardships, I am optimistic and believe that we can succeed in making a change and achieving our goals. I get much support from my team and the heads of departments who all see eye to eye with my ideology to drive you. In addition, one of the most important things is to put more emphasis on the branches and find ways to strengthen them. I believe that in order to grow, every WIZO branch ought to be the centre of activity and empowerment for the community where it is situated.

**The New Team**

**Ricky Keldes - Head of Organization and WIZO Centres Department**

Ricky Keldes was deputy to Tirtza Rubinsky, former head of the same department for several years, hence she knew ‘what she was getting into’ when she decided to run for the office. Keldes has a thorough understanding of WIZO branches and their needs simply because she visited every one of them as part of her former duties.

“Since I was forced to accept early retirement as comptroller of a large company in 2004, I have been volunteering in the Organization Department as Computers and Internet Coordinator and in charge of computer training. I travelled all over the country and got to know the branches and the wonderful work they are doing,” says Keldes. According to Keldes, the department is currently understaffed but this won’t stop her from achieving her goals, which are increasing the number of WIZO members and renovating some of the WIZO branches in the periphery.

**Nili Feller - Funds Coordinator**

Nili Feller was offered the appointment just a short time before the conference and she admits that it felt like “being thrown in at the deep end”. Very soon Feller found that there is more to her job than mere ‘finance issues’ and there are more channels for her to make an impact and contribute to the organization.

“I discovered that this appointment allows me to strengthen the coordination between the Executive and the branches. As former head of the Azur branch I know what difficulties the heads of branches have to face without proper preparation or guidance.

“The Executive needs to be more sensitive to the needs of the branches. I have visited quite a few of them and discovered that the heads of the branches would like to be updated with the activities and policies of the Executive, unlike what has been happening up to now.

“My goal is to strengthen our cooperation with the branches. The projects initiated by the Executive are carried out by the volunteers in the branches. Therefore we need to let these women know that their work is appreciated, and treat them with the honour and respect they deserve. So the essence of this duty as I see it is not just getting the numbers right but also taking care of the people behind these numbers”.

**Are’la Meiri - Head of Fundraising**

Are’la Meiri was deputy and then temporary head of the department before she was officially elected. During her years as a volunteer in the department she accumulated extensive experience organizing various fund raising events – both big and small. Nonetheless, it seems that now she is officially ‘in charge’ she is fully aware of the burden of responsibility.

“Our current and most important project is to sell 900 tickets to a premier show at the Cameri Theatre in October. Our small team at the office is actually doing all the work of selling the tickets but it is not an easy task,” admits Meiri.

“In the past it was the middle class people that supported...
our projects and donated to our causes but in recent years there is much more competition between the various non-profit organizations and people are less willing or able to donate money. My goal is to create more business affiliations with WIZO that will sponsor our projects and in this way to ease the tension we experience organizing such big fundraising events.

“In addition, I believe in the potential of our second hand clothing shops – the Bigudit. These shops are making good profits for WIZO but in my opinion we should develop and invest in them, particularly the shops in the periphery. Nowadays people love to shop in second hand shops and look for vintage clothes, therefore the potential of these shops is immense,” she declares.

Nina Shapira -
Head of the Family Welfare Department

Nina Shapira continues with her second term as the head of department and her vision is to continue with the programmes the department has developed for the welfare of children, women and young girls.

“We aim to give these women and girls the tools, and strengthen them in order to prevent them from reaching a state of risk or distress;” Shapira explains. “One of the most important tools we can give to a woman is financial independence. When a woman can work and is not dependent on husband or partner to provide for her, then she can have the strength to leave him if he is abusive towards her and her children. This is why we see great importance in women acquiring an occupation because this is their source of power. A new programme operated by the department (in Beersheva, Tel Aviv and Haifa) is one that takes care of families who were victims of crime, meaning that they have lost a family member in a criminal act. “These families lost their loved ones in an act of violence and they are left to deal with the trauma by themselves with no help from the authorities. At our centres they get the support and professional help they need.”

Shapira believes that there is much work to be done on the subject of advancing and empowering the weak sides of Israeli society and is proud that through these projects WIZO touches the lives of so many people throughout Israel.

Etti Berkin -
Head of the Department of the Status of Women

Being the deputy to former head of the department Gila Oshrat, Etti Berkin is familiar with all the department’s campaigns and projects for the empowerment of women. “One of the most important campaigns was the one against sexist advertisements with the annual contest held to grade the offensive campaigns towards women. To my great surprise – and satisfaction - all the campaigns that we dealt with were immediately changed by the advertising company. This made us feel that we can actually make a difference. Our next goal is to try to influence the reality shows that also present a very degrading image of women,” states Berkin.

Berkin’s vision, corresponding with her associates, is to strengthen the relations with the branches. “We held a meeting with heads of WIZO branches and volunteers which was very successful. They all expressed their willingness to be more involved. We have decided that our department will hold local seminars for a few branches at a time where the department’s projects and agendas will be discussed. In this way the branches can feel that they are not left out and can truly contribute to our cause. Awareness about the status of women is growing but there is still a lot of work to be done,” she says with a smile.

Mali Harel -
Head of Culture Department

Mali Harel was deputy to former head of the Culture Department, Etti Ashtar, who nominated her as her replacement.

“I have many years of experience in the department and I am deeply familiar with all the departmental projects. This year, even though our budget has shrunk, we are planning great projects. One of them is our yearly “Culture Marathon” held for the culture coordinators at WIZO Centres throughout Israel. Our target is to expose our volunteers to a variety of people who are willing to work in cooperation with WIZO. I see this as part of our commitment to our branches and the tools we are giving them so they can do their work properly,” emphasizes Harel.

Harel believes that it is important to strengthen the relations between WIZO Israel and the volunteers in branches. “The fact that these women are ready to commit themselves to WIZO and volunteer should not be taken for granted. They should feel that their work is appreciated and acknowledged. We help them by running professional courses especially for the women who volunteer and work at WIZO branches. One of the recent courses we launched is a professional group coordinator’ course. Another one we intend to open is an ‘events coordinator’ course.

Harel believes that the strength of WIZO lies in the solidarity between the departments. “It is important that the heads of departments cooperate with each other and also share budgets when possible.”

With Gila at the helm, and these devoted and enthusiastic volunteers heading the departments of WIZO Israel, there is no doubt that the WIZO Israel federation will continue to make its mark on Israeli society.
**The Conference**

The WIZO Israel Conference was held at the end of May at the Dan Panorama Hotel in Tel Aviv. Some 350 WIZO members from all over the country, representing most of the 60 branches, gathered to discuss future policies and plans for the WIZO Israel federation, and elect new leaders. In her farewell speech to the chaverot, outgoing chairperson Yochy Feller outlined her eight years in office linking her WIZO work with world events. There is no doubt that Yochy changed the face of WIZO during her term in office, increasing awareness of the organization around the country – as proven by immense press coverage of major fundraising events and important issues. Membership increased dramatically and WIZO was at the forefront of initiating and supporting legislation for women’s rights in Israel’s Knesset.

Important discussions were held with amendments to the Constitution and stimulating programmes were arranged. A panel consisting of well-known women TV presenters and journalists provoked an entertaining, yet serious discussion on Women in the Media. Recently retired veteran – the first woman TV news presenter Dalia Mazor described how difficult it was for her to persuade the ‘powers that be’ to allow her to present the evening news. One of the panellists was Karnit Goldwasser, widow of IDF soldier Ehud Goldwasser who was abducted, then killed by the Hizbollah during the Second Lebanese War. Karnit has become a TV presenter on environmental issues.

Heart-warming stories were told ‘from the field’ by recipients of WIZO’s myriad of services – we know it sounds a cliché, but time and time again we heard ‘WIZO saved my life’, from young women who were on the fringes of society, who had suffered hardships in their lives, often through no fault of their own, and had been lucky enough to find WIZO – or, in many cases, WIZO found them.

Famous Israeli pianist and musicologist Astrith Baltsan gave a wonderful musical presentation about the origins of Israel’s national anthem the Hatikva. Presentations were made to many branch chairs recognising the volunteers’ work in various aspects of WIZO’s work.
Yochy Feller, outgoing chairperson of WIZO Israel was touched by the love and appreciation of her WIZO associates.

Just before the WIZO summer break, a festive breakfast was held in honour of Yochy Feller, outgoing chairperson of WIZO Israel. One by one WIZO representatives from all over the country came to honour Feller and let her know how much they appreciate her work.

“‘It is a great privilege to be standing here and express my appreciation for the work you have done,” said Gila Oshrat, new chairperson of WIZO Israel. “Only now do I realize that I am taking your place as chairperson of WIZO Israel and I am so thrilled about it”.

Helena Glaser, President of World WIZO, recalled how she went all the way to Haifa to persuade Feller’s husband to support her because “it is impossible to take this job without the support of your family.” Helena Glaser said that WIZO is one big family and therefore you can never really leave because you can’t leave your family”. Susanne Sznajderman-Rytz president of WIZO Sweden who was in Israel for a family visit and attended the event, took the opportunity to express her feelings towards Feller and WIZO Israel – “Every one of you is part of our family but the head of the family makes the atmosphere and makes the house worth living in. It is not so simple to run a house, and especially to run a big organization such as WIZO. But a woman who is organized knows how to make the right decision for her family. Throughout these long years you paved the way for all of us. One thing I can promise – you can leave WIZO but WIZO will never leave you,” she concluded.

It seemed that every person in the room wanted to get on the stage and make a speech for Feller but the time was short. Among the speakers were Irit Levi, Feller’s right hand and her “spouse” as she defined it, Nina Shapira, head of family welfare department, and many others.

Yochy thanked all of her WIZO friends and wiped a tear from her eyes. “I feel that WIZO is my home and all of you helped me become what I am today,” she said with emotion in her voice. “I think these were the most beautiful years of my life. There is something about WIZO that elevates your spirit. Despite all the problems the feeling is that you are engaged in a meaningful activity for our society. I can recall one moment during a Bar Mitzvah ceremony which we organized for boys and girls from low socio-economic backgrounds. I was approached by one of the boy’s grandmothers who said “you have no idea what you have done for me and my grandson.” It was then I realized the importance of our work. Thanks to WIZO I have had many exciting moments I learned here that ‘the sky is the limit’ – there is no limit to what you can achieve. I would like to congratulate Gila Oshrat, the new chairperson. Though this is not an easy task I’m sure you will succeed and hope you enjoy every minute of it”.

Tova Ben Dov, chairperson of the World WIZO, added her gratitude and said that Feller left her mark on WIZO. “You have the unique combination of a great person, a mother and a leader. We always say that WIZO is one big family and therefore you can never really leave because you can’t leave your family”.

Presenting awards at the Conference
Obituary

WIZO Australia President Gilla Liberman writes:

Tom Mandel z”l transformed the lives of many through his generosity and passion.

He reaped the benefit of giving during his lifetime and was able to see the growth and development of WIZO Australia’s projects due to his philanthropy.

WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim, WIZO Australia’s special boarding school in Haifa, was close to Tom and Rae’s heart. They renovated the boys’ dormitory as well as financing improvements to the basketball court and the dining room.

Tom also gave generously for the refurbishment of WIZO day care centres.

His vision for assisting women and children is reflected in the brand new Rae and Tom Mandel Family Modiin WIZO Centre opened in May 2011.

Tom was a true friend both to WIZO and to Jo Gostin, past federal president of WIZO Australia.

His leaves behind a lasting legacy and will be sorely missed by the Australian chaverot.

Tom Mandel z”l – Proud Son of the Jewish People

We were so very saddened to hear of the death of Tom Mandel z”l, after a long and heroic battle with ill health. WIZO has lost a dear and personal friend whose warmth and caring shone through his every deed. Tom Mandel was always so concerned for the wellbeing of the children in Israel, especially those who he ‘adopted’ in WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim, donating to many projects that he felt would improve the quality of life for these children who already had to cope with trauma during their short lives. On each plaque for a project that he donated he added the words, ‘for the joy and pleasure of the children’. An example of his attention to small details as well as to the big projects, is that on hearing the children needed bathrobes, he bought bathrobes for each and every child.

Tom was dedicated to his Jewish roots and his people, and he was a strong believer in passing those roots from generation to generation. He strongly believed in the WIZO vision and in everything that we strive to do, leading him to support many WIZO projects, including the recently opened Tom and Rae Mandel WIZO Centre in Modiin, although he was unable to attend due to his failing health. He was always willing to ‘lend an ear’ when we had a specific problem, and we knew that we could always rely upon him to come through in times of need, in his own way and with a smile.

The legacy Tom leaves behind will continue long after his passing, and his timeless deeds and values will live on.

He will be sadly missed by his wife Rae, his children Colin, David and Vivienne, the Australian WIZO Federation, and all of us in Israel. He was an exceptional human being and we shall always remember this proud son of the Jewish people.

