Tel Aviv’s 100th Anniversary

Durban II
WIZO protests

MOR
WIZO leaders plan the future

ADI project
Helping young women
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President’s Desk

Dear Chaverot,

The Hebrew month of Nissan is a very significant month for Am (the people of) Israel and Eretz (the land of) Israel. It begins with Passover and our exodus from Egypt into the Promised Land. Then we mark Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day whose theme this year was Children in the Holocaust. This poignant event was followed seven days later by The Israeli Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism Remembrance, and we end the month with Israel’s Independence Day. All these events remind us that, although we are a free people in our homeland, a sovereign country, there are still those that question our legitimate right to a state of our own. Sorrow and joy are mingled as we pay tribute to those who paid the ultimate price so that we can enjoy our freedom and independence.

At the Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day ceremony at Yad Vashem, Rabbi Meir Israel Lau – Chairman of Yad Vashem and former Chief Rabbi of Israel said that anti-Semitism has existed for 3400 years and the first anti-Semitic act was that of Pharaoh when he commanded that all Jewish boys be drowned in the Nile, thus making Moses the first victim of anti-Semitism. The very same day the Durban II Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia & Related Intolerances opened in Geneva with a speech from President Ahmadinejad of Iran, a Holocaust denier and head of a country known for abusing human rights, showing that the world has not learnt any lessons of the Shoah and that anti-Semitism in all its forms is very much alive.

I had the privilege to head a very distinguished and active WIZO delegation at the Durban II Conference, and we can all be very proud of how our WIZO delegates were able to connect with the other participants: age and language barriers fell as we all stood united against those who would attack Israel, Judaism or Zionism. We were all proud defenders of our faith, culture, history, legacy and rights.

As WIZO holds consultative status in the UN, our delegation was able to participate in the preparatory committee meetings prior to the Conference; be present throughout Durban II in the plenary hall and the side events where the actual discussions combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia & related intolerances took place, and participate in the activities and events of the alternative conference organized by the Jewish and Israeli organizations to counter potential anti-Israel activities taking place outside the Conference venue.

The world saw the people of Israel standing tall, proud and graceful, articulate in words, united in action – for its own benefit and in support of other individuals and peoples who have experienced or are experiencing racial, religious, social or political persecution.

Each generation combats anti-Semitism and persecution differently. It did not prevent the pioneers at the turn of the 20th century from coming to a sparsely populated, mainly barren, undeveloped and neglected land to build “A Jewish state in Eretz Israel” as written in our Declaration of Independence. In short, rather than break our spirit – anti-Semitism in all its forms makes us more defiant and determined to protect Am Israel and Eretz Israel.

Moreover, we have an obligation to all those who came before us and commanded us to live - to do so to the full – so that their sacrifice will not be in vain. We also have a commitment to ensure that future generations know our illustrious history and continue in the footsteps of the patriachs and matriarchs of Am Israel.
Chairperson’s Column

Dear Chaverot,

We are at the verge of celebrating WIZO’s 90th anniversary, and we are continuing to carefully balance our outflows for spending the WIZO funds that you devotedly send, but we are in the midst of a very worrying period. I know that you are behind us.

As Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive, I strongly believe that education is the key to a successful future, both in society and in the State of Israel, and the WIZO year has been filled with successes. Below is a review of some of the events since the last WIZO Review.

At a presentation ceremony on February 18th, at WIZO Nir Haemek, 114 bronze awards were awarded to the pupils of our WIZO youth villages, who had successfully completed the first stage in the Israel Youth Award program. These pupils, who have had to struggle so much in their short life, now realize that they too will be able to contribute to society from a position of strength.

On February 24th, in the Bruce and Ruth Rappaport Day Care Center in Sderot, and in the presence of the Danish Ambassador to Israel, Ms. Liselotte Kjaersgaard Plesner, we held a ceremony to celebrate the donation of a thousand Lego kits by the LEGO Company, to help Israeli children cope with the trauma and fears caused by rocket fire.

On April 12th we opened the Myrna and Isaac Kaye WIZO Community Center at Kadimah-Tzoran in the presence of the donors, members of their family, members of the World WIZO Executive and the Mayor of Kadimah Tzoran, Mr. Goldberry.

On April 23rd Zeev Muchenik, a teacher of mathematics at WIZO Hadassim, who immigrated from Russia in 1989, was one of five teachers chosen from all over the country as ‘The Teacher of the State’, in a ceremony held in the presence of Israel’s President Shimon Peres, and the new Minister of Education, Mr. Gideon Saar.

The WIZO Dana Hadassim Girls Basketball Team won this year’s league championship for the third time. What an exciting game!

On May 13th, we celebrated the 90th anniversary of WIZO.uk at the Rebecca Sieff Centre for the Family in Beit Hakerem, in the presence of Loraine Warren, Chairperson of WIZO.uk, Ruth Sotnick, Honorary President of WIZO.uk and Susan Ronson, Vice President of WIZO.uk. The next day we attended the opening ceremony of the newly renovated and refurbished Judith Goldkorn Day Care Center in the Makor Chaim neighborhood of Jerusalem, with a generous donation from the Goldkorn family, in memory of the late Judith Goldkorn a well-loved and respected treasurer and Finance Committee chairman of the British federation.

On May 25th we celebrated the 70th Anniversary of our WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim school, in the presence of Jo Gostin, President WIZO Australia, members of her delegation, and the Australian Ambassador, Mr. James Larsen. Two days later, we joined Jo and her delegation at the festive opening ceremony of the newly renovated Fania and Godel Korsunsky Youth Club in Kfar Saba, which was also attended by Kfar Saba Mayor Yehuda Ben Hamo.

I have tried to bring you a glimpse of my exciting, and sometimes worrying, task as Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive. I am full of gratitude and appreciation for your hard work and efforts for WIZO and the State of Israel.

Together we will make sure that WIZO grows from strength to strength.

Fondly,

Yona Ben-Dov.
New WIZO Germany Projects

Two new projects sponsored by Wizo Germany were inaugurated in January – at opposite ends of the country – in Eilat and Kiryat Shemona. In Eilat, thanks to a generous donation from Robert and Auguste Meder from Berlin, a house was purchased which will provide a warm refuge for teenage girls who have dropped out of formal education facilities. Activities will be run jointly by the Social Services Department of Eilat Municipality, the Ministry of Social Welfare and volunteers from Eilat’s WIZO branch. The house will be open from early morning until late at night. In the mornings, educational classes will be held, followed by leisure activities in the afternoons and evening, including psychological help, vocational courses, and a computer room.

In Kiryat Shemona, five new classrooms were inaugurated in the Youth Town, made possible by a generous donation from Theodore Blumentfeld from Munich. The classrooms replaced rooms in the building which dated back from the 1950s and were in an extremely dilapidated condition.

LEGO Goes South

A very special ceremony was held in the Ruth and Bruce Rappaport Day Care Center (the only kassam-proof day care center in the country) in Sderot in February. In the presence of the Danish Ambassador to Israel Ms Liselotte Kjaersgaard a donation to WIZO from the Lego Company of Denmark of 1000 packs of Lego was acknowledged. The Lego has been distributed to nearly 200 WIZO day care centers around the country. The donation was made possible by Werner Bachman, originally from Denmark, now living in Israel, and a great supporter of WIZO. He recalled how as a boy in Denmark he played with original Lego pieces made of wood – and even produced an original Lego box, with some of those wooden pieces still intact! He commented how heart-warming it was to see children playing happily in a day care center, the WIZO day care centre “in Sderot” – something he thought he would never see. Werner and Ms Kjaersgaard completed two Lego ‘creations’ of the words ‘Shalom’ and ‘Peace’. Ms Kjaersgaard delighted the audience by speaking in Hebrew, expressing her delight at the center and saying how she grew up with Lego, and how important it is for children to be able to express their creativity through play. Many friends of Werner, ex-Danes who now live in Israel joined the celebrations including Birgit Fischermann an ex-chairman of WIZO Denmark. As Tova remarked, the ceremony aptly took place on ‘Family Day’ – “…we are gathered here as the WIZO family, the Lego family and the Danish Israel family.”
Rebecca Sieff’s Dream

World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben Dov and Koby Hillel, director of the Rebecca Sieff Centre for the Family unveiled a plaque honoring major donors at WIZO.uk’s flagship project at a festive event celebrating WIZO.uk’s 90th anniversary. The children were in full voice as they gave a rousing welcome to WIZO.uk Chairperson Loraine Warren, Honorary President Ruth Sotnick, Vice-President Sue Ronson, World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben Dov, members of the World WIZO Executive and guests including Penina Geffen, former director of the center. A tour of this ‘jewel in the crown of the mother federation’ left those present in no doubt that Rebecca Sieff’s dream was today’s reality.

Kadima goes forward

During the intermediate days of Passover, the Kaye family and members of the World WIZO Executive gathered for the opening of the newly rebuilt community center in Kadima, serving the small town of Kadima and neighboring Tzoran. Funds for the new center were donated by Isaac and Myrna Kaye in memory of their parents. The original 50-year old building was demolished, and a beautiful new, modern building erected in its place. WIZO Israel’s Chairperson of the Women’s Centers department Tirza Rubinsky emphasized that in this period of world economic crisis, WIZO’s services are needed more than ever, and the citizens of the area will benefit greatly from all the activities planned for the new center.

Leo Baeck music center

The newly renovated music room in WIZO’s Leo Baeck School of Art and Design in Haifa was inaugurated with a moving ceremony. The room was named in memory of Lucie Matuzewitz from Switzerland, in the presence of friends and family, and Anne Argi, president of WIZO Switzerland, who addressed the family with much emotion. Guest Mr Avi Chelouche spoke about Lucie whom he described as ‘like a mother to me.’ Director of the school Eran Dubovi spoke about the unique qualities of the school, citing some famous Israeli musicians amongst the graduates. Young musicians from the school gave a recital to the guests, including a young guitarist who expressed his appreciation to the school for awarding him a scholarship enabling him to continue with his studies. World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben Dov warmly thanked all the donors.