Tom’s children Colin and Vivienne unveiling the entrance sign at the opening of the Modiin family centre May 2011

(l to r) Former Australian Ambassador to Israel James Larsen, Tom Mandel, Tova Ben Dov at the 70th anniversary celebrations of WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim, May 2009

The late Tom and his wife Rae Mandel at the 70th anniversary celebrations of WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim, May 2009

Tom’s children Colin and Vivienne unveiling the entrance sign at the opening of the Modiin family centre May 2011
A School for Life

WIZO Municipal Technological High School in the name of Maya Rosenberg1 gives its students much more than merely high quality education. For many of its students who come from low socio-economic backgrounds, the school is a place where they can get the personal attention and guidance they need in order to succeed.

The students who study in this school are mostly the ones who either dropped out of other schools or were rejected by the system because of various problems. These students usually come from a low socio-economic background, and/or single-parent families; many are second generation new immigrants from the FSU (former Soviet Union) and Ethiopia. They usually have discipline issues and many of them have lost faith in themselves and their ability to succeed. We give them a second chance since no student drops out of our school and our concept is to advance each one of them according to their individual abilities,” explains Yehudit Weizenbluth, the school’s principal.

About the School
The school has a long history since its foundation in 1935 by Dr Maya Rosenberg as a school for girls. It was intentionally located in the heart of Rehovot where Yemenite immigrants lived, to encourage the parents to send their young daughters to school rather than out to work. In 1947 it was taken over by WIZO, and since 1963 the school has operated as a technological high school, jointly run by WIZO and the municipality of Rehovot.
In spite of their relatively low starting point, the average number of students who achieve their matriculation certificate is 88% - a high figure compared with other leading schools in Rehovot and even throughout Israel.

The Uniqueness
“The small classes make our school unique – only 18 students in a class compared to 34 in other schools. This allows the teacher to give every student the individual attention he or she needs. Students study for long hours and if necessary, receive private tuition. Our teachers are also provided with special workshops and guidance in order to help them cope with their classes and face their challenges. The most remarkable characterization of this school is the love and mutual respect that the students feel towards their teachers and vice versa. Some children get two hot meals a day and the rest of the students who study until 17:00 get a hot meal as well. When there are nine children in the house and the

1 Sponsored by WIZO Brazil and WIZO France
student doesn’t even have a corner of his own where he can study then he can stay and study at the school and we provide him with everything he needs,” Yehudit clarifies. Walking through the school premises with Yehudit gave me a better understanding of the nature of this special educational institute and the comprehensive work that has been invested in both teachers and students in order to provide them with the tools to fulfil their tasks. There are special rooms for every subject. Whether it is technology or literature, teachers can sit quietly, do their work and meet with the students. In addition, every room is equipped with computers and a telephone line so the teacher can call their students when they are absent from school or update the students’ parents. This attitude is unique to the school and enhances the relationship between the students, their parents and the teachers.

Yehudit is a truly unique principal. When we walk through the corridors and walkways of the school she can recognize every student by name and if he is wandering around she orders him to get back to his class. It seems she knows every student in person and is updated with his academic achievements. The reward to the staff is that even after the students have graduated from the school they feel they want to show their teachers their accomplishments. “When two of my students achieved a doctorate degree in chemistry they came here to show me their diploma,” she proudly states.

Enthusiastic Pupils

Nofar Aflalo, Paz Maman, Mazal Tarona and Orli Zaido are all 11th grade students and they have only praise for the school and especially their teacher Lizzy Even Zur, whom they absolutely adore.

“The classrooms are small, there isn’t much noise and therefore it is easy for us to learn. Plus we get all the materials we need and special printouts that the teacher prepares for us so we can understand everything and succeed in the tests,” says Nofar.

“Our teacher Lizzy is wonderful and she truly cares about us. When I fail to come to class she will call me immediately and make sure I attend school. She already became a friend of my mother and she keeps her updated with my situation in class all the time,” adds Paz, a curly haired and cheerful looking girl. “I have especially enjoyed the special activity we did with disabled children at a kindergarten that belongs to the ILAN Association. It was nice to feel that we can give these kids joy and play with them. If I could and had more time, I would have gone there more often. I felt that that I created a special bond with these children,” she recalls.

Mazal and Orli are both second generation immigrants from Ethiopia and before they were students of this school they attended “Katzir” high school in Rehovot.

“When I studied at Katzir the classes were more crowded and I didn’t get as much personal attention and guidance as I get in this school,” Mazal acknowledges.
“I took graphic design and I am very pleased,” adds her friend. “I feel that these studies have given me the tools to succeed in my life because I can become a professional graphic designer.” Orli, who studies communications, agrees with her, and says that she is thinking of working in the field of communications after she graduates.

**The Communications Department**

A visit to the Communications Department reveals a well-equipped infrastructure that provides the most professional state-of-the-art cameras and equipment. Ilya Elman, the head of the department and a devoted teacher, explains that sometimes having the best equipment is not enough. “In order to be able to create a personal statement like the one made in a short film one needs to have the support of a family. These young students suffer from low self-esteem. They simply don’t believe in themselves,” he states with sadness in his voice. Despite their hardships, some students do succeed and Ilya brags that one of his students has been accepted to the IDF’s documentation unit.

**Volunteering for the Army**

It is important to note that there is much activity on the issue of encouraging the students to volunteer for the army. Due to the fact that many of the students come from low socio-economic backgrounds and many of them do not identify with the state or feel anger towards the authorities for various reasons, much effort is needed to persuade them to volunteer.

Ranit Gold, deputy principal, tells me that she relies on the school’s graduates in order to get the students acquainted with the army. “We have graduates serving in a variety of divisions – from combat units to drivers - and I invite them to meet with our students and share their experience with us so the students can understand that there is room for everyone in the army,” she declares.

**Social Activities**

Gold continues about the variety of social activities conducted at the school: a talent festival, theatre plays that can be brought to the school instead of the students having to go to the theatre, and many other activities. Of course the cherry on the cake is the graduation ceremony and party which is always an impressive production. “I simply love those kids. I keep in touch with them even years after they graduate,” she smiles. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of WIZO Brazil and France, students and graduates of the Maya Rosenberg School have a school – for life!

(l to r) Paz, Mazal, Orli

Ilya Ellman, head of the Communications Department
Professional Education
for WIZO’s Early-Age Children

The WIZO Pedagogic Centre, located at WIZO headquarters in Tel Aviv, is a relatively modest looking venue and rather small, but size does not count when it comes to the important educational work being done there.

Sima Borkovski

The contribution of the WIZO Pedagogic Centre to the education of young children at WIZO day care centres is immense, as well as the fact there is no similar centre in Israel that is dedicated to the education of early age children. Only recently, new regulations regarding the need to supervise early age educational facilities were issued by the government.

Shedding light on the centre’s activity
Betty Crystal, the founder and living spirit behind the pedagogic centre, decided, as part of her recent birthday celebrations, to invite executive members of Friends of WIZO, and other guests for a morning at the Centre. Hence, a group of vital women for whom WIZO is an inseparable part of their lives, assembled to get acquainted with the activities and people of the centre.

Hassida’s presentation
Hassida Danai, chairperson of WIZO’s Early Age Division, gave a thorough presentation on the importance of the centre as a source of training, information and knowledge for WIZO’s day care centres throughout the country.

“The Pedagogic Centre creates different educational programmes to suit the ever changing needs of children in the various day care centres. For instance, children who live in Kiryat Shmona have different needs to those living in Tel Aviv – their vocabulary, knowledge and even the interaction between the parents is different. Therefore their programmes cannot be based on the same materials,” Danai explains.

The multi-purpose day care centres that are situated in poor neighbourhoods also need greater attention, since the children stay longer hours. Special programmes are created to suit their special needs, as well as activities for their parents.

The ‘encyclopedia of education’
The main room at the centre resembles a library and is packed with books and designated files for every holiday. The best way to realize the comprehensive work being done at the Pedagogic Centre is to browse through ‘The Book’- which is basically the Bible for every day care centre director. This thick ‘encyclopedia’entitled To Grow Up in WIZO, covers all the issues relating to children’s education. The book is another endeavour initiated and funded by Betty Crystal and it provides a great working tool for day care centre directors.

Presentation in appreciation to Betty Crystal:
(l to r) Tova Ben Dov, Hassida Danai, Betty Crystal

Courses for day care directors and caregivers
The pedagogic centre also provides training courses for caregivers (metaplot) and special courses to train the next generation of day care centre directors. Danai explains that there is a variety of courses both for future caregivers and for the ones that are already in the system.

Rising demand for WIZO dcc places
Hassida reported that there is a huge deficit of day care centres in Israel and demand for WIZO day care centre places is rising, especially in Tel Aviv. “We always have huge waiting lists. In recent years, young families have been moving back to the city to avoid the rush-hour traffic jams. This year WIZO is opening a new day care centre in Tel Aviv University to help parents who are studying for their Master’s and PhDs and hopefully we will open another one in Beersheva at Ben Gurion University.”

The morning concluded with warm tributes and a presentation to Betty.

Sylvia Milgrod, Betty’s sister, congratulated her saying that she was always engaged in pikuah nefesh. “Just go on and on in good health, but don’t forget to look after yourself as well as looking after others.”

Betty thanked everyone for attending, saying she is proud to have a family that supports her and her work for WIZO. “You can’t work without family support and I have a WIZO family.”
The Jesse Cohen neighbourhood in Holon is notoriously known as a poverty stricken area with high levels of unemployment, crime and families who are supported by the welfare department. Under such conditions, WIZO’s multi-purpose day care centre (sponsored by WIZO Holland), which is situated in the neighbourhood, functions not only as an educational institute but as a substitute home for the 65 children under its supervision. These children come from single parent families and low socio-economic backgrounds, with many of the parents new immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

Yair Peretz, director of the centre, and Noa Baso, the social worker (and his right hand), have succeeded in making the place a home for the children, which provides them with all the warmth and attention they need. A display of photos at the entrance depicting an activity following a reading of the book *Where is Ayelet?* by Rinat Hooper (an Israeli story about a little girl who loves to play hide-and-seek), shows just how involved Peretz is with the children’s education. “I love reading to the children and I decided that playing a game of hide and seek following the reading would be an interesting activity. All the kids cooperated with me and we had great fun,” he recalls.

The advantages of having a male director
Peretz is not a typical director, not only because he is a lone male in a women-based organization (working in a day care centre whether as a care giver or as a director is considered a ‘woman’s job’), but because of his personal involvement in the children’s lives. “I used to work as a comptroller but everyone who knew me said that I should work with people. I started a Master’s degree in education for young children and all along I knew that my field of expertise would be children at risk. To make a long story short, I was recommended for this job by the educational supervisor and what started as a temporary job became permanent. Although my first year as a director was tremendously difficult, and I was torn between my responsibility to the staff and the needs of the children and their families, now I feel that finally things are starting to get in order,” he confesses.

“The fact we have a male director is very helpful at times,” admits Baso. “We get much more cooperation from the children’s fathers since Yair has joined our staff.”

Importance of the father
Yair states that he sees great importance in making the fathers more involved in their children’s lives. “There was a father who had no contact with the child and his mother; I kept calling him every month to invite him to join our activities and meet the child here. Eventually he came, and ever since I don’t have to remind him to come again. There is another father that holds his weekly meeting with his child at the centre because their meetings need to be supervised; this is the most convenient arrangement for them,” he explains.

Child-parent activities
“’We have a variety of joint activities for the children and their parents such as guided playgroups for children and parents once a week followed by supper that they eat together;’ says Baso. ‘These activities revolve around a certain subject we need to raise with the parents and the children. Many of the parents need parental guidance, as some of them simply don’t know how to behave with the child or how to express..."
their emotions towards them or control their anger. “Last year we had a volunteer who gave the children and their parents a reflexology workshop. Our goal was to create intimacy between the parent and the child, to be able to communicate through touch. It was a very successful workshop,” she declares. “One of the children had feelings of alienation towards his mother because she hardly spent time with him since she had to work long hours. In addition, the mother was an immigrant from the Former Soviet Union and was restrained in the way she showed her emotions even while they were together. In the beginning, the child would not agree to let his mother even touch his foot but gradually they became closer and eventually he asked her to give him a foot massage,” recalls Baso.

Volunteer involvement
Many of the projects being held at the centre are initiatives of organizations and individuals who are willing to volunteer for the children. One example of a long lasting project is the ongoing relationship with the Abu-Kabir detention centre; volunteers indulge the children on a weekly basis with special dairy products for the supper held after the guided playgroup and also at special events such as the celebration of Shavuot. “They bring us personal packs of butter or cheese, special yogurts and other dairy products the kids are not used to eating. Every time they come they make the children and their parents happy,” says Baso.

The day care centre is comprised of several age groups: a babies’ class, toddlers and pre-kindergarten and an afternoon centre for children who attend the municipality kindergarten; they arrive at noon, have their lunch, play and rest and stay at the premises until 7pm. Most of the children stay long hours at the day care centre from the morning until 7pm and have all their meals there. When asked if this situation is not hard for the children, Peretz and Baso reply that for these children the centre has become their home.