Judy Goldkorn honored

Family and friends of WIZO.uk’s late Honorary Treasurer Judy Goldkorn from Israel and the UK, World WIZO chairperson Tova Ben Dov and members of the World WIZO Executive gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the opening of the renovated Judy Goldkorn day care center, made possible by a generous donation by the Goldkorn family. In describing Judy’s attributes, all speakers referred to her feisty, no-nonsense attitude to finance. Her son, Geoffrey emotionally described Judy’s love for WIZO and how she inspired him and his children. He added how proud he is to be associated with such a wonderful organization as WIZO.

Esther Berman, who worked very closely with Judy for many years in the Finance Dept. traveled especially from the UK to attend the opening.
With these resounding words, WIZO.uk chairman Loraine Warren, summed up the 2009 Meeting of Representatives, held during the IDF ‘Cast Lead’ military operation. Not one participant canceled her visit due to the war situation.
Can it be only one year ago that 1,000 of us were here together laughing and dancing and eagerly looking forward to the opportunities and aims of our federations for the coming year? This was my pound last year, this is my pound today. This was your dollar last year, and you all know where your dollar is today, cut down to size by the unfortunate dramatic collapse of the world economy. (Ed note: Loraine held up a pound note and a dollar bill and dramatically cut them in half!)

The world sneezes and Israel catches a cold, but sadly this is a cold which will not be shaken off in a week, or ten days. This is an illness that is going to take delicate nursing and a lot of tender, loving care.

And that is where we all come into the picture. Look at us all, women from every part of the globe, volunteers who share the same values and aspirations for the State of Israel. We are passionate about our cause, we want to mix with like-minded women, we want to enjoy ourselves and we want to give something back. We want to play a small part in changing someone’s life and we are doing just that. We are shaping and changing Israeli lives. That is what volunteering is all about.

However important our deliberations and lectures may be, we could not wait to get to our projects. War in Gaza did not deter one single delegate from attending this MOR, we would not expect it to, would we? And a packed coach traveled to Ashkelon on Sunday afternoon, to show solidarity with our chaverot.

The day care center at the Barzilai Hospital, a WIZO.uk project continues to do a fantastic job, caring for the children of the doctors and nurses, so that they can care for the wounded from both sides of this sad conflict. They are safe in the knowledge that their children are kept secure.

Taking a nap in bomb-proof shelter? A normal occurrence for an Ashkelon kiddy.

We were privileged to meet Dr. Alan Marcus, Director of the Strategic Planning Branch of the City of Ashkelon. The reality of a lifestyle with a thirty-second red alert heralding the signal to run for cover took on a whole new meaning when the alarm sounded whilst we were at the briefing.

We were certainly apprehensive about this visit to the South, but proud that we were able to do our bit, however small, for these beleaguered citizens.

At the Plenary session on Monday, we were honoured to receive greetings from past presidents, Michal Modai and Raya Jaglom, both eloquent as always. We all greatly respect and admire your history with WIZO; your presence adds stature to our meetings and we thank you. And we thank Raya for kickstarting WIZO Israel’s annual major fundraising campaign with a magnificent donation of NIS 100,000.

Our WIZO President Helena Glaser is a force to be reckoned with - with her boundless energy, commitment and keen intellect, she skillfully talked us through a global review of the year and its implications on WIZO and Israel. We shared the World WIZO Executive’s pride in being awarded the Israel Prize and we shed tears together recalling the Mumbai terror attacks. We reaffirmed, together, Helena’s plea that ‘when things get tough, WIZO chaverot get tougher’. We acknowledge that the decisions that we make today will define WIZO’s tomorrow.

We are proud that WIZO had the opportunity to build the Rappaport rocket proof day care center in Sderot and we are confident that the renovated Margaret Thatcher Center will provide a desperately needed post trauma center for the region. A marvelous ambassador for WIZO, Helena, we applaud and thank you for your many overseas trips. These visits have enabled you to understand the need to invest more
in federations and to adapt to federation friendly policies and working practices coupled with plans to nurture and promote Aviv and the younger generation. You continue to champion anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism whilst keeping your finger on the pulse of your responsibilities here at home.

Helena told us that a 90th anniversary fund for the future will be established to guarantee WIZO’s financial reserves. Such a fund will provide for all strands of the community, no matter what the economic circumstances dictate. It sounds like another great plan; we thank you Helena from the bottom of our hearts for everything you are doing.

Painful Budget Cuts

Now I am going to cut to the chase. Yes, it is the cuts in the budget. We had been forewarned by our dear Chairman, Tova Ben Dov, that the cuts would be deep and painful, amounting to NIS 20 million.

These cuts are in all divisions and no one can avoid them. Tova’s analogy of the rising share market in which we all want to invest, a market comprising of youth and women cleverly spoke of guaranteed dividends and of Israel’s natural assets bringing top returns. WIZO takes children from low socio-economic levels and provides them with equal opportunities.

Tova and Haim presented the 2009 Work Plans for our approval, and to take back to our federations, a comprehensive and easily absorbed document which must have taken many hours to construct and will form the basis of planning. Tova says, ‘We smooth away the bumps and wipe away the tears, we open the doors for them to a better future.’ We have done it before, WIZO has a very impressive list of graduates who now occupy major positions in government, education, medicine, science and the IDF.

Tova, we are your own little IDF, you are our captain, you lead us and inspire confidence in us, and we trust you. Your time, patience and commitment to WIZO, the WIZO federations and the thousands of people who WIZO helps is legendary, thank you for being just you!

I am sorry Miri, there is no easy way to make a budget report ‘sexy’ especially one that is laced with ‘doom and gloom’. You talked us through an emergency budget which not only takes into account the financial situation around the world but the problematic situation of money transfers at the time of a weak and unstable dollar. The details of the budget need long and careful analysis by our own treasurers, but we congratulate you, and your team for the clarity of this complex presentation and the unpalatable decisions that we will all make together. We all know that we won’t let cutbacks be setbacks.

WIZO’s social services to the needy

WIZO Israel is the safety net as the poor get poorer and new families join the cycle of violence and despair. Wide ranging programs for new immigrants, senior citizens and bereaved families will all come under financial scrutiny.

Yochy Feller, Chairperson of WIZO Israel, posed the question ‘Who decides who will get and who will not get?’ Each one is a deserving cause, it is another tough call. We applaud the work of WIZO Israel and Yochy’s excellent team both lay and
Soldiers from the IDF Entertainment group singing to the chaverot on the last night

Tova ben Dov (l) and Helena Glaser (r) presenting Yochy Feller with a gift for her new grandson born the previous day

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professional, in branches across the country, whose core work is with weak elements of Israeli society. Hassida Danai, a new girl on the block, as Chairperson of the Early Age Division, and Ruth Rubinstein, Chairperson of the Education Division, we commend you both in your efforts to minimize the impact of cuts in your sectors. On Tuesday we couldn’t wait to get to our projects; every federation has its own ‘House of Dreams’. Seeing really is believing. Each center provides a sound and secure environment with a loving caring teacher, a calm place to shelter from a family storm; we all know
how good our projects are…but they just keep getting better, don’t they? Leading edge work to protect and care for families in crisis. The touring day ran seamlessly as we expect from Lili Peyser, Janine, Orna and the team, and we know that when we send visitors to our projects they will receive the same VIP treatment. We must try and persuade as many people as possible to visit a WIZO facility, so that they, too, will be hooked on WIZO, just as we are.

A lecture from a speaker of the caliber of Miri Eisen pays tribute to the high esteem in which WIZO is held. She explained to us about the four legs of terror: ideology, recruitment, weapons and money. She told us about millionaire smugglers importing everything through Egypt and regular families in Gaza existing on $5 a day. She explained that Israel must stand firm until a proper exit strategy is found. This strategy will ensure that one million people will no longer have to endure the daily bombardment of rockets and missiles. As Miri declared, ‘We have the right to defend our citizens’, we stood and applauded her.

Quality printed information, brochures and campaigns have so long been a vital marketing tool for so many federations, with the **WIZO Review** and **The Fuller Picture** continuing to be respected and necessary publications. I acknowledge my fellow Brits, Brenda Katten and Ingrid Rockberger for their excellent input and editorial skills.

The Organization and Education Department skillfully led by Sylvie Pelossof will now be focusing upon effective recruitment of more members, especially Aviv members. We are all going to have to ‘think outside the box’ and attractively package our WIZO product - the Aviv International Seminar, which is a springboard for recruitment, and together with the work of Zipi Amiri, in the Publicity Department, we confidently rely on a modern approach to membership and publicity, appealing to the next generation.

Bravo, Professor Braverman, let us all campaign for teaching salaries which are comparable to those of doctors and lawyers. Education is the key, WIZO knows that and has done for a very long time.

Thank you, World WIZO Executive for taking on board the request from the federations.
for time to meet with the heads of the departments and the time to talk amongst ourselves. The fundraising session, organized by Chairperson Esther Mor, gave us the opportunity to hear and share successful campaigns and original concepts. Fundraising is never easy. With the support of the department here in Israel, which constantly supplies us with the streamlined and modern packages which we need, and are so valuable to us, we are able to compete in this highly competitive market. Professionalism is the name of the fundraising game in the 21st century, and that is the direction in which the Department is taking us.

I would just like to mention the successful rebirth of the ECWF (European Council of WIZO Federations) and the ongoing fruitful discussions at the Past Presidents Meeting. Both of these forums are important to all our federations.

Was it only this morning that Professor Sofer managed to make the depressing reality of demography such an amusing whilst sobering subject? He told us that we must keep Israel as a first world country, whilst being one of the most densely populated countries in the western world. The former Head of the Mossad, Efraim HaLevy, outlined briefly, the security of the State of Israel. The current war in Gaza signals a new era for the State of Israel and for Gaza. He asked what has happened to the billions of dollars that have been channeled into Gaza? Hamas has certainly not used this money to create an infrastructure for the Palestinian people and to build better lives for themselves. But firstly they have to identify an appropriate Palestinian leader who is able to take a credible place on the international, political stage. At present they are still thriving on a corrupt and unacceptable system.

Miki Doron, a former pupil of Canadian-Hadassah WIZO Hadassim Youth Village, is a senior clinical psychologist. He explained the processes involved in building up resilience, and methods of adapting and moving forward, despite huge personal, emotional and physical challenges. I am not even going to attempt to summarize the challenges and unimaginable traumas experienced by those young women who bravely spoke to us. If you were to read these stories in a novel you would think them far fetched. However, I am going to remind you that WIZO is their support and strength. This is what we do. We give them hope for a better life, a hope for a positive future.

The Meeting of Representatives has drawn to a close. A different atmosphere from January 2008. All our deliberations these past four days have been accompanied by the constant concern for our brave IDF and our citizens in the South. We pray for their safety. We pray for peace.

We are returning home with a job to do. We pledge to do that job to the best of our ability.

Tova, you asked us to raise our commitment by 10% this coming year. Our commitment to you is that we will raise that 10% but we will aim to raise it by 100%.

Cutbacks are not going to be setbacks for WIZO women, are they? ■
Jewish unity prevails at Durban II conference

As you know, I headed the WIZO delegation that took part in the official Durban II Conference and in the events held parallel to it, along with participants from other Jewish and Israeli organizations and NGOs from all over the world. I would like to take you behind the scenes and share with you what I experienced there.

Helena Glaser

Leading up to the Conference

The Durban Review Conference was supposed to evaluate the progress towards the goals set by Durban I in 2001. However, pro-Israel advocates were very concerned that the Durban II or Durban Review Conference would also become an anti-Israel conference expressing a biased attitude and policy of the UN Human Rights Commission towards Israel.

The first draft for the declaration to emerge from the 2009 Durban Review Conference (Durban II) breached the red lines set forth by France, the UK, Netherlands and other EU governments, with special references to the Palestinians as victims of Israeli racism. Therefore, Israel declared it would boycott the Conference. The U.S. expressed its concerns explicitly, and announced its intention to boycott Durban II if it looked as though it would be a repeat of the 2001 conference, as did Canada.

As there was also concern for the potential anti-Israel activities that might take place outside the Conference venue, a decision was taken to arrange parallel events to Durban II to be attended by Jewish and Israeli NGOs and organizations.

A year before the Conference, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs began voicing its fears and concerns. Senior Israeli politicians and ambassadors met with their counterparts to urge them to boycott the Meeting especially as the Regional Preparatory Meetings held before the Conference led to a declaration that included hatred and intolerance towards Israel and also included clauses drafted by Moslem countries that suggested breaching freedom of speech and religion – blatant abuse of human rights - anything but the combat of global racism. Eminent key Jewish figures in every country, and the executives of the WJC also joined the effort to get their countries not to attend.

The intensive diplomatic pressure bore results. Most Western countries only sent low and medium level representatives instead of heads of state or ministers.

A new version of the draft resolution was circulated a week before the Conference. Direct references to Israel were taken out but the document still affirmed support for the declaration of the first racism summit held in Durban in 2001, which linked the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the problem of racism.

Israel rejected the amended version of the declaration. The United States and Australia called for further changes to the text saying that they would not take part officially in the summit. Other countries took the position that they would participate so that the Conference would not be canceled, which would enable them to put forward their views against racism.

Indeed, as soon as it was known that President Ahmadinejad would attend and speak, the USA, Canada, Italy, Australia, Germany, Poland, New Zealand and Holland boycotted the Conference.

Durban II Opens – on Holocaust Remembrance Day

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon opened the Conference by airing his anger at the countries that boycotted it. He claimed that they should have voiced their opinions within the framework of the Conference. He reiterated that there were challenges on many fronts that had to be addressed and that the eyes of the victims were looking to the conference for solutions.

To add insult to injury the conference took place on Holocaust Remembrance Day. We held a most moving commemoration ceremony led by Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel.

When the President of Iran began his speech, there was no
Israeli presence whatsoever in the hall. All the Jewish NGOs and organizations were in a hall a floor below where we could see his speech via a video link. However, there was no translation – and as this is the UN building, I have to wonder if it was intentional. Mr. Alan Dershowitz the famous American lawyer and political commentator, who also participated in all the plenary and parallel activities, protested strongly and decided to return to the hall. Many of the NGOs and organizations joined him but were stopped by security guards. By chance Mr. Dershowitz, Rama Enav and myself managed to slip back in when the guards were busy and witnessed the exit of the envoys and joined their line. Outside, the Jewish students from various organizations expressed their joy and satisfaction by applauding the long column of envoys. Condemnation to Ahmadinejad’s speech by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and others were many - but as far as Israel was concerned - it was too little too late, and as far as Durban II was concerned – the damage to its legitimacy was irrevocable.

“Voices”
Apart from the plenary hall, sessions were held in other halls. As the sessions were comprised of panels, dialogue was encouraged: if any attempt to combat racism was attempted it was at these events rather than in the main hall. For instance, at the “Voices” session Berthe Kayitesi, a young genocide survivor who lost part of her family in the Rwanda conflict, gave a powerful and hopeful message of peace and of reconciliation in her country. “We are asking for justice,” Kayitesi said. “And the first thing is to recognize the crimes.” Many believe that the fate of Durban II will be like that of other UN conferences and decisions – irrelevant. However this is the tragedy of the conference – racism is a global malady, as is abuse of human and civic rights and genocide. These topics need to be addressed and regretfully were sidelined by one small man consumed with hatred. However, we can be pleased that the “Outcome Document” did not mention Israel; and it even included a statement (clause 66) in which it “recalls that the Holocaust must never be forgotten.” The “Outcome Document” was perceived to have skipped an attempt by Muslim states to establish an international law against “defamation of religion,” which many observers correctly identified as a gambit to stifle critics of Islam. Notwithstanding, it also became very clear to our delegation that the lesson of the Holocaust has not been learnt. Genocide and ethnic cleansing still take place and the world still looks on in silence.

Jewish Unity
It is often said that if two Jews speak with each other you will hear at least three views. What was evident throughout the alternative Conference and its activities was the unity of all the Jewish and Israeli NGOs and organizations. Credit must be given to the World Union of Jewish Students (WUJS), who organized numerous demonstrations both inside and outside the UN building while the conference was taking place. You have often heard me say that strength is in numbers and that division weakens us. In Geneva we put aside our personal social and political views and opinions and concentrated on one thing only – unity. The united front and single Jewish voice displayed and heard in Geneva showed a strong Jewish people who have overcome generations of persecution and flourished against all odds; that is attentive to the tragedy of other peoples and is ready to help prevent racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, related intolerance and genocide – no matter where it happens on planet Earth. The media coverage reflected this. WIZO can be proud that it was an active partner in this venture.

The Background – Durban I
In 2001 from 31/8 – 8/9 the United Nations held the World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in Durban South Africa with the declared purpose of combating racism. Tragically, the conference and its noble causes were hijacked by an organized campaign of anti-Semitic and anti-Israel hatred, causing the US and Israel to walk out. Other democracies, UN officials and human rights leaders denounced the ugly bigotry.

The 2001 Conference also linked the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the problem of racism. It had been suggested that they were trying to revive United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3379 (issued 1975, annulled 1991) which stated that “Zionism is a form of racism.” Their position was that they were trying to underline that the actions being committed by Israel against Palestinians were racist. Pro-Palestinian, anti-Semitic and anti-Israel demonstrations demonizing Israel were held outside the venue and without Israeli counter action had exclusive media coverage.

The WIZO Delegation
As WIZO holds consultative status with the UN, our delegation was able to attend the preparatory committees’ meetings prior to the Conference and to be present in the plenary hall throughout the conference. I headed a very distinguished WIZO delegation that included: Mrs. Rama Enav (our WIZO representative to the UN in Geneva), Mrs. Celia Michonik, Mrs. Anne Argi, Ms Irene Golberg, Mrs. Miri Metuki, Mrs. Rachel Singer, Mrs. Diana Schnabel, Mrs. Esther Sharell, Mrs. Joelle Lezmi and Mrs. Yvette Sabag. It is hard to describe the depth of commitment and conviction that each one of our delegation displayed and the impression we left on others. I am very proud of our delegation and how it was able to connect with the other participants – age and language barriers fell as we all stood united against all who would attack Israel, Judaism or Zionism.
Sarita, tell us something about your background, were you born in Brazil? Were you from an observant family?

I was born and raised in Rio de Janeiro. My father was a businessman. My parents were always working for Israel; ours was a traditional, warm Jewish home, and my own family was brought up this way. We are observant; we go to the synagogue on Shabbat, and I keep a kosher home. My husband, Waldemar, is a doctor in clinic analysis. My son, Rony, and my daughter, Cintia, attended local Jewish schools and they too continue in the same Jewish tradition. Rony lives in New York. He is a Fellow Member of New York Memorial Hospital, specializing in haematology. He also studies the Torah. Rony and his wife, Silvia, have two delightful young children, Daniel and Debora. My daughter, Cintia is a jewelry designer working with a renowned jeweler in Brazil. She is married to Isaac and they have a darling baby, Rebeca.

Sarita Lea Schaffel combines her presidency of WIZO Brazil with her professional career as a university teacher and author of scientific texts. She has a Doctorate in Education, having gained her Master’s Degree at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and her PhD (Doctorate) at the Catholic Pontifical University. I asked her how she managed to find the balance in her professional life and what the driving forces are in her voluntary work.

“The more you do, the more time you have.” President of the WIZO Brazilian Federation Sarita Lea Schaffel lives by this saying. When I interviewed her during the World WIZO Meeting of Representatives in Tel Aviv, she explained how she puts this philosophy into practice.