Books as a therapeutic tool
One of the most successful projects is the one held with the community centre’s library and conducted by the librarian, Rima. This activity is conducted with the pre-school children; once a week a group go to the library and since a parent needs to join the group it becomes an opportunity for a special activity for the child with his parent. “Before I came up with the idea to go to the local library I remembered that I asked for the cooperation of another centre and received a negative answer. This made me realize that not everyone is willing to volunteer and I shouldn’t take it for granted. When we began with the library project, our intention was to expose the children to the world of books, to teach them the codes of behaviour in the library, how to find a book etc. But with time we realized that books can be used as a therapeutic tool,” Peretz reveals.

“We discuss with Rima before the visit to the library about themes that are relevant to the children’s needs or if there is a special problem or issue that needs to be brought up,” says Baso. “For example we had a child, an immigrant from Ethiopia who was called kushi (Hebrew slang for ‘black’) by another. The child was offended by that and we wanted to raise the issue of the diversity of human society – the fact that every one of us is different and we should accept all people. In the library Rima talked to the children about the subject and read them the book My Father is Brown. Eventually, the child loved the book so much that we had to make him a copy so his mother would be able to read it to him at home.”

Rima, the librarian who operates the library project, says that for her the project has been a great experience. “I usually read the children a book that touches an issue that can interest them, sometimes the care givers guide me as to the issues that need to be raised. I see great progress in the way the children behave in the library and their attitude towards books in general. It is great to see the way they sit quietly and listen to the stories I read them,” she proudly acknowledges.

WIZKIDS
WIZKIDS is another successful project that brings joy to the older children at the afternoon centre. The project is an initiative of Compedia, an Israeli company that develops educational games for the computer with WIZO Holland. “Representatives of the company came and installed hundreds of educational games, and provided us with an instructor who guided the children for 20 sessions (The computers were also donated). “As a matter of fact the instructor called me recently and said she misses the kids and would like to come and visit them again. When you work so closely with the kids it’s hard not to get attached to them,” Peretz says with a smile.
For Prof Rivka Lazovsky, educational strategist in World WIZO’s Education Division, and deputy chairperson of the World WIZO Executive, accompanying World WIZO President Helena Glaser to the Latin American WIZO Congress in Montevideo, Uruguay this past May was like closing a circle, for it was from Uruguay that Rivka made aliya as a teenager.

Held every two or three years, the previous one being in Panama two years ago, the congress gives the chaverot from these countries the opportunity to share the problems of their communities, and brainstorm together with fresh ideas for innovative ways to increase their WIZO membership and fundraising to support the projects they sponsor in Israel. They also show their collective solidarity with WIZO and Israel, and have the chance to renew old friendships and form new ones.

WIZO members and supporters from Argentina, Chile, Brazil (more than 50 delegates!), Panama, Mexico and Colombia joined the local chaverot from Uruguay.

Personal touches
“The conference was so well organized and I was most impressed by the many personal touches provided by the chaverot,” says Rivka. “Everything was planned to the last detail, the little things as well as the big ones, and this made all the difference.

History and Tradition
The uniqueness of the Latin American federations is the WIZO tradition that, in many cases, has passed through some four generations from grandmothers and even some great grandmothers who immigrated to Latin America from Europe. Rivka Lazovsky’s own family is a prime example: “My maternal grandmother, Helena, was on the WIZO Executive in Vienna. The family managed to escape to Uruguay in 1939 where she continued her WIZO activities and passed on her enthusiasm and commitment to my mother, Anita Jamitovsky, who was president of WIZO Uruguay for many years. After she immigrated to Israel in 1973, she was head of the Latin American Division of World WIZO for a long period. With her mother’s milk, she passed on the family WIZO tradition to me,” continues Rivka. “When I immigrated to Israel it was only natural for me to join WIZO Aviv. WIZO was always part of my life and my family’s life.”

Lectures and workshops
Following the opening evening, the next two days consisted of lectures and workshops, given by guest speakers and WIZO members. Presentations were given by the presidents and representatives of the attending federations on membership, fundraising, women in politics, women’s leadership, fundraising, changes in family structure, and other topics.

Highlights
A Jewish Uruguayan journalist Jana Jerolimsky Beris pointed out how the press reports items about Israel – in many cases not as facts but conjecture – for example when rockets fall in Sderot, the press would say “Israel reports that…” or “Israel says that…”. One of her suggestions was – and this could be for WIZO federations – that teams of adults and young people who are active in their community, should be formed and trained to keep in contact with influential figures in their communities with regard to Israel.

Magdalena Furtada discussed the rise in the status of the Latin American woman; a change is taking place in Latin American society. Today, women are playing a more central role in what has been a very male-dominated society. Referring to Uruguay in particular, which is more advanced than other Latin American countries, Furtada stated that there is a definite correlation between education and employment amongst women in Uruguay. Quite simply, a woman with higher education has better employment opportunities.

Latin American politics vis à vis Israel
Bnai Brith International Director of Latin American Affairs Dr Eduardo Kohn, spoke about the serious situation existing today, where the attitude of Latin American countries to Israel has changed. Countries, which for many years, were
supporters of Israel, and one would never have thought
their attitude would change e.g. Venezuela and Bolivia,
have cut their diplomatic relations with Israel. Even worse,
there are political organizations which demonstrate against
Israel. This has also manifested itself in the terminology
used today...for example in March 2011 in Venezuela 'The
International Week of the War against Apartheid in Israel' –
was publicized as 'the opportunity to get acquainted about
the Jewish genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza.'

**Fundraising session**

A first class lecture and workshop was given by Daniel
Cesarkas, who stressed that fundraising must be done in
a professional manner with long-term strategic planning.
One of his major suggestions was to plan what he called a
'Macro-Magbit' – a fundraising campaign which would last
more than one year – even three years – with meticulous
planning for the final goal and how to achieve it.

Another lecturer spoke about how important it is to be
aware of what's 'cool' today – we must 'sell our product' using
today's tools and terminology – in all languages – especially
to the young people. Brand names (Coca-cola, Hoover,
Kleenex) became household words by clever marketing –
we should learn from them!

**Social aspects**

In addition to the serious business, amidst a wonderful
atmosphere of friendship and solidarity, there were gala
and celebratory dinners, and of course dancing and singing
in true Latin American style!

On the Friday night before the conference, a kabalat
Shabbat was held at the home of the head of the Ashkenazi
community whose wife is very active in WIZO.

After the conference, a brunch was arranged at WIZO House,
for WIZO Uruguay members. Rivka stressed the importance
of getting to know WIZO's work well and disseminating all
the information to as many people as possible, because
this is the best possible *hasbara* for WIZO and Israel. She
emphasized the need to recruit new members, especially
young women, and integrate them in the executive as soon
as possible.

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**Helena and Rivka’s presentations**

Helena and Rivka contributed greatly to the conference.
Before the conference, Helena had a meeting with women
members of parliament, where she spoke about WIZO
and the status of women. She also gave a presentation on
violence in the family and what WIZO is doing in this sphere
– she told the chaverot about WIZO's shelters for battered
women, the programmes for rehabilitation and help for the
women to leave the shelter and start a new life with their
children.

Rivka gave a presentation on WIZO's work in education,
focusing on projects dealing with youth at risk. She stressed
how the combination of formal and informal education was
a great success with these young people who had failed
in the regular education system. She emphasized how we
succeed with these youngsters by investing in them, giving
them personal attention, raising their self confidence and
self-esteem so they become confident and upright citizens
of the State of Israel.

For Rivka, the conference ended on a very emotional note,
when she visited the school where she had studied as a child.
She met with the bar/bat mitzvah children and showed
them a film about WIZO’s bar/bat mitzvah celebrations, after
which she held discussions with the children, asking them
for their reactions to the film and what emotions it aroused
in them. “The hall was full. I told the children that I sat on
those very benches, and the excellent Jewish and Zionist
education I received at this school brought me to Israel. I
told them how important it is to preserve their Jewish
identity and their identification with the State of Israel.”

“Theese federations should be recognized as a source of
great pride to WIZO”, concluded Rivka, “as many of them
operate in very difficult circumstances.”
Dedicated Community Worker

Committed to WIZO, her family and her community of Holocaust survivors, business-woman and president of WIZO Sweden, Susanne Sznajderman-Rytz talks to WIZO Review

Ingrid Rockberger

I spoke with Susanne between sessions at the Meeting of Representatives in January in Tel Aviv. I started by asking her to give us some background about herself and her family:

I was born into a family where charity has been for generations – my mother was a leading and dedicated WIZO woman. All the community, all the ladies where I grew up were Holocaust survivors – all passionate Zionists - and my mother was always eager to help in social work, organizing the community and in fundraising for WIZO. My parents were Holocaust survivors and so was my husband’s family, so we share the same history.

The little Jewish community where I still live is called The Jewish Community of Borås, and was established by Holocaust survivors in the year 1946. More than 3000 survivors came to Sweden after the Second World War. Many were saved by the Red Cross, and Sweden was considered a temporary solution. The Swedish government thought they would all go back to their home countries and they were working on repatriation, but most people wanted to continue to other countries; some emigrated to Israel. My father-in-law wanted to as well, but as he was in a deep sleep one night, ill with a fever, his group left illegally and left him behind. When he awoke the next morning and discovered what had happened, he left by himself, wearing only his pajamas. My parents went back to Poland at first, but then my father found out that three surviving sisters had arrived in Borås so they joined them in Sweden.

Today, our community is shrinking and my husband and family are very much involved in caring for the remaining Holocaust survivors. There are so many aspects to it, and we have dedicated ourselves to this community.

How did you start in WIZO?

Most of the ladies in WIZO were my mother’s age, and even as a student I was involved in supporting Israel. So, aged 25 when my daughter was born, I found myself to be the president of our local WIZO. Since then it has been a story of passion and love. Although I still live in this little town, I went on a mission to Budapest with Raya Jaglom and to Beijing with Rachel Limon. I give a lot of credit to former WIZO presidents of Sweden, who trusted me to share a leadership position for many years. This was a very important and valuable education.

What is the situation of the Jewish community in Sweden today?

It is hard to estimate the exact number but there are about 12,000 who are affiliated to the community – living in and around the three main cities: Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmoe. The population of Sweden is 9,000,000 of which 10% are Arab/Moslem. This of course affects the Jewish community: once we were a minority which was appreciated and look upon as an asset. Today, we have a higher rate of mixed marriages and a higher rate of people giving up their affiliation to the [Jewish] community. Of course, what happens within the general Swedish society affects our community. There are few Jewish schools: there is one major Jewish school in Stockholm and one in Gothenburg, which has a Jewish curriculum added to the Swedish curriculum. Most Jewish children do not attend a Jewish school or a Jewish kindergarten.

The compilation of WIZO Sweden?

Our tradition used to be a completely homogenous group of Jewish women within the ranks of WIZO. Those days are gone. As I said, we have a high rate of intermarriage, and even in my generation there are a lot of non-Jewish women married to Jewish men, whose children may have been converted and have had a bar/bat mitzvah. We say that anyone who feels they can share the motives and ideals of WIZO, and have an affiliation to the Jewish community due to their husband being Jewish, is welcome to join us.

Do you have mixed-age groups or separate groups for Aviv?

We have five cities [with WIZO groups] – each city works in the way which is best suited for it. We don’t dictate. In the main cities (Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmoe) we have groups that mostly meet regardless of age –except for the
younger ones, who join the Aviv groups. The groups meet in private homes and have different types of events.

Is there any type of outreach programme, for example to attract the younger women?
Since I became president we have started a new campaign where we are trying to double our numbers. This year’s campaign is ‘We shall grow.’ Growth is numbers and knowledge – so we are doing a campaign that is for everybody but is especially for the young ones, to get them involved in WIZO and to teach them what decision-making is and why they should join WIZO and by WIZO learn to empower themselves – and by that empower WIZO.

You are a communications person, and in this age of hi-tech, presumably you will contact your members by these new means?
We do that already, our new website is up – we are restructuring all our methods of communication. There are two aspects to this: one is that with high-tech we need ‘hi-touch’. We have to see people; we have to have face-to-face conversations because we don’t think big money will come through the anonymous high-tech.
We had an example recently where we were personally approached by a donor, who was willing to donate a substantial sum of money if we could find a suitable project for him. However, by the time some proposals were ready, the donor had given his money elsewhere. We were very disappointed because we really wanted this donation for improvements to the two day care centres we support in Rishon-le-Zion. So, undeterred, we set out to find another donor. We soon found another family, who agreed to consider the proposal, and within a short time, they came back to us and agreed to fund the improvements.

Do members of the community visit Israel regularly, do they have family here?
Most Swedes do have some kind of relationship with Israel. And they are mostly very Zionist. Many have family in Israel and visit regularly.