Tricia Schwitzer

Sarita Lea Schaffel: Zionism is in my DNA

The more you do, the more time you have. My professional life and voluntary work run parallel. Yes, I have a successful career, but I also address the emotional side - my caring side. I believe that we are here to serve people less fortunate than ourselves, to help them ‘grow’ - not merely to give ‘charity’. It is very important to help in the development of a nation. Zionism is part of my DNA. I know there are people who may not agree but I believe it is an integral part of Judaism and I cannot separate my Judaism from my Zionism. That is my conviction; it is part of who I am. I care very deeply about Israel. My Jewish identity is such that I have unshakeable solidarity with Israel. If the people of Israel suffer then I suffer too. I am also extremely proud of Israel’s achievements.

It is unfortunate that some young people do not share my connection with Israel. They do not identify with it - for them Israel is just a distant country like Spain or Italy. Maybe they haven’t had the chance of building their Zionist identity properly. Some 50% of Jewish children in Brazil attend Jewish schools, and membership of Jewish youth movements such as Habonim and Hashomer Ha’tzair is beneficial to their awareness. Nevertheless, problems often start when they go to university where they meet with a melting pot of other cultures, religions and influence - although I went to university and I never wavered from my Judaism. I think the reason for this was the example shown to me from home. It is in the Jewish home where children learn the most. The home

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does not need to be religious as long as the fundamentals are in place. A child is a building; his or her foundations are laid in the family home.

**When and how did your association with WIZO begin?**
I have been active in WIZO for over 35 years. I started as an Aviv volunteer in a local group rising to the federation’s president. [Sarita was elected president in 2003 for three years, and was re-elected in 2006 for a further three years. Her term of office will end this coming November]. In Brazil, the various WIZO groups evolve as a social networking of friends including husbands as well. From celebrating the bar mitzvahs and weddings of our children, to rejoicing in the birth of our grandchildren, every phase of our lives, both happy and, of course, not so happy, is intertwined just as family. Yes, WIZO is most definitely a family.

**How would you clarify the raison d’être of the Brazilian Federation?**
The rationale of the Brazilian Federation is culture and education - to provide Jewish culture to the Jewish women of Brazil. Central to this is our Bible Day. You cannot imagine the enthusiasm with which these women, old and young, study the bible. The passion is immense and it is a great source of pride to us. It is another way in which we strengthen links with Israel.

Jewish culture is very important in WIZO Brazil. We have many WIZO members who are converts to Judaism; they have married Jewish men and their children attend Jewish schools. They are eager to learn about Jewish history, culture and Zionism. We welcome them warmly and teach them, encouraging their identity with Israel. We do not accept the ethos that one is either a Jew or not a Jew. The fact that they have chosen to be Jewish is enough. We like to say that they are Jewish not by birth but by choice.

**Tell me about your Federation’s Aviv groups.**
We have around 45 Aviv groups in Brazil, all composed of women who are dedicated and conscientious in their work for WIZO. We also have younger groups. Aviv is represented on the executive board. It is the policy of the Brazilian WIZO Federation to include Aviv in all decisions, not just to give them orders. I started in Aviv, and then came to executive, and now I am president. I believe this is the only way. You have to give them their voice; to listen to them and let them decide on important matters relating to the federation. It is not so easy to form new groups; juggling family and career is difficult, but membership in Aviv groups does grow steadily. I think 50 is the ideal age to work in our movement - when the children are at the age when they do not want to see so much of you - then you have time to dedicate to WIZO. The Aviv groups meet in the evening. Afternoon meetings are not practical at all. The women rush in from work, then they have to prepare the dinner. Evenings are so much easier. I hold all my meetings in the evening.

**What qualities have you brought to your role as the President of the WIZO Brazilian Federation?**
I have always said that in order to be a leader one must listen. Of course, everybody wants to speak but to listen is the most important thing of all. I am mindful that I am not the ‘guardian of the truth’ and I always take on board the opinions of others. This is, I believe, a leadership quality. Even if we do not agree, we must always think within the framework of the movement and evaluate each differing opinion in the interest of WIZO.

'It is in the Jewish home where children learn the most. The home does not need to be religious as long as the fundamentals are in place. A child is a building; his or her foundations are laid in the family home'
rather large Palestinian community in the Southern border area of the country, so the events in the Middle East bring a strong and growing anti-Israel sentiment. Personally, I do not make the distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. In my opinion, they are the same. The media, so terribly biased against Israel, will show vivid images of injured Palestinian babies and this is something that is so hard to explain but we are meticulous in countering this propaganda with the distribution of hasbara (information).

It is vital to keep our members informed so that they can tell Israel’s side of the story. We have a database with hundreds of articles explaining the situation. Each week we send copies through the Internet to all the branches including the valuable information we receive from World WIZO as well as articles from the Israeli press. Branches distribute this information to the wider community. This is vital to our WIZO work. It is crucial for people to know the facts. Every year we hold hasbara seminars attended by hundreds of chaverot. We invite speakers to lecture on the situation in Israel. This hugely popular event is the psychological spark of WIZO Brazil.

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Sarita is also a prolific writer. As a child, she invented elaborate characters for the stories she wrote, and hoped to become a journalist but chose teaching as a career more in keeping with raising her family. She has published many professional papers and writes for, and edits, WIZO Brazil’s ‘Corrente’ - the Brazilian Federation’s excellent magazine that contains many interesting and original articles on Jewish culture and Zionism.

You are so busy, Sarita. What about your home life?

You know, I am a grandma. My daughter will often ask me to help with Rebeca. Do you think I would refuse her? Never! I work full time from Monday to Friday, but on Friday night, there is always a family Shabbat dinner on the table. To be a WIZO leader, to travel often as I do, it is so important to have a supportive husband. For this reason, I actually asked for his permission before I accepted the role of president because I knew how it would encroach on our home life. Sometimes, my husband asks me, ‘will you be staying home this evening?’ Perhaps we will sit and watch television, or I may relax and read a book - or write a column for the Corrente - our WIZO magazine.

Do you have any plans for your retirement?

I would like to write and publish a book, one day, perhaps a novel. I love being a grandmother but I could never be just a grandma. It is my belief that one should always contribute to the well being of society while one is capable of doing so.

The Brazilian Federation is unlike many other federations who meet every so often to organize their events. We are unusual in that our groups meet every 15 days. It has been this way for 85 years. At each meeting, there is the cultural part. Invited speakers talk about a host of subjects of interest to the Jewish woman. Of course, there is the social side as well. We chat about home and family but the core part of our meetings is always meaningful. They are culturally uplifting. For instance, in my group, Kalaniot in Rio de Janeiro, we have a course where a teacher talks for thirty minutes on Jewish history. It is most informative. In order to attract new members, meetings must always be thought-provoking.

How do you combat the global rise in anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment?

In Brazil, anti-Semitism is not so aggressive; however, we have a

Interview with a WIZO President

Sarita with her family when she received the Pedro Ernesto Merit prize from the Rio de Janeiro Municipality

Sarita at the MOR conference with the Brazilian chaverot and (r) Elisa Pustilnic member of World WIZO Control Committee

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In Memoriam

Terry Schwartzfeld

I was privileged to meet the late Terry Schwartzfeld at the World WIZO Meeting of Representatives in January 2009. I was deeply impressed by her warm personality, and her commitment to WIZO and Israel. She was so full of ideas for her term of office. We were all so shocked to hear of the brutal attack on her and her daughter-in-law while on holiday in Barbados – an attack which rendered Terry unconscious, and from which she never recovered. Ingrid Rockberger

Below are extracts from the letters of condolence World WIZO chairperson Tova Ben Dov sent to Terry’s family and Marla Dan (President) and Alina Ianson (Executive Director) of Canadian Hadassah WIZO.

“Since the terrible news of the senseless attack on her and Luana, we have been following every shred of information and praying for her recovery. It is hard to speak of Terry in the past tense. She dedicated her life to helping others. I can still feel her vitality and her hopes for the future. She was very excited after being elected as the twentieth National President of Canadian Hadassah WIZO. When I last met her at the Meeting of Representatives in January, she shared with me, in an animated voice, her plans for the children and women in Israel. Her enthusiasm infected all those with whom she came into contact. She, herself, came from a committed Jewish home, and both her grandmother and mother were Canadian Hadassah WIZO members. She imbued the importance of Zionism and helping others, as she grew up. Her loss will leave an irreplaceable void in all our hearts. May you be comforted by your wonderful memories of Terry. She was an example to us all.”

May God comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Tova Ben Dov, Chairperson World WIZO Executive.

Aya Dinstein

Aya Dinstein was elected Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive in 1970. In this capacity she initiated the building and opening of new day care centers so that women could go to work, secure in the knowledge that their children were being cared for. I was personally very impressed by the way she delegated responsibilities, trusting the decisions of the departmental chairpersons, yet quietly hovering in the background, always ready with support and advice.

Aya was a loyal Zionist to the very core of her being. She loved the State of Israel and WIZO, and saw her WIZO work as sacred. As an educator herself, she had a special interest in everything that was happening in the schools, and kept in close contact with the directors and staff of the schools and youth villages. She held the office of Chairperson of World WIZO until 1977, when her husband was appointed Israel’s Economic Minister to the United States and Canada, and the family relocated to the US returning to Israel in April 1980, when she continued to work for the benefit of society.

Aya Dinstein was born in Jerusalem in 1926 to founders of the yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine prior to the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948.) After training to be a teacher, Aya continued her studies in the United States, where she graduated with a second degree from the New York University School of Education. When her husband was appointed Deputy Minister of Defense, the family moved to Tel Aviv and Aya joined WIZO in 1965. In 1966 she headed WIZO’s Vocational Education Department.

Together with her family, we mourn the recent death of Aya Dinstein. May she rest in peace.

Tova Ben Dov, Chairperson World WIZO Executive.
The way President Shimon Peres sees it, “Yerushalayim hee moreshet, ach Tel Aviv mitchadeshet”, Jerusalem is tradition, while Tel Aviv is innovation. He said this at the launching of a year-long birthday party celebrating Tel Aviv’s 100th anniversary which began on April 2nd with a grand ceremony at Bialik Square in my neighborhood.
Hillel Schenker, ex New Yorker and long-time Tel Aviv resident, describes the opening celebrations

Only “dignitaries” were invited to the festive recreation of Tel Aviv’s history in song, dance and incredible psychedelic images on the walls of the old municipality building and the municipal music library, with Cameri Theater actors hanging from the rafters of the buildings’ various balconies. When I tried to go up to my roof to watch the festivities with some neighbors, we encountered a menacing uniformed sniper who refused to allow us onto our own roof. When I tried using my journalist card to walk the half block up Idelson Street, I was blocked, and told I should try the other way via Bialik Street. Somehow, I made it through the guards, convincing them that I had no threatening technology with me, only a pen. So I got to see most of the show, which highlighted images of Tel Aviv as the cultural capital of the country, Ha’ir Ha’ivrit Ha’rishona, the “First Hebrew City” as it’s called, the home of the rebirth of the Hebrew language and modern Israeli theater, music, poetry and art, and also President Peres’ presentation (the reason for the armed guards). When the show was over, the city had arranged for bicycle-drawn carriages (replacing the donkeys from the ‘30s) to take the guests from Bialik Square to Allenby Street. So when cute little Shiri offered me a ride, I said why not.

The next morning, I ran into a young guy cleaning up the mess left in Bialik Square from the night before, wearing an “I Love NY” tee shirt! “That’s sacrilegious” I exclaimed. “Even though I was born in New York, you should be wearing an ‘I Love TA’ tee shirt!” His response was a smile, and “Well, New York isn’t bad either.”

The truth is, when the first Jews left Old Jaffa behind to build a new city on the sands, some of them had visions of building “the New York of the Middle East,” and sometimes I myself call Tel Aviv a “mini-Manhattan on the Mediterranean.” And when Rothschild Boulevard and Chen (the initials for poet Chaim Nachman Bialik) Boulevard were built in the heart of the city, the city planners were dreaming of the Champs-Elysées in Paris.

Tel Aviv – New York
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Party in the Square
On Saturday night, April 4, the official public launching of the centennial year took place in Rabin Square. The municipality went out of its way, with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Zubin Mehta seemingly hanging in the air in front of the walls of city hall, leading singers led by Barry Sacharov singing the popular Zeh Hayom Huledet Sheli (It’s my Birthday), which everyone under 30 seemed to know, Danny Robas singing his Tel Aviv theme song Lo Nirdemet Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv never sleeps) Matti Caspi, Shlomo Gronich, and others, stars of the Israeli Opera singing excerpts from major operas, a controversial version of Carmen interfaced with cheers for the reds (Hapoel Tel Aviv soccer club) and the yellows (Maccabi Tel Aviv), some fast-paced folk and modern dancing, incredible multi-media imagery accompanying everything on the wall of the municipality. Still shots of days gone by accompanied with contemporary avant-garde imagery, Russian born pop singer Alona Daniel (her mother lived in our apartment building) singing her theme song Al Gagot Tel Aviv (On the rooftops of Tel Aviv) with spotlights lighting up all the people watching on the surrounding rooftops and concluding with transgender Yemenite Dana International who was actually born in my neighborhood as Yaron Cohen, representing the club scene, singing and jumping around to her version of the Danny Robas song about how the city never sleeps. When the official ceremony ended, a DJ took over and all the young people continued dancing till the wee hours of the morning. Maybe it wasn’t quite the Chinese opening ceremony for the Olympics (for good and for bad), but it was a world-class ceremony which captured much of Tel Aviv’s vitality.

City of the Yellow Duck
The unofficial mascot of Tel Aviv is a yellow duck, the signature character of the late Tel Aviv cartoonist Dudu Geva. Tel Aviv is a fun-loving, relaxed live-and-let-live Mediterranean city, and the yellow duck is its perfect emblem. The duck could never make it in Jerusalem.

Donkey Time
I frequently run into old-timers wandering around my historic neighborhood. One day I met two couples pointing out the sights, and it turns out that one of them was born in the neighborhood, and his father was the first municipal engineer when Meir Dizengoff was mayor. He recalls when a decision was made that all of the department directors would have their own personal transportation…a donkey! So six donkeys were given out to the department directors, and he remembers his father riding around on one of them. Only Mayor Dizengoff got a horse. And this was the 1930s, just 70 years ago. And today Tel Aviv is a major city on the international map. We really have come a long way.
What does it mean for you, personally, to be deputy mayor of Tel Aviv, the “First Hebrew City” as it’s called, on its 100th birthday?

I am very proud to be deputy mayor on the 100th anniversary of the founding of Tel Aviv. I began my public political activity in 1999 when I participated in WIZO Women’s Political Leadership Training Course and 10 years later I am the deputy mayor. I think this birthday is a very important moment for the city. This is a city that arose from the sands, and we are now going through a rebirth, by remembering the ethos of our founding days.

The founders had a pioneering spirit, different from the spirit of the kibbutzim and moshavim which was connected to agriculture and the land, but another form of pioneering: cultural and entrepreneurial.

The type of spirit that characterizes Tel Aviv was the struggle to enable the Kassit Café to remain open in the evenings. The first institutions in Tel Aviv were not huge, monumental institutions and buildings. Their strength came from the unique human capital that has always been the source of Tel Aviv’s strength. It knew how to convert a café into the center of a new, cultural, artistic discourse. The people who sat at those cafés were the national poets of Israel, who came with their sandals and slippers to carry out an extraordinary marathon of discussions on every topic under the sun.

And the home of the national theater, Habimah, was also Tel Aviv.

Habimah began in very modest premises which have developed over the years. Today we are investing millions of shekels to preserve and maintain Habimah and the other major cultural institutions and landmarks.

Tel Aviv began when a few families left the walls of Old Jaffa, and founded the neighborhood of Neve Tzedek, 120 years ago, and then, in 1909, the lots were distributed on the sands for the founding of what was called Ahuzat Bayit, which eventually became Tel Aviv.

One of the characteristics of Tel Aviv is that it is a very young city, with an old mother, or grandmother – Jaffa. – a grandmother with a very powerful cultural and historical background. That’s where Jonah the prophet left for Ninveh…

Three thousand five hundred years ago…

Six thousand years ago! Jaffa was founded 6,000 years ago, according to the archeologists, and we will celebrate Jaffa’s 6,000th birthday in the near future.

So what is Tel Aviv’s identity?

It’s a city that grew out of the sand, a city founded by Zionist pioneers who wanted to develop a living Hebrew language, a Hebrew culture. It’s a city of independent entrepreneurs, of free thinkers, of freedom in general. Every city has its unique character, just like every human being.

Just as Tel Aviv knew how to be reborn as it left behind the walls of Jaffa, it knew how to go beyond the heart of the new city to create Ramat Aviv, Nahlat Yitzhak and many other neighborhoods. It created additional new cities, all of which are part of the fabric of Tel Aviv. And every neighborhood in Tel Aviv has a different character. There’s room for many forms and variations of life within Tel Aviv. You can see young people and artists who live in lofts, and millionaires who live in hi-rises.
People always think of the contrast, the counterpoint between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, as if they were two poles within Israeli life. How do you view that relationship?
Jerusalem is a much harsher city, because it was born on a mountain. Therefore its character is more closed. Tel Aviv is a new-born reality. It isn’t an extension of Jaffa, but something entirely different. It’s a city that left the walls to the open expanses of the sea. That’s why the official name of the city is Tel Aviv-Jaffa, because we left behind the old and created something new. Ben-Gurion wanted the whole city to be called Jaffa, because he wanted a direct tie to the historical roots, but all the rest of the national and municipal leaders objected, saying we have created something new and different, and therefore there should be a new name.
That’s a perfect reflection of the rebellious character of the city. We have built something new, and we will call it by a new name. That’s the difference between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Jerusalem is stuck in its holiness, and holds on to its history. There’s something about Tel Aviv that is much lighter – always moving forward.
At the same time, Tel Aviv respects its tradition, as is reflected by UNESCO’s declaration of the White City, the Bauhaus style architecture in the center of Tel Aviv, as a modern architectural heritage site.

Tel Aviv is known as Ha’ir Ha’ivrit Ha’rishona, the First Hebrew City. This emphasizes the special role of language in the city. And culture.
Jerusalem preserved the holy language and ancient Hebrew. But Tel Aviv is the place where the poets, Chaim Nachman Bialik, Avraham Shlonsky and the others updated and revitalized the Hebrew language. Tel Aviv broadcast the message of the new, modern and vibrant Hebrew language and culture. Hebrew literature and theater, it all began here. From the beginning, Hebrew was the dominant language in Tel Aviv.

Another very important question concerns the status of women in Tel Aviv, a special concern of WIZO.
Tel Aviv is a city which looks at all segments of the population in a very open manner. This is true for women, entrepreneurs, new immigrants, the young from all over the country, the gay and lesbian community, even refugees from Darfur. Everyone has a place in Tel Aviv. This is also true for the ethnic groups as well, the Russians, the Ethiopians, the Arabs, the migrant workers, and the refugees. Tel Aviv welcomes all of these communities. It even has an annual gay rights parade which attracts people from all over the country.
Concerning women’s rights, it very much depends on who’s in power. Today I am the only female deputy mayor in Tel Aviv. In my party, Meretz, which has three seats on the city council, two are women and the other is an Arab from Jaffa. And I’m proud to note that there are nine female council members in Tel Aviv out of about 31. Women deserve to have power and representation in local politics. The municipality decided that there should be 40% female representation on all the boards of city institutions. When we honored ‘Distinguished Citizens of Tel Aviv’ towards this year’s Independence Day, we made sure that a fair number of women, including Arab women, were honored.