Do you think it is important for people to come and see the projects, to learn about all the different activities of WIZO?
I think my first goal is to develop the essence of WIZO, because they know Israel, they know Israeli society. We are moving on, but I cannot say it is all laid out yet, as I have only been in office one year. Of course seeing is believing.
We planned to bring a group to Israel this year but could not get enough people. There were two reasons for this: one was due to the fact that we are all professional working women, and have limited holiday days per year. The second was that the price was too expensive due to the currency exchange rates.

Tell me about your own family, I know you have a daughter here in Israel.
Yes, I am happily married. My family is a WIZO family – everyone in my family – old and young work for WIZO – having said that I think my best supporter is my husband. As many WIZO members in Sweden would agree, our husbands are the true supporters and loyal working force. In Borås where our children grew up there was a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish community, to Israel and to Jewish values. Like most young people of today they moved to bigger cities for education and work. Our oldest, Naomi, studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, after which she moved to London where she got involved in Young WIZO. She is now living in Tel Aviv and has made aliyah. Daniel lives in Stockholm, and as a computer engineer he gives me advice on how to use modern media. The youngest, Judith, also lives in Stockholm and has given WIZO her professional advice on graphic design. So I am lucky to say, that in our extended family, we all contribute to WIZO.
You run your own business, tell us what it is exactly.

Since 1986 I have had the privilege of running my own company. I teach and develop spoken and written communication skills, business development and leadership. By profession I am educated in linguistics, so this is my formal background. Being in charge of my own time, has very much contributed to the way I can spend time for WIZO, unlike most of our chaverot. Readers might be interested to know that I have been instrumental in making Yiddish a national minority language in Sweden. In Sweden we have a national federation of Yiddish and we are supported by the state for the preservation and development of Yiddish and the culture connected to this heritage. As I grew up in a Yiddish speaking environment, I made it my personal challenge to prove its importance and value. Most of my time I have been lucky to work with causes, where my skills and my passion can be united. This I thank my family for. Running my own company has given me the opportunity to share my time between WIZO, Yiddish, community work and family. I see it all as being part of an extended family. It has enriched us and given us the pleasure and privilege of supporting others.

We salute Susanne – the epitome of the multi-tasking 21st century woman, who manages to integrate a career, family and voluntary community work.

The special connection with WIZO Sweden and Mickey Dahav, director of the World WIZO Fundraising Department

It is a very interesting and beautiful experience to open your mail one day and realize that at WIZO headquarters in Tel Aviv, works a young woman with a mother and grandmother whom my family has known for more than 60 years. So when I met Mickey working with Esther Mor in the Fundraising Department it was like closing a circle. We were fortunate, in May, to have Mickey come to Gothenburg and hold a weekend seminar on fundraising for the whole of WIZO Sweden. If we had hoped and planned for a good weekend, Mickey certainly excelled our expectations and added a warm and friendly atmosphere that absolutely made the seminar a success. I can really recommend this kind of cooperation and shared experiences in order to build understanding and trust for a good and fruitful relationship within the organization. The most important lesson was that if and when you want to engage your chaverot, it is necessary to hold a professional, well prepared seminar, where the leader can identify and relate to the daily challenges of the local work.
I cannot believe that it is almost nine months since my husband and I ‘committed’ aliyah (immigration to Israel). Committed is a great word because a) you have to be very committed to this process to make it work, and b) you have to be committed for not being in your right mind! Jokes aside, I am loving every minute of my experience because when I decided to make the move to Israel, I committed myself 100% to making it work.

I am a very passionate Zionist, having worked and volunteered for some of South Africa’s most prolific Zionist institutions that have included amongst others, the South African Zionist Federation’s Media Team Israel as well as our very own WIZO South Africa. I was exceptionally proud to be WIZO’s Young Representative to the Zionist General Council. The decision to make aliyah was relatively easy, although fraught with the usual anxieties that plague olim (immigrants to Israel). For me, making the final commitment to the State of Israel was a natural progression of sorts. Several months later, my husband and I are happily settled in Modiin and following the normal (and I use that term loosely!) paths that many before us have taken. I will share some advice with those of you thinking of making aliyah as well as some of my experiences to date.

The right attitude
People who have had a successful aliyah will tell you that it is all about attitude. Aliyah is not for the faint hearted. You almost have to divorce ideology from the reality of building a new life and conquering the challenges that come with it, bearing in mind that there are no subtitles. Okay, that and a sense of humour! But it is true. Make the effort and do so with a positive attitude and you will reap rewards.

Aliyah is also about starting again and not taking yourself too seriously. You have to understand that you are almost rediscovering the world, albeit in a different language. I find this strangely liberating. You also have to be prepared to make a total fool of yourself on occasion. An example of this would be setting off to the butcher to order chicken breasts. Now, the husband and I make a habit of taking our dictionary everywhere we go or at least try to learn a few words a day. We do look ridiculous standing in stores, dictionary in tow. You should have seen us in the bakery trying to figure out what a ma’afa anak (giant pastry) was! Don’t fall into the ‘you can get away with English, everyone speaks it’ trap. Make learning Hebrew a priority if you want to integrate and get a great job.

The Hebrew language
Hebrew is a difficult language. For a language without any kind of formal structure, there are so many rules to remember! An example: somebody asks you a question. Before you answer you have to figure out what gender, tense and rules apply to specific words or if you need to speak in the singular or plural. And be careful because sometimes there are exceptions. All this while reading and writing from right to left while conjugating the verb and its infinitive and hopefully learning to do all this without vowels. No wonder classmates make a bee-line for the coffee during hafsaka or break time!

The ulpan (Hebrew class) also serves as a mini-United Nations, as olim from all over the world, speaking Hebrew with diverse accents, all come together to learn. We have our gals from Brazil, our feisty South Africans, our Russian contingent and not forgetting those from the US, UK and the Netherlands. And completing the picture, the most patient and deserving of a medal, Morah (teacher) Michal. No olim experience would be complete without doing ulpan! Don’t just do it because it is part of the sal klita (absorption basket of benefits) but do it because ulpan is your passport to functioning in Israeli society. You will be amazed at your personal sense of achievement when you can string a cohesive sentence and conversation together.

Everybody’s aliyah experience is different. What is frustrating to some is a breeze for others. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Enjoy your process and remember it is YOUR aliyah. Own your experience!

So, anyone wanna do the chicken dance with me….?
The Hong Kong Sisterhood

Although many Jewish residents of Hong Kong are ‘in transit’, a vibrant women’s organization exists, supporting local and Israeli charities, including WIZO

Tricia Schwitzer

In 1947, Jewish women living in Hong Kong founded the Jewish Women’s Association of Hong Kong (JWA) to assist some 30,000 Jewish immigrants fleeing Europe to China. After the establishment of the State of Israel, the JWA concentrated its efforts on assisting the women and children of Israel, mainly through WIZO. The JWA supports four organizations in Israel in aid of autistic children, children with cancer and the education of bed-ridden children but its greatest beneficiary is WIZO, through which it supports battered women in the WIZO Ashdod shelter and children in the Boris Green Day Care Centre in Tel Aviv’s Yad Eliyahu district. The JWA also supports local Hong Kong charities. Israel-born Daphna Peyser, the current chair of the JWA, explained that although its ‘sisterhood’ values are the same as WIZO, it is not affiliated.

Community in Transit

“As the community in Hong Kong is constantly in transit, it is hard to establish long term commitment to the organization. While the 15-woman strong JWA board makes all the decisions, members and friends of the organization contribute and take an active part in our activities as long as they are in Hong Kong and sometimes even from their homelands. The JWA organize two major fundraisers a year, a gala ball and a bazaar, both of which are at least 50-year-old traditions. The bazaar is one of the largest held in Hong Kong. Fundraising is done within the community and although Hong Kong is one of the richest places to do business, it has the most charities per square metre. Every Jewish person contributes to a local charity as well as a Jewish charity.”

The majority of Jews live in the Mid Levels area above the commercial and business Central District on Hong Kong Island close to the Jewish Community Centre. It is a very organized community with Jewish schools, kosher restaurants and shops. The Jewish population is comprised of some 4,000 people - just less than half of them are Israeli. Apart from the vibrant expat community, many are ‘in transit’ - in Hong Kong to do business and then go home. So while the husbands are working hard on the fast-paced corporate treadmill, the women, in many cases, need to leave their careers behind and care for the family and the house. Many women enjoy this new found freedom initially but soon get bored and find themselves drawn to the JWA – where they can empower themselves by doing charity work and meet other like-minded women.

Daphna is one such woman who came to Hong Kong with her husband and their two daughters, aged six and four. She told me: “I had only been here five days when a woman called me and asked me to become the chairperson of the JWA. I said, excuse me – I have just arrived and I have two young daughters. I know nothing about the JWA – but of course, I will help. So I joined the board, started working, and by the end of the year I became the chairperson. The community is small, complex and very friendly. I have been here three years now, and know my way around the community. I feel right at home.”

In the Family

The daughter of World WIZO Tourist Department Chair Lili Peyser, Daphna is a former marketing professional who has always used her promotional writing and fundraising skills in a volunteer capacity for various community and social work projects. “JWA presented me with the opportunity to be able to do something meaningful for Israel while I am in Hong Kong. Doing good deeds for the community is in my genes. It started with my grandmother, who was involved in many Zionist organizations. My mother can meet a person and just by listening to them, she will realise a need and find a way in which she can assist them. She will do it so quietly without any fuss. She will help not only within the framework of WIZO but wherever the need arises.”

Dare I say – like mother like daughter?
Dear Aviv friends,

A few months ago, I had a most wonderful experience when my husband Joseph and I travelled to Israel together with a group of 20 couples from Panama, of which only two were Jewish. The trip was under the auspices of the Panama chapter of the Young Presidents’ Organization (www.ypo.org). In this organization there are people from many different backgrounds and religions. We usually organize one trip a year for couples to a different country in the world.

First time in Israel

For most of the couples this was their first time in Israel, which made it even more special. Even if I try very hard, I cannot really express and relate to you the enthusiasm we all felt, and how amazed and impressed our friends were with Israel and all its different aspects. They loved the richness of history all over the land. How could one not be in awe when one sees before one’s eyes the sources and proof of Judaism, Christianity and Islam! Then, abruptly, from a biblical and historical Israel we were propelled into a modern society of technology, entrepreneurship, culture, success and visions for the future. I felt so proud! This trip was a real success. Now we have 36 new ambassadors who value the relevance of Israel and its contributions, and who admire the country for its extraordinary achievements in such a short time.

Visiting WIZO

During my trip I could not miss the chance to visit WIZO. Firstly we went to WIZO Gan Venof Youth Village (co-sponsored by Switzerland and Panama) in Petach Tikva, followed by the WIZO office in Tel Aviv where we saw my WIZO friends. It is incredible how, by just spending some hours in the wonderful ambiance of WIZO, one gets recharged with positive energy and inspiration to continue working and growing within our organization.

Come to the EGM!

Dear Aviv friends, this is the right moment to start making preparations to travel to Israel for the 25th World WIZO Enlarged General Meeting (EGM) that will take place from January 15 to 19 at the Tel Aviv Hilton Hotel. Our participation in the EGM is very important as we will have activities organized especially for the Aviv groups, and from past experiences I can guarantee that the time we will spend together will fill us with great new ideas and energy to bring back to our federations, where we are needed to work strongly on promoting WIZO to the younger generation. For many federations this is their biggest challenge since many young girls feel that WIZO belongs to their grandmothers. We must concentrate on membership recruitment and leadership succession for the continuity of our organization. At the EGM I will present the delegates with a report on Aviv achievements around the world and suggestions for future improvements to ensure our growth as an organization and WIZO mission.

See you in Israel soon!

Vicky Fidanque
Aviv Representative to the World WIZO Executive
CREATING A NEW TOMORROW at The 25TH WORLD WIZO EGM, JANUARY 2012

WIZO women will look back with pride on the accomplishments of the past 90 years, and look ahead to the ways in which they can change the future.

With great excitement we are all looking forward to the 25th World WIZO Enlarged General Meeting (EGM), and are deeply involved in preparations for it.

We anticipate 1,000 WIZO chaverot from around the world coming to participate – the same number as in 2008. A group of this magnitude shows the power of WIZO.

In the three and a half years since 2008, we have witnessed economic upheaval and the weakening of the dollar, as well as natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes and massive fires. Now more than ever, the role of WIZO in improving Israeli society is crucial and crystal clear.

We are filled with the desire to succeed. The 25th World WIZO EGM will prove to the entire Zionist world that we WIZO women are stronger than ever. The centrality of the Jewish woman in the education of the younger generation cannot be overestimated. We are sure that WIZO women who have stood behind the State of Israel through all its trying times – proud Jewish Zionist women, chaverot committed to WIZO, the largest Zionist women’s movement of all – will come and take their stand to show their solidarity with the State of Israel.

Meetings, panels, visits to WIZO projects, decisions, and…elections

The EGM will take place at the Hilton Hotel in Tel Aviv and will be held for five days, from the 15th through the 19th of January, 2012. Days will be packed with meetings, panels, visits to WIZO projects, decisions, and…elections. We will elect a new president and a new chairperson of the World WIZO Executive. We will honour outgoing president Helena Glaser, who has served in this position for eight years, who has been a WIZO volunteer for more than 35 years, and has represented our movement in numerous international forums.

Special sessions will be devoted to Aviv members. They will enjoy separate meetings and visits to WIZO projects, as well as workshops and panels, all in an atmosphere similar to that of an Aviv Seminar. And of course, there will be time for fun!

The EGM provides an opportunity for women who have not yet had a chance to learn about WIZO first-hand to come and see for themselves what WIZO has accomplished, and how much remains to be done. It is also a means of encouraging membership recruitment, of bringing women who can contribute by their participation closer to WIZO and closer to Israel.

Eminent personalities will be in attendance as guest speakers and participants in panel discussions. Workshops will be conducted by first-class moderators.

On the special mini-site (click EGM Conference at the top of the home page of the World WIZO website, www.wizo.org) you will be able to find the EGM programme in four languages, registration forms, and much more – all you want to know about the EGM.

Come in large numbers and prove that we WIZO women are stronger than ever.

We look forward to seeing you in January 2012 in Israel. Welcome Home!
Images from WIZO's 24th EGM, January 2008
The Department of Organization and Education

SOUVENIR DOLLS, WIZO AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Who does not have souvenir dolls in national costumes from all corners of the globe displayed on shelves at home? This article tells the story of the souvenir doll-making industry in Israel and WIZO’s role in it, prior to and following the establishment of the State

Raquel Dar

Dolls have the capacity to fully resemble human beings, but of course at the same time they are also totally different and distinct. They have ancient roots, and play diverse roles in different spheres of both traditional and modern culture, including rituals, ceremonies and sorcery, games and socialization; and they represent myriad ethnic and national groups. A souvenir fulfills the desire and need to take home something that represents a place where one spent time, or to give a gift to those who were not there and so could not share the experience of being in that place.

Inventing a national identity
Souvenir dolls are an expression of a cultural practice developed in Israel that created and consolidated Israel’s national identity. Due to the absence of Israeli folk craft with a clear-cut tradition and heritage, there was a need to invent it. The production and design of these dolls played a significant role in the ‘invention’ of tradition. Tradition serves as one of the primary systems for building national identity and guaranteeing common coherence and affiliation, crucial primarily in times of dramatic change. This ‘invented’ tradition made a contribution to the establishment of Israeli society as a nation based on common images and values and a sense of belonging. National costume dolls as a socio-cultural phenomenon are a part of popular culture that began before the establishment of the State of Israel and came to its end in the late 1980s. The height of their popularity was between the 1950s and the 1970s.

Dolls during the British mandate
In the 1920s, when the Yishuv (Jewish community) in Palestine was ruled by the British Mandate, the first national costume dolls appeared on the scene. Rivka Stark Avivi, born in Poland, studied at the art academy in Vilna and immigrated to Palestine in January 1914. She began making dolls in the 1920s and was known for her fabric sculpture, as well as the abundance of elements which she incorporated into it. She documented and meticulously designed dolls representing the different types of Jews from east and west that she met in the country, creating a series of 20 ethnographic dolls (each approximately 25 centimetres high), painstakingly preserving accurate clothing and ornamental details.

The role of WIZO
Along with other women’s organizations, WIZO took part in the process of building the nation. WIZO intentionally combined production methods and distribution of national folk art objects with the establishment of institutions for education and professional instruction. Three WIZO departments dealt with integrating folk art into the process of the advancement and improving the status of women: the Department for the Training of Women, the Department of Home Industries, and WIZO stores. WIZO started dealing with the subject of home industries and the development of folk art after its unification with the Organization of Hebrew Women (as the Federation of WIZO Israel) in 1933. An expression of the spirit of WIZO home industries can be found precisely in the product that characterized the period: the ‘typical’ dolls representing various characters among new immigrants and Israelis – a series of dolls of small proportions created by the artist Edith Samuel, who arrived in the country from Dusseldorf in 1939. This chapter in the dolls’ story took place during the ominous days of Jewish history in Europe in the 1930s. Edith Samuel, born in Germany, studied sculpture and graphic design in her youth, and designed large fabric dolls for children. She immigrated to Eretz Yisrael in 1939, settling in Rishon LeZion, where she painted, sculpted, wrote and illustrated books, but her great love was and remained dolls.

Pioneer dolls
The halutz dolls she made, particularly the women, were conspicuous for wearing a keffiyeh – a patterned fabric scarf of Arabic origin, which was adopted as the hallmark of the new Israeli youth seeking to assimilate in the Land of Israel. The Israeli halutzim worked under the blazing sun and needed...
a head covering. As portrayed by *halutz* dolls made by WIZO and others, women often wore a straw hat – a kind of Israeli-European hybrid. The men wore a khaki or blue *tembel* hat, later to become a symbol of Israeli society. They were dressed in blue shirts with red laces. Others are dressed in embroidered shirts, possibly in imitation of the Russian style.

These *halutz* dolls were produced and sold in WIZO shops throughout the country and served as models for other craftsmen and manufacturers, who began working in the sphere in the early 1950s. They always appeared as European-Ashkenazi.

The counterpart of the European *halutz* was the Yemenite doll. The Yemenite image served as an expression of biblical authenticity. The biblical background was stressed after the State of Israel was established in order to create a link between Israeli nationalism and the traditional new immigrants, who were well-versed in the Bible.

WIZO doll-makers were less focused on the quasi-biblical image of the Yemenite figure and placed greater emphasis on the new immigrants themselves. A Yemenite woman doll carrying her baby, accompanied by another child with curly side locks, was a common sight among WIZO dolls, highlighting the new immigrants.

Arab men and women were also portrayed in the Israeli dolls. These dolls wore colorful *jolabiyas* (traditional Egyptian garments). The man also had a moustache and wore a *keffiyeh*, while there was an assortment of head coverings for the women. In general the Arab men dolls did not engage in anything specific, except for a few who carried baskets or smoked a *nargilah*. The Arab women dolls usually carried a bundle on their heads. This look was perceived as typical for many years, and this is how the Arab figures were designed by WIZO and others. Fannie Peltz, who created small dolls in her Tel Aviv home, added to the Arab “fantasy”, particularly to the profusion of colors. Her dolls were also sold in WIZO shops.

Orthodox Jewish dolls are depicted in various religious contexts: the men putting on *tefillin*, carrying the Torah, or studying; and the women lighting the Sabbath candles, the majority wearing their nicest outfits.

Several manufacturers designed and produced dolls in the image of Israeli men and women soldiers, thus demonstrating the pride of the nation in its fighting forces. However WIZO and other manufacturers that were part of the establishment did not produce any soldier dolls.

**Epilogue**

Souvenir dolls embody a partial, concrete and imagined memory of the story of the country. In the beginning, the dolls, which were made in Eretz Yisrael, gave expression to a multicultural viewpoint and a diverse ethnic reality. As the years went by, diversity gradually lessened and the dolls were charged with ideological and national elements. The dolls became more stereotypical, to the point that not only did they not match the complex Israeli reality, but they also ceased to express the reality to which the country aspired.

The 1980s marked the end of the era of national costume dolls. Israeli society became capitalistic and individualistic, and the national and collective ethos declined. The drop in tourism in the 1990s led to a significant plunge in the demand for these dolls, and the last factory that produced them closed.

Now, in the era of globalization, Israeli national costume dolls are produced in China, imported to Israel, and sold as souvenirs in tourist shops.

*Editor’s Note: Most of the material for this article and photos were taken from a catalogue accompanying a recent exhibition in the Eretz Yisrael Museum, Ramat Aviv*
Responding to the invitation of Rada Camel, Chair of WIZO Daliat El Karmel, some 1000 Druze women participated in the 18th WIZO Druze Women’s Conference, which took place at the shrine of the Druze prophet Jethro, Moses’ father in law, who is recognized by Islam as the prophet Shoaib. The women participated in a workshop discussing women’s role as mediators and the important part they have in conflict resolution. According to Rada, the Druze woman has the patience needed to resolve conflicts and she takes the role of a mediator in every argument. Rada spoke about the history of WIZO and the opening of the first Druze WIZO branch in Daliat El Karmel 35 years ago. It was Rada who initiated these annual conferences. Ricky Keldes head of WIZO Israel’s Organization Department and Etti Berkin, head of the Department for the Advancement of Women, both congratulated Rada on her WIZO work and her efforts towards integration in Israeli society.

As part of this summer’s social protests in Israel, WIZO supported the mothers’ demonstration for equal and subsidized education for all children from kindergarten age. Tova Ben Dov, Chairperson of World WIZO, spoke at the demonstration of mothers (and fathers) held in Tel Aviv and said: “Social justice begins with providing equal opportunities for professional and subsidized education for early age children. I call on the government to take responsibility for early age education and establish a national committee that will address the severe shortage of educational facilities.” Out of 300,000 babies and toddlers that attend various educational facilities, only 100,000 children can attend the subsidized and supervised network of day care centres, which are operated by the three women’s organizations – WIZO, Emunah and Naamat - and there is a growing need to open at least 2,500 additional day care centres. WIZO prepared a detailed programme concerning young age education, which was presented to the Prime Minister and the committee for socio-economic change headed by Prof Trachtenberg. "This is not only about making a change for the next generation of children and parents but also a tremendously important tool to reduce the social gap between rich and poor and achieving equality for women,” concluded Ben Dov.
Ramat Gan WIZO Bar/Bat Mitzvah Celebration

For many years, WIZO Ramat Gan has been working with the welfare department of Ramat Gan Municipality to hold a special Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration for children from low socio-economic backgrounds and single-parent families. This year it was decided to hold the event in Jerusalem. Mrs Esti Yerushalmi, head of the Department for Single Mothers at WIZO Ramat Gan, worked relentlessly to coordinate the event, raise the funds and arrange the presents for the children.

On June 6th, a bus with 50 excited children and their families made its way to Jerusalem. Here, the children were divided into groups and enjoyed a guided tour in the old city of Jerusalem and learned about the ancient history of the city and its importance to the Jewish people. The highlight of the event was a ceremony held in an events hall near the Western Wall under the guidance of the Western Wall rabbi. Speeches and blessings were made by WIZO representative Mrs Nina Shapira, head of the Welfare Department and Mr Avihu Ben Moshe, deputy to the mayor of Ramat Gan. The event was heart touching and memorable for both the children and their families and for all of the participants. Special thanks are given to Ricky Keldes, head of WIZO Israel Organization and WIZO Centres Department and Esti Yerushalmi for all their work to ensure the success of the event.

Youth Award Scheme Honours WIZO

Mr Matthew Gould, Britain’s Ambassador to Israel held a special event in the garden of his residence in honour of the ‘Israel Youth Award.” Hundreds of guests were present, amongst them heads of councils and municipalities where the scheme operates, depicting the diversity of Israel’s society: Jews, Muslims, Christians and Druze, both religious and secular.

WIZO is the only organization in Israel whose pupils participate in the scheme, and some 7% of the overall participating students are pupils at WIZO schools. Mrs Tova Ben-Dov, chairperson of the World WIZO Education Department received a special award from the ambassador and Mr Michael Gross, Co-chairperson of the programme’s executive in Israel for WIZO’s contribution to the programme. Mrs Ben-Dov was accompanied by Prof Rivka Lazovsky, responsible for strategic planning in the World WIZO Education Department and deputy chairperson of the World WIZO Executive, Mrs Brenda Kattan chairperson of World WIZO Public Relations Department, Pnina Gefen and Moshe Bitman both from World WIZO Education Department.

A group of students from WIZO Nahalal boarding school, who came with the ‘Na’ale’ programme, together with a pupil from Dimona who attends the WIZO Gan VeNof School congratulated the participants in the name of all the Youth Award students in both Hebrew and English. (Editor’s note: The Israel Youth Award is part of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award International Association, which operates in 120 countries)
A Special Day at the Pardess Katz
WIZO Centre

A new WIZO centre was recently inaugurated for the welfare of the Pardess Katz (near Tel Aviv) neighbourhood residents, many of whom are Ethiopian children who were desperate for a place to do their homework and have after-school activities. The dream of WIZO volunteer Rachel Mangoli, the renovated premises was funded by donations from local business people and professionals. The spacious venue symbolizes a new beginning for the women and children of the neighbourhood.

Mangoli, who works tirelessly for the benefit of women and children, says that she holds many activities at the centre. “In this place I discover the true face of Israel: people who are willing to give their time and volunteer for others,” she explains.

On June 14th a special ‘beauty and fun’ day was held for the women of the neighbourhood – Dana Gefen, director of the Training, Development and Culture Division at WIZO Israel, was the initiator of this event. “I knew that such a beauty event would bring joy to the women. I approached my own hairdresser and manicurist to volunteer their services and to my great delight they did not hesitate for a second.” Esther Bruchim, a resident of the neighbourhood and a volunteer at the centre, reveals that she has witnessed many heartbreaking situations in the poverty-stricken neighbourhood. She relates how she has had to run and buy milk formula for a hungry baby and assist families that need supplies of basic food, a task her husband helps her with.