They say that Tel Aviv is a paradise for singles, since about 40% of the population is single. So what is the attitude of Tel Aviv to children, and to education?
Tel Aviv welcomes everyone. According to one survey, 20 percent of the families in Tel Aviv are single-parent families. Clearly there is a high percentage of singles in Tel Aviv, and also a significant gay-lesbian community.
I am the mother of two children that are 14 and 12 1/2 years old. I began my public life when they were three and four years old. I was motivated to become active because of my concern for the educational environment for my children. I became the head of the parents’ committee in my children’s kindergarten, and also fought for the creation of a garden next to the kindergarten. There is a period in everyone’s life when they should go beyond their own private world, and work on behalf of others.
My goal for Tel Aviv’s future is that it must be a city for families, without losing the rest of its unique character. The question which will determine whether families will stay in the city is education. If we provide quality education for children, and frameworks which will enable both parents to go out and work, families will remain in the city, even if the price of housing is a little higher here.
As deputy mayor, I am in charge of the portfolio for early age education. My goal is to guarantee education from birth to all children in Tel Aviv. This means more day care centers and kindergartens, and a higher quality in them. WIZO and other women’s organizations provide education in their day care centers.
centers for children through the age of three, while the State is required to provide free education from the age of five. It’s not clear what happens between the age of three and five. I am promoting a law which deals with this together with the new minister of education Gideon Sa’ar.

If children, and their parents, are happy with the early years of education in the city, they will remain in Tel Aviv and not move out to the suburbs.

**Were you born in Tel Aviv?**

No, I was born in Herzliya, and came to Tel Aviv during my army service, when I was based in the Kiryah, the IDF’s headquarters in the heart of the city. I rented an apartment, and I even worked as a waitress at Rafi Shauli’s restaurant.

**So you represent the general process of young people from around the country who see Tel Aviv as a magnet, which attracts them. Here you are, a deputy mayor, and you were born in Herzliya, while the mayor Ron Huldai, was born in Kibbutz Hulda. What is your personal Tel Aviv, and why did you decide to live here?**

I fell in love with this city, because for me, Herzliya was just a little village. When I would walk from school to home, my mother already knew everything I had done and where I had been. People used to tell me what to wear, and what to do.

In Tel Aviv, there’s a place for everyone. Today, while being deputy mayor, I can go to the Carmel Market wearing shorts, a tee-shirt and sandals, and I feel perfectly at home. And I can see other public figures doing the same - we are all part of the people. Tel Aviv is so big and so varied, that it enables you to be yourself. That’s what I liked about Tel Aviv - the ability to be anonymous. When I was in the army, I used to go home, take off my uniform and put on civilian clothes, and then go to work in the restaurant, where the guy washing the dishes was an Arab, and sometimes the head of the shift was an Arab as well, from Haifa. And there was also a gay guy working with us. And model, later entrepreneur (and even for a while MK) Pnina Rosenbloom was hanging around as well. This variety of people astonished me. It was so different from where I had grown up, where everyone knew everything about you. In Tel Aviv, there’s room for freedom.

**So here we are, celebrating Tel Aviv’s 100th anniversary. What’s your vision for the next 100 years?**

The heart of Tel Aviv is its human capital. If we think back to the original Geddes urban architectural plan for Tel Aviv, to build a garden city for the people, if we think of the cafés, of how poet Chaim Nahman Bialik lived and invited the people to his home on Friday evenings for a Shabbat cultural evening, it’s a very human city, despite its size.

I wouldn’t want to see Tel Aviv become a forest of towers. We must enable the city to develop, to the north and to the east, but it must retain its current human character. We must retain and develop the sense of community. This doesn’t contradict the need to maintain and develop large cultural and economic institutions. We need that sense of megalomania, in order to be cosmopolitan as well. But while investing in these institutions, we must make sure that the neighborhood community center also remains open. And we should encourage the city’s residents to be active, to be a real civil society, and even to stand up to the system when necessary.

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**Tel Aviv@100**

Events and festivals celebrating Tel Aviv’s 100th birthday run through the end of this year. If you are visiting Israel during this time, check out the official birthday website (in English), to see what’s going on during your visit: www.tlv100.co.il/ENG
To Raya Jaglom
Honorary Life President of World WIZO
On the occasion of your 90th birthday

Wishing you heartiest congratulations and many happy and healthy years to come

Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend…

2009 WIZO pins

Who wouldn’t be proud to be seen wearing the new WIZO 2009 Chai pin! For a donation of $5,000 you will receive this stunning white gold pin enhanced with 18 diamonds.

The Woman of Valour gold and diamond pin is awarded for a donation of $10,000. For further donations this pin can be enhanced with a sapphire, emerald or an extra diamond. It was developed by Israeli designer Osnat Weingarten, and is rainbow-shaped to symbolize hope for the future of Israel’s children.

For $12,000 the new eye-catching Sponsor a Child pin is 18ct gold and is studded with diamonds. Your donation will sponsor 12 children in WIZO day care centers for a whole year. There is also a Sponsor a Child pin for $1,000, which sponsors one child for a year.

All pins are available from the World WIZO Fundraising Department
Examples of the Fellowship playgrounds

We are presently completing the installation of ‘Fellowship playgrounds’ in 52 day care centers of WIZO, Naamat and Emunah. This project, at a cost of $375,000, funded by the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, has revived and renewed the play areas in the day care centers for the benefit of children in Israel. New, colorful games equipment, uniquely designed, was installed in 19 playgrounds in eight WIZO day care centers, in Jerusalem, Netanya, Afula, Kiryat Malachi, Beersheva and Nahariya. The day care centers were chosen by the World WIZO Executive, according to a list of priorities in the organization.

The project, and its play equipment upgraded and enriched the many activities in the play areas. It is wonderful to see the joy on the faces of the children each day, when they see their new play areas.

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, the President of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews: ‘The WIZO Organization is well known for its work with early age children, and its efforts to build up a strong Israeli society. The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, which receives its donations from Christians to strengthen Israel’s society, view the assistance to WIZO as an important one, and is happy to have the opportunity to contribute to the children of Israel, through this organization’.

Information on the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews

The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews is the largest philanthropic foundation in Israel, and works for the strengthening of Israeli society. The Fellowship operates through the generous donations of citizens of the USA, and Israel loving Christians around the world, and has taken up the cause of those sectors in society who are in need in the areas of: immigration and absorption, social welfare and security in crisis situations. Up until today the Fellowship has donated over one billion shekels to its various projects.
Outgoing Aviv Representative to the World WIZO Executive, Marci Waterman, was unable to attend the Meeting of Representatives, but sent an impassioned message and challenge to delegates and WIZO leaders around the world, read by New York Chair Gail Perl. Gail began by saying:

“It is a great pleasure for me to participate in the Meeting of Representatives at this critical time for the people of Israel and the Jewish people as a whole, and bring Marci’s report to you. Five years ago Marci had never heard of WIZO, had never been to Israel. Today she is a fully dedicated chairman of New York WIZO.”

My dear friends,
It is so wonderful to address you with so many positive things to say. I only wish I could be with you in person. Can you believe I spent the first 39 years of my life without visiting Israel and in the past year I’ve come here three times! I’m practically a citizen. During the first week of December I was lucky enough in be in Tel Aviv with 65 women from 15 countries for the Aviv Seminar. Let me tell you, the exchange of information, the exploration of new frontiers in leadership and fundraising, combined with the rekindling of old friendships and discovering new ones, made for an incredibly electrifying experience. If positive energy emits light, the Tel Aviv Sheraton was ablaze! From the moment the plane touched down at Ben Gurion airport and the warm sun embraced me and welcomed me back, I knew this trip would be especially memorable. The lectures we heard were each important in their own way as they really addressed the “whole” WIZO young leader. The trips to Yad Vashem, the Western Wall, and to an IDF Base were moving and inspiring. However, what we saw when we visited the WIZO projects is what every volunteer really has to experience to understand what WIZO does and how it touches so many people. From children who can feel carefree inside the WIZO kassam-proof day care center in Sderot, to the battered women living without fear in the WIZO shelter in Ashdod, to the teens who have an opportunity to grow up with a future because they are independently living at the Nachlat Yehuda School and Youth Village, WIZO touches someone in every way.

Pride in Leadership
I was so proud to be the representative of such a dynamic group of confident leaders. It was incredible how women from South Africa, England, Panama, Australia, Germany, and the United States could sit at a table together, each so remarkably different, and yet so connected because of the Aviv bond...

Based on our exchange, the one issue I’ve found facing the women who are considered Aviv is the fact that we cannot consider our “young leadership” group to be 45-year-old established women with careers and children. That is a problem. In any other organization in the world, these women are the lifeblood of the organization – not the fresh-faced youth setting out to change the world! In my opinion, based on reading, speaking to, and compiling reports from women in over 50 countries, WIZO needs to re-brand. I said it at the EGM and I need to say it again. WIZO is no longer a grandmother’s organization that raises money from bake sales and mishloach manot baskets during Purim. WIZO is a sexy, inspired, electric organization that attracts women in their early 20’s who are starting careers and families and are blessed to give back to the Jewish people and want to feel connected to Israel. WIZO leadership must begin in high school with community service credit, continue as a social network in college, reinvigorate in the early 20’s as a means of connection to like-minded people, become part of the life of the young married family, and already be integrated in the life of the flourishing couple in their 40’s and 50’s. These 40 and 50-year-old women should be our present leadership...

In New York City, under the leadership of our forward-thinking president, Evelyn Sommer, we have set up an infrastructure that follows this pattern. Unlike many of the chapters I have heard from, WIZO NY is enjoying a boom in new, young members. With the “reinvention” of our “Founding Friends” group, we have
reinvigorated the goals of our supporters in their 60’s and 70’s who now have their own specific activities to organize which appeals to their age group.

Although the new year is generally thought to bring hope and prosperity, this year has already begun with tremendous challenges – challenges to world peace and to the stability of our economy. But, as we always have, the Jewish people will not only survive, but prosper and shine. As a relative newcomer to the beautiful state of Israel, I believe that the energy to go back to our federations and inspire new volunteers comes from seeing the people we help and the lives that we change. I know I can speak for every Aviv member when I say that we are infused with the responsibility and necessity to advance the status of women in the State of Israel, to provide for the welfare of women, children, and the elderly, and to strengthen the ties between Israel and the Diaspora. Thank you for giving me the opportunity and thank you Sylvie Pelossof and Ahuva Koren for your support during my term of service. My best wishes to my successor in the extraordinary endeavor of strengthening the WIZO Aviv movement.

Marci Waterman

Opening message from newly elected Aviv representative to the World WIZO Executive
Vicky Fidanque of Panama

What a privilege and honor it is for me to address all WIZO members, especially the Aviv, as the new Aviv Representative to the World WIZO Executive through WIZO Review.

My passion for WIZO started when I was very young; WIZO was always a topic of conversation among my direct family members.

As soon as I married and automatically became a WIZO member (a great WIZO Panama tradition!) I began my volunteer work for this wonderful organization. That was 15 years ago, and throughout all this time I have worked actively and enjoyed every minute of it. As a member and as a group president, I found the opportunity to quench my thirst to help others, to work for Israel, and to be creative as well. WIZO material has made me aware of what goes on in the Jewish World and keeps me updated and well informed. I have made friends and met the most wonderful and dedicated ladies who have become an inspiration for me to do more and reach higher.

WIZO is a well-organized and highly responsible organization to those in need. The objectives are clear and the work to be done is well defined.

When I first got involved I found everything already established, yet every day as I learn more and more about our organization, I can see that there is much more to do and thankfully, at our age, with G-d’s help, we will have the years to learn more and do much.

One of my goals as Aviv Representative is to reach out to the younger generation and encourage them to do more volunteer work. I take this up as my duty and I shall dedicate all my efforts to achieve this.

Together we are WIZO; each one of us is a valuable and necessary link of a long chain coming from the past and pressing on into the future.
Young Women At Risk

From Risk to a Safe Haven and Hope

The Beer Sheva branch of WIZO sponsored by WIZO.uk, where the ADI Center is housed

A WIZO project in Beer Sheva’s Beit Sherman gives a second chance to teenage girls and young women who seemingly had no future

Esther Tal

“I feel as though this place is changing my life.”

G. describes how she feels at the ADI Center, where she is undergoing therapy. G. and her friends have had difficult lives and were identified by the Center at the eleventh hour, just in time to prevent them spiraling out of control to a place from which there is no way back.

When Revital Liraz’s friends ask her innocently why she does not watch telenovellas, she replies quite seriously: “I see the real life version. The stories I hear every day exceed anything you can imagine.” Liraz, a social worker at the Welfare Department of Beer Sheva Municipality, comes to work every day at the local ADI Center, which she heads, hugs all the girls being treated there and settles down to listen to their stories.

ADI (a Hebrew acronym for Power, Concern and Friendship) is a collaborative project established jointly by WIZO, Beer Sheva Municipality and the Young Girls and Teenagers Service of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services. “Those three bodies decided to pool resources to provide a solution for young girls who have struggled with problems in their lives since childhood”, explains Mariel Huberman, another social worker who is Director of WIZO Israel’s Family Welfare Department.

“Every girl at the center has her own tale to tell. Some wander around with no fixed address. Others are waiting to find some kind of organized framework, while still others face serious family problems. But all of them are young women whom it is not too late to save.”

Time To Trust

Liraz explains that the girls at the ADI Center have already been through many different therapeutic, educational and academic processes. Some have even lived in hostels or closed facilities, yet they were never integrated into society and rehabilitated. The majority come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and some are new immigrants. Their lives are typically disorderly and unstable; most of them have encountered every possible form of violence and they are physically and emotionally damaged.

This is precisely why the ADI Center’s approach is gender-based, allowing the girls an all-female haven where they can feel safe and protected.

“ADI’s advantage is that there is no admissions committee,” Liraz clarifies. “We accept any girl at risk, who is not connected with some other framework to further efforts to integrate her into the community. There is no waiting list. The girls can spend an unlimited time at the center and take part in activities until they feel able and ready to stop.”

The center offers girls an alternative program, a different kind of daily facility that taps into their strengths and abilities as a way of empowering them. The girls are active partners in selecting their own personal program at the center. They can choose their own preferred course, pursuit or enrichment activity in order to achieve integration, and they undertake to attend regularly.

“It is important to us that the girls not only receive therapy but are rehabilitated,” Liraz continues. “We teach them a profession or trade, conduct job searches for them and we are trying to develop...
a business enterprise center to enable them to earn money and gain some employment experience, in order to prepare them for life in the world outside. What we aim to do is give them tools that they will be able to apply in the future.”

According to Liraz, each and every one of these girls has an extraordinary life story and, after years of being unable to trust anyone, they feel at long last that they can trust the staff at the center. “I consider that the most important aspect. It takes a long time to earn such trust,” she states with satisfaction. “It is a difficult and lengthy process requiring a lot of groundwork and perseverance.”

The girls’ attendance and consistency are one of many professional challenges facing the team at the center. Any minor crisis at home can cause a girl to disappear for several days,” says Esther Amar, a social worker who heads the Welfare Division of Beer Sheva Municipality. “In such cases, we locate the girl, bring her back and examine how the center can serve as a good alternative option for her so that she won’t give up so easily.” Amar stresses that the center provides support, accompanies the girls and gives them a warm embrace. The main goal is to teach them professional tools and develop the commercial potential that will eventually help them achieve financial independence.

Michal Komem, a Doctor of Social Work who directs the ‘Girls on the Map’ program of another partner in the project, Ashalim (the Association for Planning and Development of Services for Children and Youth at Risk and their Families), explains that, “activity at the ADI Center is feminist in nature; the reason for the girls’ distress is not only their personal pathology but the social reality in which they live.” Some of the problems stem from sexual abuse or living in families that can barely make ends meet. Even if these girls outwardly appear to be sick, we see their behavior as an expression of how they cope with their situations.”

The purpose of the ADI Center in Beer Sheva is to provide an answer to the needs of all girls at risk in southern areas of the country. Rivka Tevel, inspector for the southern region at the Young Girls and Teenagers Service of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, also expects the project eventually to cover the Bedouin sector. “We adapt ourselves to the specific characteristics and needs of any place,” she asserts. “With the Bedouins, for instance, the matter of just arriving at the center is problematic and group transportation is needed. We began with [the Bedouin town of] Rahat and gradually we will reach Ksafa and other places. The ADI program is a last chance to succeed in life,” Tevel emphasizes. “These are still early days and we are trying to design a ‘custom-made garment’ for everyone who needs one.”

**Success Story**

Girls also mentor each other in the rehabilitation program – that is, girls who have been through similar experiences themselves and managed to successfully rehabilitate themselves are today able to tutor others. “They make the best possible role models for our girls,” says Esther Amar. “Mentoring provides a clear example of success stories. Seeing how these girls present themselves and talk is heartwarming and inspires hope.”

Alona, a 20-year-old from Beer Sheva, has been mentoring for about a year. She passed a special training program at Tel Aviv University. “Working as a mentor makes me feel stronger and helps prevent me from slipping back to where I used to be,” she says. She admits that she was a rebellious girl, studying in school up to 7th grade then wandering the streets aimlessly. “University made me want to progress and I was motivated to study. She adds, “My self confidence grew, I managed to get a partial high school diploma (Bagrut) and I am carrying on with my studies now. I recently completed National Service as part of the ADI project and still continue to work here. I train and guide the girls, listen to them and draw on my own life experience to advise them.” Alona has announced that she will not leave this field of work: “I would like to be a probation officer and help other girls from deteriorating.”

**Like a Family**

G., a girl from the center of Israel was sent to live with a foster family, but that did not calm her stormy spirit. At the age of 21 she found an escape in cigarettes: “My father threatened me to make me stop smoking, but nothing helped. In 10th grade I was faced with problems beyond my control and I left school,” she continues. “After that I was sent to a boarding school in the south, one with exceptionally strict rules. If I met my father in town and turned up one minute late, I was not allowed to have lunch.” Despite the difficulties, she eventually discovered inner strengths that she did not know she had. “At the boarding school I found that I was able to stand my ground. If I was promised something, I demanded that the promise be kept.” G. returned home four years later and eventually joined the ADI program.

G.’s commitment to the ADI program is not something to be taken for granted: “I used to get up at 5 in the afternoon. It was not a simple thing for me decide to get up early and take the trouble to come here,” she recalls. The staff at the center represents a kind of family setting for her and is helping her achieve her ambitions and build a future, to a point where she is able to state: “I feel like this place is changing my life.”

This article originally appeared in the Hebrew WIZO magazine Ba’mid Ha’isha, and was translated for WIZO Review by Marian Shay
Located in the heart of Tel Aviv, on the corner of Bialik and Idelson Streets, Bialik Square is one of the most important heritage sites in Tel Aviv. From an urban, historical and cultural point of view, the square is an inseparable part of the small street with the same name, that of Hayyim Nahman Bialik – poet, author, researcher of literature, translator, editor and publisher. Though the square is relatively small, during the British Mandate it served as a central location for ceremonies and municipal events, as well as a meeting place for demonstrations against the Mandate authorities.

Sculptress and artist Ayelet Bitan Shlonsky is the visionary behind the renewal of Bialik Square, and its curator. She notes that the area “offers a compact walking tour of all of the city’s major architectural styles.” There are plans to open institutions nearby focusing on fashion, theater and design, transforming the locale into a center of historic and contemporary culture. Bitan Shlonsky believes that if people want to understand what helped create the culture of the city of Tel Aviv, Bialik Square is the place to start.