The women who arrived at the centre were thrilled with the opportunity to have their nails and hair done by beauty professionals. One of the hairdressers, Eli Biton, turned out to be not only a talented hairdresser but also a children’s book author. He generously donated copies of a book he had both written and illustrated.

“I was very happy to volunteer for this mission as I believe that if someone was blessed by a certain talent he should not keep it to himself but contribute to the community. I don’t see this day as a ‘lost day’ because I believe that what we have ‘earned’ here is worth more than money,” he claims.

One of the manicurists, Keren Elgabi, said, expressing her willingness to volunteer another time: “The women kept thanking me and expressed their appreciation for what we did for them.”

Hana Yehezkel said that she attends the centre once a week and for her it has become a place she can call home. “Usually we don’t take the time and mostly don’t have the money to invest in our looks and it is heart-warming to know that the women of WIZO think of us in that manner as well,” she says with a smile.

WIZO’s Excellent Worker

Maggie Buganim, director of the WIZO Savionim Day Care Centre in the northern town of Ma’alot, was one of 18 workers from the public sector who were honoured with excellence this year at a festive ceremony in Jerusalem in the presence of President Shimon Peres.

Maggie was awarded the prize for her great devotion to the children and their parents at the day care centre. In addition, she contributes her time and energy to promote many educational projects and programmes for the empowerment of children and youth at risk in Ma’alot. Buganim was described by her associates as ‘an institution’ and ‘the big mother’ of the day care centre.
Beit Heuss Renovations

WIZO’s Beth Heuss in Herzlia Pituach has recently undergone extensive renovations, with all 13 bedrooms being refurbished. Some of the rooms – and bathrooms – have had special adjustments to enable handicapped accessibility. An elevator was installed to enable wheelchair-bound course attendees to be able to access the lecture hall on the first floor.

All these renovations and improvements were due to the wonderful fundraising efforts of Beth Heuss sponsoring federation - WIZO Germany - and the cooperation of Beth Heuss director Chely Yechiely.

WIZO São Paulo Visit

Sulamita Tabacof, WIZO São Paulo honorary president, and other chapter members visited the Brazil-sponsored WIZO Antoinette and Leon Feffer Multi-Purpose Day Care Centre in Jerusalem. Together with Miriam Berguer from the Latin American Department, Sulamita was welcomed by Hassida Danai, chairperson of the Early Age Division and Miriam Friedel from the WIZO Jerusalem Tourism Department. The visitors were welcomed by the 73 children who attend the centre with music and folk dances.

(1 to r) Ana Maria Natinsson, Sulamita Tabacof, Miriam Berguer
ARGENTINA

Joyful Celebration

Osfa WIZO celebrated World WIZO’s 90th anniversary at the Palais Rouge Hall in June. Among the many notable guests were Israel’s ambassador to Argentina, Daniel Gazit and his wife Michelle. Osfa WIZO Past President Clara Gersberg and current President Amalia Polack welcomed guests. Ambassador Gazit hailed the work done by WIZO members and praised them for their dedication. Film presentations highlighting Osfa WIZO’s contribution and World WIZO’s mission also featured a well-received congratulatory message from Israel’s President Shimon Peres. Sonia Kovalivker and the Industria Nacional Orchestra entertained with a medley of international music. Various aspects of Israeli and Jewish history were depicted in the magnificent floral table arrangements artfully created by Nicolle Kovalivker. A special committee comprising of Nicolle Kovalivker, Nilda Elfman, Noemi Gueler, Marina Fabricante and Estela Vilamowski organized this joyful event with the support of the Osfa WIZO Executive.
Peles Performs

WIZO Victoria’s youngest group, WIZO Dor, presented a ‘one-time only’ concert by celebrated Israeli singer and entertainer Keren Peles accompanied on the keyboard by Omri Bar, at Melbourne’s Mount Scopus Memorial College. Over 150 guests enjoyed the show.

Multicultural Tea

A tasty afternoon tea followed an informative panel of outstanding speakers at WIZO Victoria’s fifth Annual Multicultural Function attended by 150 people.

Cooking Up a Storm

When men post photos of their dinners on their facebook profiles, and celebrity chef Nigella Lawson purchases a cookbook on line, and when every Australian national TV show and magazine covers the stories and recipes of the WIZO Monday Morning Cooking Club (MMCC), it clearly shows that WIZO is on to a winner. For the past five years, six Jewish home cooks, Jacqui Israel, Lisa Goldberg, Merelyn Frank Chalmers, Natanya Eskin, Lauren Fink and Paula Horwitz, who share a passion for food and a love for WIZO, have met every Monday morning for cooking, tasting and evaluation of hundreds of dishes. Their favourites are included along with a short family history of the cook and origins of the dish in their first book, The Monday Morning Cooking Club, which has become a runaway success. The first print-run sold out in just three months and television shows have reported on the phenomenon, giving the six cooks celebrity status. WIZO Canada is also selling the book as a fundraiser. The books will be presented as a fundraising tool at World WIZO’s EGM in January 2012 in Tel Aviv.

Oscar Attends WIZO

Academy Award winner Emile Sherman, producer of the film, The King’s Speech, was guest speaker at WIZO Rachel’s champagne breakfast. Also attending was television personality and author Libby Gorr who interviewed Emile during the course of the event, eliciting lots of Hollywood gossip from him. Mr Sherman brought ‘Oscar’ along to the New South Wales WIZO event. The WIZO Rachel group raises substantial funds through its inventive art lunches and breakfasts.
**BOLIVIA**

**Reinforcing Friendships**

In May, WIZO La Paz hosted an afternoon tea to reinforce their friendship with the Church of Transformation, which organized The March of Life in La Paz to commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day. In deep gratitude, WIZO arranged for Holocaust survivors to address the gathering. Their moving testimonies were deeply appreciated by church members who felt honoured by their presence and uplifted by their strength in overcoming adversity.

![Members of the Church of Transformation enjoy afternoon tea with WIZO members and Holocaust survivors](image)

**BRAZIL**

**Bahia Revival**

A group of 15 dynamic and eager chaverot from Bahia under the leadership of Léa Ester Sandes-Sobral met to breathe new life into the WIZO Bahia chapter, renaming it Reviva WIZO Bahia. Among the chaverot were several former presidents of the branch, which shows the level of commitment that these chaverot have towards WIZO. Some time later, Léa Ester met with WIZO Brazil President Helena Keler and Vice President Sheila Saubermann at WIZO Head Office in Rio de Janeiro to report on the restoration of the branch in Bahia, a state in the northeast of Brazil with about 200 Jewish families.

![Reviva WIZO Bahia chaverot](image)

**Reinforcing Brasilia**

In Brasilia, 20 chaverot and friends attended a meeting at the home of chavera Vivianne Felicia Landwehr. WIZO Brazil Vice President Sheila Saubermann spoke about WIZO’s mission, the scale of its work, the importance of community work and the relevance of a representative group in Brasilia. Chaverot watched a screening of World WIZO’s video, The Sky is the Limit. Chaverot were pleased to have Mrs Rachel Becher, wife of the Israeli Ambassador to Brazil, join them at the meeting.

![Mrs Rachel Becher (r) with chaverot from WIZO Brasilia](image)

**Rio Lauds Clara**

WIZO Rio de Janeiro celebrated Israel’s Independence Day with an enlightening presentation by Hillel-Rio activist Michel Guerman. At the event, Clara Novikov was honoured for her work for WIZO Rio. President of WIZO Rio de Janeiro, Lúcia Balassiano, awarded her with the WIZO Brazil 85 years celebratory medal.

![Clara Novikov (l) and Lúcia Balassiano](image)
Zilda’s Medal
Zilda Sauer, honorary president of WIZO Rio de Janeiro and honorary member of WIZO Rio, received the prestigious Pedro Ernesto Medal in a formal session at the Rio de Janeiro City Hall during Israel Independence Day celebrations. Hundreds of people attended, including family, friends, WIZO Rio President Lúcia Balassiano, WIZO chaverot and leaders of Brazilian society. Among those present were Israel’s Consul Osias Wurman, congressional representative Teresa Bergher and deputy Gerson Bergher of the Israelite Federation of the State of Rio de Janeiro, who gathered to witness Zilda’s proud moment.

(S to r) Osias Wurman, Teresa Bergher, Gerson Bergher, Zilda Sauer, Sarita Léa Schaffel and Lúcia Balassiano

Chaverot celebrate Israel’s Independence Day at the Henny Landau subcentre.

Amazing Women
WIZO Rio celebrated International Women’s Day with the event, Women who make a Difference.

Lucia Balassiano (3rd from left) with amazing women (l to r) Helena Lewin, Claudia Burló, Dalal Achcar, Ada Chaseliov and Silene Balassiano

Sema’s Tribute
Sema Petragnani, former curator and director of the WIZO São Paulo Painting and Drawing Competition, presented an impressive exhibition promoted by the Italian government in São Paulo to the WIZO Executive. Sema Petragnani and Ana Rosa Campagnano Bigazzi were asked to create the piece on Italian Jews in Brazil, a topic they know very well. Sema was awarded the WIZO Brazil 85 years Celebratory Medal in honour of her dedication and work in the competitions department in WIZO São Paulo.

Sema (sitting right), with executive members of WIZO São Paulo

WIZO Paraná’s festive Shavuot celebration, chavera Regina Mergenstern won the fruit basket at a raffle.

Lucia Balassiano awards Simita Kelson the WIZO Brazil 85 years celebratory medal for her outstanding dedication
Winter Camp

The WIZO Rio Grande du Sul L'chayim group celebrated 25 years with a winter camp at the Serra Gaúcha. Despite the cold, Marion Nudelman hosted them warmly in her home. Festivities began on Shabbat with a wonderful programme. The hilarity continued at dinner, as one of the chaverot surprised participants by giving an informative and amusing speech while dressed as a rabbi. The camp was a riot of games and cultural activities, created by chavera Rosa Spunberg, which left the participants buoyed with a renewed sense of commitment, pride and motivation.

Marina in Montreal

CHW Montreal hosted an evening of inspiration in association with the CHW Reuven Feuerstein Chapter. Held at the Tudor Hall, over 150 guests listened to acclaimed author and survivor Marina Nemat tell her story of courage and survival. Marina Nemat, born in 1965 in Tehran, Iran, was arrested at the age of sixteen and spent more than two years in a political prison in Tehran where she was tortured and came very close to execution. Her memoir, Prisoner of Tehran, was published in April 2007 and has become an international bestseller. Nemat now lives in Canada with her husband and children. This intimate evening was an incredible success and gave people the chance to hear Marina candidly tell her story. Over $5,000 was raised for CHW projects in Israel.

Hearts are Wild

Vancouver’s Dorot Chapter held their second annual Hearts are Wild poker evening. Chair Ginaya Peters left nothing to chance ensuring the success of this year’s event. Held at Heritage Hall on Main Street, Dorot’s signature fundraiser was a sell-out. Over 120 people, from beginners to seasoned professionals competed in this fast-paced tournament. The evening began with cocktails and snacks followed by two games of Texas Hold ‘Em poker: one game for beginner players, one for the more advanced. Afterwards, a live auction was held where players bid for prizes with the chips they had amassed. An impressive $92,000 was raised for Canadian Hadassah WIZO (CHW) projects in Israel.

Silver Spoon Dinner

Women from the Saskatoon community came together for an evening of festivity to benefit CHW and three other charities at the Silver Spoon Dinner. World-renowned Canadian comedian and musical impressionist, André-Philippe Gagnon, was the star guest of the evening, entertaining some 800 all-female guests with his repertoire. Since its launch in 1991, the Silver Spoon Dinner has been a huge hit and is a sparkling, delicious and elegant event for women only. The entire Saskatoon community rallies to support this event donating their time and a myriad of excellent prizes to ensure its continued success.

At Our Table

Over 200 beautiful and generous women of Toronto enjoyed a stunning evening at a private home on The Bridle Path supporting the Tzedakah Chapter’s annual fundraiser, At Our Table. Chaired by Gayle Goldgut, Linda Friedlich and Robin Turack with Vice chairpersons Paula Klaiman and Jeannie Sklar, the evening, themed Jewels of the City, really did sparkle. Sponsors Downtown Porsche and the Brettler/ Mintz Foundation led the evening, which complemented the lovely contemporary home decorated by Marla Brown Events and the stunning white tent decorated by Creations by Gitta. Entertainment was donated by Joanna Pearl.
and Cadence, and the Low Overhead Jazz Trio as well as the strolling magician Julie Eng. The evening started with tasty canapés by Ginza Sushi and Prosecco, followed by a splendid dinner prepared by Encore Food with Elegance and sumptuous desserts from Pusateri’s and chapter member Karen Florence. The icing on the cake was the figure raised by this prestigious event – over $93,000.

(1 to r) Event chairs Linda Friedlich, Robin Turack and Gayle Goldgut

On the Executive

At WIZO Chile’s AGM held in May, World WIZO President Helena Glaser and World WIZO Organization and Education Chair Sylvie Pelossof paid tribute via video link to outgoing WIZO Chile President Susy Baron for her outstanding leadership. Sima Rezepka and Gaby Yudelevich also commended Susy for her devotion to the WIZO cause. Susy conferred honorary directorships on Marta Bercovich, Gerda Brady, Elena Kiverstein, Cata Trajtman and Fira Bortnik, and thanked the executive board for their support during her term. Incoming president Agnes Mannheim heads the board for the period 2011 – 2014 supported by Past President Susy Baron, Vice Chairpersons Yael Hasson and Caty Farkas and an executive board comprising of Tily Zylberberg, Evelyn Najum, Sarita Dobry, Inge Mannheim Raquel Curiel, Rebeca Levy, Raquel Hasson, Sima Rezepka, Francine Tempel, Dalia Rezepka, Frida Vainsencher, Sandra Volochinsky and Lisel Rosenberg.

CHILE

Shavuot in Santiago

The WIZO Chile family celebrated Shavuot with a festive dairy luncheon. Guest speaker Rabbi Eduardo Waingortin enlightened the crowd with his address and guests enjoyed entertainment provided by the Voice of Israel choir. WIZO Chile Vice president Yael Hasson presented Rabbi Waingortin with a certificate of appreciation. The presidents of four newly formed groups were also present.

The Voices of Israel choir with Agnes Mannheim

School Supplies and Sports

Groups vied for the top prize when they brought their gifts of school supplies and sports goods into WIZO headquarters to be distributed to the pupils of the Golda Meir and State of Israel schools. A jury awarded first prize to the Gilad Group and second prize to the Sara Group for their efforts. The Kalaniot Group won third prize and all other participating groups received an honourable mention.

Gilad Group (l to r) Irene Subelman, Denisse Feldman, Sonia Pinto, Barbara Hasson and Yael Hasson

The new board with (back row right) WIZO Chile President Agnes Mannheim

(l to r) Gaby Donskoy (Irene Wolff Group), Agnes Mannheim, Barbara Herzko (Gilad Group), Vivi Gelfestein (Hadar Group) and Hanna Binstock (Esther Group)
Shavuot in Viña del Mar

The WIZO Viña del Mar branch celebrated Shavuot with a very entertaining programme, which featured an enlightening lecture entitled Women and Zionism, given by past president Susy Baron. Rabbi Ephraim Rosenzweig also spoke on the meaning of Shavuot and praised the commendable work of WIZO chaverot.

COLOMBIA

Inspiring Youth

In a bid to attract young members, WIZO Bogota hosted a group of young women, all students from the Colombo Hebrew College. Chaverot Mara Guberek and Janet Finkelstein shared their experiences with these future volunteers and spoke about the history of WIZO and its crucial work for women, children, education and the family in Israel. The students showed great interest and were keen to learn more about the movement. Engaging the youth of today ensures that WIZO Bogota’s future is secure with these new leaders of tomorrow.

DENMARK

Copenhagen Motivation

Twenty five chaverot headed by WIZO Denmark President Dorrit Raiter gathered at the new Jewish Community Centre in Copenhagen to choose the new executive for the coming term and discuss their work plan. The meeting opened with the presentation of a cheque by the representative of Keren Hayesod to WIZO Denmark President Dorrit Raiter. World WIZO Fundraising Department Director Mickey Dahav was also present and shared fundraising tips with Denmark’s highly motivated and faithful chaverot.

FINLAND

Enthusiasm in Helsinki

Hosted by Aviva Jalkanen in her delightful home, 15 chaverot including WIZO Finland President Pirkko-Liisa Schulman gathered to participate in a fundraising workshop presented by World WIZO Fundraising Department Director Mickey Dahav. In her address, Mickey spoke on fundraising methods and ideas to engage younger members. She was impressed with the fondness that this active group of chaverot have for their project, the WIZO Shaviv Day Care Centre in Herzlia, and their dedication to WIZO. Past president of WIZO Helsinki Dr Karmela Bélinki who recently received a prestigious award for her many years of journalistic achievement was honoured at this convivial evening.

GERMANY

Fast Cars and Fashion

Gleaming Mercedes Benz cars, handsome male models and elegant female models, all WIZO women, added up to a highly lucrative and enjoyable evening, raising considerable funds for the WIZO Germany-sponsored Theodor Heuss Family Therapy Centre in Herzlia Pituach. Mercedes Benz dealership boss Oliver Gotzler hosted the Fast Cars and Fashion extravaganza at the car showrooms where guests enjoyed the show following a reception of cocktails from Zohar’s and champagne.

Chaverot from Santiago & Viña del Mar celebrate Shavuot

Dorrit Raiter (2nd left) and Mickey Dahav (centre) with chaverot

Dr Karmela Bélinki

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from Rendito. Summer fashions by Mango, Silke Scholz and Charisma Fashions were accessorized by Rainer Brenner Optik sunglasses, Juwelen am Opernplatz jewellery and Abro handbags. Models were made up by the Famous Face Academy with products by La Biostetique and hair styling by Matthias Scheffler and his team. Guests enjoyed a preview of next season’s furs and gowns by Pelze am Dornbusch. Male models wore suits by Maßatelier Loureiro over their WIZO T-shirts and polished the new Mercedes SLK to the hit song, Car Wash wearing trendy leather jackets. The show choreographed by Inbar Oppenheimer and organized by WIZO Frankfurt under the direction of Anita Schwarz was compered by TV personality Andrea Kiewel.

Luna Park Fun

The faces were painted but the smiles were real as the children of Frankfurt enjoyed the 2011 WIZO Purim Luna Park held at the Ignatz Bubis Community Centre. The fun-filled afternoon provided them with a host of activities including football, basketball, a bouncy castle, arts and crafts, face painting, rodeo riding and a fancy dress competition. Hungry little appetites devoured the popcorn, waffles and delicious home-baked cakes on offer. Sponsors, including Bank Leumi and Graffee & Schieferstein, ensured a great time was had by all in this eagerly awaited annual event organized and managed by Nese Bar-Shoshan and the illustrious WIZO Frankfurt team.

Youth Orchestra

Twenty-four young musicians aged between 11 – 19 years old from the WIZO Youth Orchestra of Tiberias under the baton of Noam Yaakoby entertained an appreciative Frankfurt audience with a polished performance. The orchestra was invited by the City of Worms, partner city of Tiberias, to play together with local musicians. A smiling group of German schoolchildren all proudly wearing WIZO T-shirts welcomed the talented troupe, which was on a three-day tour of Frankfurt. The young Germans were part of the project run by Alexa Brum, director of the IU School Lichingfeld where eighth grade students donated their time and energy in the preparation and organization of charitable events. Thanks to generous donations, the young Israeli orchestra members, hosted by the city of Frankfurt, were able to sample the delights of this beautiful city with visits to the zoo, museum and a boat trip.
Berlin Bids
One hundred guests had the opportunity to attend a special WIZO event in Berlin's well-known Trompete Lounge, where they enjoyed culinary specialties and a silent auction. To the sounds of jazz musician, Brandon Stone, they ‘quietly’ considered which of the 21 exhibited premium artworks would best suit their home décor. With a signature, each guest could bid, and the battle for the highest bid ensued. WIZO Berlin President Michal Gelerman presented each piece and announced the name of its owner and corresponding highest bidder. At a second auction, a prized five-piece Shabbat set from Meissner Porcellan, donated by Mrs Sylvia Borgschulte of Deutscher Lloyd Insurance, was the absolute highlight. WIZO Berlin reports that this event was a huge financial success and an enjoyable evening for all.

Greece
Thessaloniki Celebrates
Former past president and WIZO Aviv President Flora Mihael was delighted to present a surprise performance by a leading popular Greek singer and dancer at the WIZO 90th anniversary celebrations in Thessaloniki. Chaverot enjoyed a delicious buffet and fine wine and wished WIZO many good years in the future as they cut a magnificent celebratory cake.

India
Gila in Mumbai
WIZO chaverot in Mumbai met with Romanian-born artist Gila Ram (Sachs) at a workshop attended by both members and their children. Now living in the USA, Gila is a substitute teacher at the Abraham Joshua Heschel School in New York. At the workshop, which was held just before Shavuot, Gila explained the meaning of the festival, the story of Ruth and shared a recipe for cheese blintzes. The children, who were on school vacation, joined their mothers in making creative pictures with the Shavuot theme from the materials that Gila had sourced in the Mumbai and Crawford markets.

Italy
Pride in Padua
Adei WIZO chaverot in the northeastern Italian city of Padua were proud to witness the return of the precious sefer torah to its home in the magnificent 16th century synagogue in Padua. The holy scroll was water-damaged some years previously but had been meticulously restored by celebrated specialist Amedeo Spagnoletto from Rome. Coinciding with this event was an importance conference on the written text with distinguished
scribes in attendance and a meeting of the chairpersons of the Union of all Italian Jewish communities. Chaverot, led by their enthusiastic branch president Michela Caracciolo, provided delicious meals and warm WIZO hospitality to their important guests.

In the picture - The sefer torah comes home to Padua

Memo from Milan

The Adei Wizo Milan branch offers many activities to keep chaverot motivated and enlightened, in particular, a whole range of courses including cooking and painting run by very talented teachers. Once a month, chaverot enjoy a movie afternoon where women assemble over coffee and cake and watch an interesting film of special Jewish interest.

Susanna Sciaky (r), president WIZO Milan addresses chaverot and guests

Mexican Schools

WIZO Mexico makes a difference for the benefit of local children. They are proud to report two major donations of furnishings, one to the Melchor Ocampo Primary School and one to the secondary school, Secundario 17 Constitucion de 1857. On Children’s Day, the Federation organized a tour of the local schools that WIZO had furnished.

Chaverot visit the Melchor Ocampo Primary School

Proud of Kesher

Members of New Zealand’s WIZO Kesher groups are non-Jewish ladies who share a passion for WIZO and a love of Israel. New Zealand President Lorna Orbell is pleased to report the formation of a new Kesher group in Havelock North, Hawkes Bay, headed by Berry Small. Its first fundraising event was a dessert and coffee evening with musical entertainment attended by Israeli Ambassador Shemi Tzur, his wife Orit and mother-in-law Ruth. Ambassador Tzur spoke warmly in support of Berry’s new group and presented her with an Israeli recipe book. Berry was also invited to attend an Israel Independence Day celebration in Wellington.

The first WIZO Kesher group in Hawkes Bay was started in 2001 by Linda Cook. Linda is still active in WIZO New Zealand together with the Prayer for Israel group.

Lorna and her committee acknowledge the continued support for WIZO from the WIZO Kesher groups and from those of other faiths throughout New Zealand.
Bingo Hat

WIZO Panama chaverot, families and friends really enjoy a game of bingo and it is a firm favourite on the social calendar. The Aviv Chai group has been hosting bingo events for more than ten years now. This year, more than 700 guests enjoyed bingo with a twist at the grand hall of the Hebrew Cultural Centre when the eagerly awaited event was themed Bingo Hat. Guests were asked to wear hats, with prizes awarded for the most original style. Attendees donned their best bonnets to attend this eagerly awaited fun event.

Eyes down for bingo in Panama

Poker Night

WIZO Aviv Chai group's Poker Night is popular with the WIZO husbands in Panama. This year's poker night included a blackjack tournament, where the women also got the chance to throw the winning dice.

Honourable Women

Three outstanding WIZO women, Marcia Parness, Moonyeen Castle and Suzanne Edmunds were recognised for their services to Zionism and Israel at this year's 47th Conference of the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF), a constituent body of the World Zionist Organization. Marcia is honorary life vice president of WIZO South Africa and honorary life member of the World WIZO Executive. She has also been senior vice chair of the SAZF since 1998 and chairs various other committees. She was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the SAZF and elected honorary life president. Moonyeen Castle and Suzanne Edmunds were also elected as honorary life vice presidents of the SAZF.

Saluting Jerusalem

WIZO Johannesburg's outstanding Jerusalem Day event was attended by a large crowd. It began with an illuminating address by a rabbi, followed by two light-hearted sketches by three hilarious women calling themselves Salon Soiree. Two well-known singers entertained the gathering with a magical rendition of songs of Jerusalem and Israel, followed by a delicious Israeli breakfast.

WIZO Durban Celebrates

Over 120 guests assembled in the magnificent gardens of the Beth Shalom Retirement Home to celebrate WIZO's 90th birthday where resident chefs provided their visitors with a delicious tea. WIZO Durban's long-standing and oldest chavera, 96-year-old Martha Levy who lives at the home, proudly cut the celebratory cake. After tea, executive member Marlene Keats gave a short history of WIZO and introduced her brother, the distinguished Judge Mervyn King known to many as simply Mervyn, who shared his memories of Doornfontein and the Doornfontein Shul, taking his audience on a nostalgic trip down memory lane.

WIZO around the world
WIZO Women Walk

On a sunny Sunday in South Africa, four members of WIZO Cape Town and graduates of Aviv seminars put on their walking shoes and WIZO T-shirts and joined thousands in support of the Blisters For Bread charity fun walk in aid of the Peninsula School feeding scheme, whose motto is ‘you can’t teach a hungry child’. For every person who registered in the charity’s fun walk, 16 children are fed. The diamante emblazoned WIZO shirt attracted the eye of a visiting Canadian WIZO chavera who also participated in the walk. Whilst walking and talking, WIZO fundraising endeavours were compared. It was wonderful to connect, share and laugh, proving that WIZO attracts like-minded individuals to charitable events in every part of the world.

Reinvention Convention

In August, 30 young Aviv members converged on Johannesburg from all over South Africa for the Aviv Seminar. Entitled the Reinvention Convention, the aim of the day was to revitalize young chaverot. The packed agenda encouraging delegates to think ‘outside the box’ included motivational workshops, speakers and an animated exchange of ideas. Key themes were to focus on the positive, show gratitude and embrace change and the use of social media to convey the WIZO ethos to a wider audience. At the seminar, South Africa Aviv took the decision to adopt the Chorley Day Care Centre as their specific project, thus giving them a tangible tool for their fundraising effort.

Live Magazine

In keeping with the theme of the WIZO Johannesburg’s Live Magazine event held in August, chaverot were impressed to see inventive table arrangements made from magazine pages and table mats made from laminated magazine covers. Zee Bergman, chair of WIZO Johannesburg, who planned the event, welcomed guests and introduced Master of Ceremonies, Batya Green Bricker, who performed her duties with wit and charm. Speakers were celebrated chef Susan Grieg, Joanne Jowell, author of the book Finding Sarah, and Judy Alter who discussed the subject of falling in love. After the three entertaining speakers, the Live Magazine team tempted chaverot with a fabulous selection of Michelle Papayas fashions. Caron Leah Reznick’s interior design presentation demonstrated how to strike a harmonious balance using fabrics, furnishings and lighting. Molly Jayes thanked chaverot for their valuable contribution and presented them with WIZO cards, after which a delicious tea was served.
above: (l to r) Barbara Solomon, Robyn Blumenthal, Margo Snoyman, Beulah Spark, Andrea Wainer and Nadine Lemmer

Medical Morning

There was no shortage of questions from the audience when WIZO Johannesburg’s Ilanit branch held a very informative medical morning in August attended by some 80 guests. Two eminent speakers addressed the crowd introduced by Master of Ceremonies Sharon Spiegel who injected humour into an otherwise serious forum. Professor Trefor Jenkins spoke on Jewish genetics, discussing research findings on whether Jews are genetically more intelligent - not discounting the role of the Jewish mother in ensuring high levels of academic achievement in her children. Professor Franco Guidozzi spoke about the different stages in life that a woman goes through, the various accompanying physical and emotional symptoms, and methods available to counter them. A tasty brunch was served after the morning meeting that gave much food for thought.

SWEDEN

WIZO Weekend

Chaverot travelled long distances from Malmo to Stockholm to attend the WIZO Sweden AGM, which was held over two days in May. The well-organized weekend gathering included a dynamic fundraising workshop jointly presented by World WIZO Fundraising Department Director Mickey Dahav and WIZO Sweden President Susanne Sznajderman Rytz. Some 30 chaverot participated in this intensive yet enjoyable brainstorming and networking weekend, reaffirming their devotion to the WIZO cause. Chaverot also enjoyed a delicious Saturday evening dinner at the beautiful home of Leah Rytz Goldman.

SWITZERLAND

Music for the Soul

The WIZO Switzerland-sponsored Nachlat Yehuda Youth Village benefitted from the proceeds of a hauntingly magnificent performance by baritone Ron Appel accompanied by Loraine Etienne on the piano. The duo delighted their audience by performing pieces written by four composers, known as the ‘degenerate composers’, whose work was prohibited by the Third Reich. Ron is the son of Myriam (honorary president of WIZO Bienne) and her husband Klaus Appel.

General Assembly

In May, WIZO Switzerland held its general assembly where seventy representatives from eight sections gathered in Lausanne, the home city of WIZO Switzerland. President Anne Argi was unanimously re-elected for a second four-year term. At the assembly, which was addressed by Jewish Community Co-President Mrs Marianne Gani and Israel’s ambassador to Switzerland, tributes were paid posthumously to two cherished chaverot, Ruth Fayons and Bluette Nordmanns who recently passed away. Holocaust survivor Ruth Fayons had dedicated her life to teaching children in Geneva’s public schools, instilling in them the meaning of the words, ‘never again’. She was an honorary member of the World WIZO Executive and honorary president of the WIZO Swiss Federation and president of her hometown branch of Fribourg until failing health intervened. At the assembly, Swiss chaverot were proud to unveil their new WIZO Switzerland website featuring an online pledge facility: www.wizo.ch
Music for Peace

In June, at the Fête de la Musique in Geneva, Metin Arditi and his Instruments for Peace Foundation gave a memorable concert at the Geneva Music Academy. Over 200 people attended to listen to Arab-Christian Gad Abu Saman and orthodox-Jew Orian Shukrun. These two dazzling pianists representing the music school of Ma’alot Tarshiha were true ambassadors of peace representing Israel. The director of the music school, Mendel Barak, also attended. The successful concert filled the appreciative audience with harmony in piano wizardry and the different religions that make up the Israeli population. The entire event would not have been possible without the support of president of WIZO Geneva Cornelia Fisher, chief rabbi of the Jewish community of Geneva, Rabbi and Mrs Itzhak Dayan, Julia and Roger Nada and WIZO Switzerland President Anne Argi.

UNITED KINGDOM

Jazz Lunch

More than 90 guests attended Chamanit WIZO’s Jazz Lunch at the Shenley Cricket Centre in Hertfordshire and enjoyed the sounds of the Osterity Quartet. Over £4,000 was raised for WIZO projects in Israel. First prize in the raffle was a framed picture generously donated by artist and committee member Jenny Cawson.

Sponsor a Child

Over £70,000 was raised at the annual WIZO.uk Sponsor a Child lunch held at the home of world-renowned artist and art collector Wendy Fisher. In the 17 years that the Sponsor a Child campaign has been active in the UK, over half a million pounds has been raised for the care of vulnerable and under-privileged children attending WIZO centres in
Israel. Guest speaker World WIZO Public Affairs Department Chair Celia Michonik addressed guests on the continued anti-Israel stance of the UN.

Rebecca Sieff Day

Guest speaker Nicola Mendelsohn, president of the Institute of Advertising Practitioners, was the only attendee to arrive by motorbike at WIZO.uk’s annual Rebecca Sieff day. She addressed an audience of over 200 on the importance of brands retaining their heritage and focus and the impact of social media on the charitable sector. Using her own career as an example, she explained how chutzpah had played its part in her success. The recipients of the Rebecca Sieff award for 2011 were Rhoda Livingston from Glasgow and Rosalind Shenderey from Leeds. London based Merlis Cohen received the Lily Sieff Award.

New York Concert at Carnegie Hall

Two hundred guests attended WIZO New York’s annual Sponsor a Child concert at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. The glittering evening was chaired by Jackie & Bippy Siegal and WIZO USA vice presidents with their husbands: Caren & Dr Arturo Constantiner and Mira & Beny Sofer. The programme featured performances by various young, talented Israeli classical musicians supported by the Ronen Foundation. A beautiful reception held at the Metropolitan Towers followed the concert where guests enjoyed the ambiance and breathtaking views of the New York City skyline.
WIZO Rocks the Casbah

In March, over 300 guests gathered at New York’s beautiful Tribeca Rooftop for WIZO New York’s annual winter event, which was full of Middle Eastern promise featuring belly dancers, henna tattoos and a marketplace style buffet adorned with fresh pomegranates and nuts. Guests also enjoyed a friendly backgammon competition as well as a silent auction. Azita & Zoheir Aghravi, Haley & Jason Binn, Harriet & Steven Croman, Jennifer Gilbert & Bennett Egeth, Amy & Michael Gross, Allison & Jason Rosenfeld, Victoria & Darius Sakhai, Sheila & Frank Shahery, Mona & David Sterling, Elizabeth Shaoul Wilens & Michael Wilens, and Tanya Zuckerbrot & Glenn Beyer chaired the event.

Honouring Rosita

WIZO Florida marked its annual Mothers’ Day Sponsor-A-Child luncheon and bazaar by honouring WIZO USA Vice President Rosita Retelny. Rosita, who is also a member of the World WIZO Council, was lauded for her lifelong commitment to WIZO and the State of Israel. Over 300 chaverot were present to honour Rosita, who, after her emotive speech, joined her in an uplifting rendition of Hatikva in celebration of Israel’s Independence Day. Under the co-chairmanship of Melania Benlolo and Sara Kanarek, this extraordinary event adorned by magnificent flower arrangements and attended by many friends of the WIZO family featured a fashion show by world-renowned designer Tory Birch. WIZO USA Co-President Jana Falic made a moving appeal resulting in pledges of significant amounts of money. The event, hailed as a fundraising success, was organized under the effective leadership of WIZO Florida Vice Chairperson and Head of Fundraising, Ruthy Benolie.

Blessed is the Match

A screening of the film, Blessed is the Match: The Life & Death of Hannah Senesh was held earlier this year at the Norwood Private Club where guests also enjoyed lunch. Hanna Senesh was a pupil at the Girls’ Agricultural School at Nahalal established in 1929 by WIZO’s Hannah Meisel Shochat. In the 1940s it became a co-educational farming school now known as the WIZO Nahalal Youth Village. This wonderful afternoon was made possible in part by Elizabeth Shaoul Wilens and was chaired by Mireille Manocherian and Victoria Sakhai. Among attendees were Evelyn Sommer, founding president of WIZO USA, Gail Perl, Marjorie Harris, Brenda Abuaf, Brigitte Ouakrat, Joan Kahn, Mira Sofer, Jackie Siegal, Gezelle Javaheri, Charlene Khaghan, Azita Aghravi, Debbie Cooper and Susan Erlich.

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Above: (standing l to r) Lillian Tabacinic, Melania Benlolo, Sara Kanarek, Judit Groisman, Liliana Retelny, Mercedes Ivcher, Beverly Koplowitz, Anita Friedman. (centre of photo) Rosita Retelny (seated l to r) Jana Falic, Ruthy Benoliel, Goldy Retchikman at the Sponsor A Child luncheon

Fundraising like Mummy

Under the leadership of WIZO Florida Fundraising Chair Ruthy Benoliel and Evelyn Faigenblat, WIZO Florida Sponsor-A-Child program chairperson, the children of chaverot followed in their mothers’ footsteps with innovative ideas for fundraising. On Mothers’ Day, they raised funds through lemonade sales, car washes, raffles and the donation of their birthday present money. Smiling broadly as their names were called out, these young citizens of tomorrow were justly pleased with themselves for putting the lessons they learned at home into practice. WIZO Florida was also proud to know that its chaverot instil in their children the concept of tzedakah (giving charity).

LOS ANGELES

WIZO Book Club

Since its inception in 2008, the brainchild of WIZO executive member Irene Sirebrenik and Ana Lya Sater, the WIZO Book Club meets every other month at Irene Sirebrenik’s home. Members contribute a small amount of money at each session to support centres for battered women and children in Israel. Every six months, the reading list is posted on WIZO LA’s website and a reminder is sent the week before each meeting. With light refreshments provided by the host and seating arranged in a friendship circle, the guided discussion that follows includes the author’s biography and information on the book. Questions are distributed and everyone’s participation is encouraged. The international and multicultural composition of the members contributes to lively discussion on the content, format and style of the book, and all to the benefit of WIZO.
Where Can You:-
- Meet WIZO Members From All Over the World?
- Take Part in the Decision-Making Process?
- Witness the WIZO Experience?
- Strengthen Israel Through WIZO?
- Be a Link in the Zionist Chain?

WHERE CAN YOU CREATE A NEW TOMORROW?
at the
25th World WIZO Conference (EGM)
January 15 – 19, 2012
Hilton Tel Aviv

Lectures, Panels, Discussions,
Meetings with Israel’s Leaders,
Tours & Special Events
Exclusive Events for Aviv Participants

for more details, visit our website
www.wizo.org
Each generation has the responsibility to prepare the next generation for the future.

In an ideal world, children’s needs are provided by the parents, the extended family, the educational system and the community. For Israel’s youth at-risk, even basic needs such as proper nutrition, warm shelter and regular education are often lacking. WIZO takes these neglected youth and turns their lives around.

These are WIZO’s Citizens of Tomorrow.

Without WIZO, these youth could become Israel’s lost generation.

Help WIZO Launch Israel’s Citizens of Tomorrow Campaign

Invest in Israel’s Citizens of Tomorrow

$180 Sponsorship of one youth for one month at a WIZO youth village

$500 Music, dance and art scholarships for one youth for one year

$1,800 Scholarship for one youth to attend a Holocaust educational trip to Poland

Visit our website: www.wizo.org