**A Walk around the Square**

The focal point of this “open-air museum” is Bialik House, at Number 22 Bialik Street, overlooking Bialik Square. Designed by architect Yosef Minor and build in 1924-5 for the national poet and his wife, the house was once considered one of the
most beautiful and most important buildings in Tel Aviv, not only because it was the home of Hayyim Nahman Bialik and his wife Manya, but also because of its pioneering architectural design combining European and Oriental decorative elements in an imposing structure. Bialik, born in 1873 in the Ukraine, was already a celebrated poet and publisher when he moved to Tel Aviv in 1924. A week after he arrived, a ceremony was held in his honor in which the street was named after him. In pre-state days, Bialik’s home was the epicenter of a budding Hebrew culture. Early Zionist authors, poets, painters and actors would gather regularly in his salon. Perhaps it was because of this that the city’s first mayor, Meir Dizengoff, moved City Hall right next door. After the poet’s sudden death in 1934, his widow Manya bequeathed the house to the Municipality. It was renovated, and reopened in 1937 comprising archives, a library and a museum. For decades, it was a pilgrimage site for Israeli schoolchildren. But over the years, Bialik House and its contents were neglected and left to deteriorate. In 1984, the house was closed to the public and partly renovated, reopening only in 1991. In 2006 the house was closed once again, and after three years of renovations, in January 2009, it was reopened to the public in time for the city’s 100th birthday celebrations. It was redone from the foundations up -- with colors, decorations and furnishings faithfully restored. The poet’s former bedroom is now a display room, and his personal archive has been replicated. The main floor of Bialik House, originally a communal space for receiving guests, has also been restored to its original décor. Islamic arches and European columns are complemented by Bezalel tiles depicting the twelve tribes of Israel and the Hebrew months. Two tiles that face each other across the central foyer define Bialik’s vision of his place in history: one is a depiction of the Judea Capta coin minted by the Romans celebrating the destruction of the Second Temple; the other is a medallion of Jews being released from captivity. After visiting hours, Bialik House serves as a cultural center. Literary readings by up-and-coming Hebrew authors as well as established ones take place every Thursday night. From January through March, a children’s play about Bialik and his works was presented weekly.

Sekura House (Number 27), facing out toward Allenby Street, was the second home of the Tel Aviv Municipality. In 1925, City Hall moved to the building on the square. Originally meant to be a hotel, it housed the Municipality until 1965, when the present City Hall was built. In 1971, it was reopened as a museum of the history of Tel Aviv, closing in the 2000s. Today the building is in the process of being renovated as the Tel Aviv Heritage Museum, a multipurpose museum and cultural center which commemorates the establishment and development of all facets of life in Tel Aviv, with permanent and temporary display areas including the restored work room of Mayor Meir Dizengoff, a visitor activity room, a library, and a reception hall. The new museum is scheduled to open towards the end of 2009 as part of the Tel Aviv @ 100 celebrations.

From the mid-1970s until January 2008, a sculpture by artist Nachum Gutman stood in the square, directly in front of the former City Hall. A colorful mosaic, it depicts the 4,000-year history of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, beginning with the Greek myth of Andromeda and ending with the Declaration of Israel’s Independence. In place of Gutman’s mosaic, a “biological pond”, complete with lily pads, goldfish and a fountain, has become the Square’s new centerpiece.

Between City Hall and Bialik House is the colorful Music Center and Library (Number 26). Founded in 1951 as AMLI (Americans for a Music Library in Israel) Central Music Library, in 1996 it moved to the impressive building dedicated to the memory of famed pianist Felicja Blumental (1908-1991), who had musical compositions dedicated to her by such composers as Villa Lobos, Penderecki and Lutoslawski. The music library has a circulation department that lends its collection of books, scores and recordings, as well as a reference room, periodical collection, audio-visual department and exhibition hall. The Music Center is a venue for musical performances, workshops and lectures. The Rubin Museum (Number 14) is the former home of painter Reuven Rubin, where he lived with his family and worked from 1946 until his death in 1974. Built in 1930, the house was opened to the public as a museum in 1983. A choice selection from the Museum’s permanent collection of Reuven Rubin’s paintings is on display, and a children’s workshop is located on the basement level. The street level floor houses the main gallery. An additional gallery is located on the second floor, along with the library and reading room. Rubin’s own studio, preserved as it was in his lifetime, is located on the third floor, which also houses a biographical display of photos, documents and sketches.

Bialik Square is also home to a small Bauhaus Museum - located, appropriately, in an International (Bauhaus) Style building at 21 Bialik Street. The first exhibition included original Bauhaus furniture, graphics, lamps and glass and ceramic ware by Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer, among others.

Along with Tel Aviv’s past, its future is represented in Bialik Square. City Tree (Number 23) offers help, advice and ideas to those who want to live a “cleaner and greener city lifestyle”. City Tree has many projects, including restoring its apartment using ecological renovation methods; promoting energy efficient lighting; and hosting workshops and lectures.

At the end of a walk around Bialik Square, one comes away with a strong sense of Tel Aviv’s early history – along with hope for a bright, dynamic and sustainable future.
How Can We Attract More New Dynamic Members?

What are we doing wrong? How can we do it right?

Jenny Cohen-Khallas
Israeli counselor on Resource Development for NGOs and a former director of a WIZO day care center

A sustainable modern organization (whether a business or a non-profit) requires a Generation Turn-Over to prevent a funding recession and operational stagnation. Often, entrenched leadership doesn’t want to rise to this challenge. But energetic and creative potential new leaders will land up elsewhere if they are not recruited and then managed in a way that answers both their needs and the organization’s needs. WIZO’s needs and aims are to continuously develop its excellent work in Israel in education, welfare and women’s issues. WIZO’s work is unique in its impact on Israeli society and economy. WIZO’s work can impact the modern world’s social agenda. Maybe a secondary aim is indeed to bring WIZO’s vast experience in these issues to the forefront of the relevant international fora, as Israel’s contribution to the world social agenda (see JDDC participation in world committees and access to international funding!). These are therefore also the aims of WIZO Federations worldwide.

How do we answer the needs and aims of potential young, dynamic members? How do we recruit and retain them? WIZO’s aims are undoubtedly relevant to young women interested in these issues, as listeners, active contributors and world representatives. Offering a social framework to the ladies of the local community may be a good way to attract some members, but it is not the Federations’ aim and it is clearly not attractive enough to young, dynamic women. They are seeking satisfaction with Young Leadership Divisions of other organizations that encourage their
pro-active participation and offer them peer group experiences. How do we achieve the Win-Win scenario, wherein both WIZO, the local ladies who want a social framework and also new forceful young leaders have their needs answered? **Here is a plan for action**, with a schedule, based on the understanding that recruiting and retaining effective members require the same attitude and skills as recruiting and retaining effective, loyal, long-term and satisfied paid staff.

**Task I of the plan: We study the competition:**
If outsiders Google the key words “Jewish Young Leadership”, they won’t find WIZO there at all. Moreover, in the WIZO website, you have to be an insider to know that “Aviv” refers to young leadership. This means that potential young leaders looking for a platform to identify with will not easily find information on WIZO peer groups. Young educated women, young professionals, businesswomen, community activists, feminist activists, and social movers will not find their common age denominator in WIZO websites. This situation will be changed by WIZO headquarters. The Federations should also include high profile exposure to young leadership opportunities in their websites. Have a look at the Young Leadership web page of other major Jewish and Israeli organizations. Analyze how they attract outsiders, what they want from their youngsters, but also see what they lack in attraction.

WIZO can do better! WIZO’s message is unique in its impact in Israel and, potentially, in the modern world.

**But beyond all these techniques, remember that WIZO Federations must offer new members the challenge of sustaining WIZO’s first-class work in Israeli society and the possibility of contributing to the modern world’s social agenda, on issues of women, child welfare and youth**.

**Task II: Federation Presidents convene a workshop to launch effective recruitment and retention of young (under 45s) members.** Planning a first-time workshop, that attracts maximum participation, can take three months. At the event, the following stages are presented, with the aim clearly in mind to attract young leadership to carry on WIZO’s mission. At the workshop, a capable recruitment committee is formed. Remember that the plan must be budgeted!

**Task III: (Two weeks/one meeting): The Committee writes a short and concise tender for new members** with a description of WIZO’s mission that the Federation addresses, skills required (e.g. fundraising, marketing, public speaking, participation in local, national and/or international events on WIZO subjects), and the rewards offered (e.g. a top-drawer peer group, friendly mentors, social challenge, respect, community leadership, and the possibility of representing WIZO in national and world meetings on women’s, children’s and youth issues).

**Task IV (one month): The Committee publishes the tender in all media that potential candidates probably browse — local, national and international Jewish newspapers and notice boards, newsletters of other Jewish concerns, both local and national, e-mail chain letters, Jewish blogs and chat-backs of any kind, banners and ads in Jewish Internet publications, including those of other organizations, professional and business journals and notice boards.**

**Task V (two months): The Committee meets potential candidates and coordinates expectations with them.** These meetings are critical to the success or failure of the future relationship. They can be individual, but even better is a group meeting, as networking and mutual feedback will then occur.

What achievements are expected and over what time-line? What support, recognition, friendship, activities, tasks, aims and challenges are you offering them? What are their networks and influence and what do WIZO’s (both local and international) networks offer them? What ideas and plans can they bring to the table? Who wants to be selectively active, who shows leadership aspirations and who wants to be passive, but included? How much time do they truly perceive as having available for WIZO?

These questions help to offer them an appropriate level of stimulus with tasks that earn them recognition, satisfaction and achievement, rather than failure, exclusion and frustration.

**Task VI (one month): New Young Leadership Committees are formed that deal with fundraising, marketing, and representation in local and national events (Jewish and non-Jewish) on WIZO issues.**

This stage really requires tailor-made mentoring for those who don’t have experience. It is crucial that committee work includes annual strategic goal planning, analysis of obstacles, coordinating expectations, learning from mistakes, praise and mentoring.

**The scope of this article does not allow for a step-by-step guide, but in a nutshell:**
The Federation should use a data and networking system on-line, such as ALTRO (www.altro.co.il). This will prevent misunderstandings and faulty communications, enable real time reporting and feedback. Each committee decides an annual strategy to achieve its input to the Federation’s total annual achievement of WIZO’s aims. All tasks (fundraising, marketing, representation) have to be challenging but do-able, according to the expectations, capabilities and time that members have volunteered. We have to overcome competition from other organizations, achieve aims creatively and use modern communications to the full (e.g. websites that achieve fundraising and recruitment. See for example www.tabletotable.org.il). Activities should impact the local community positively.

Schedules are made, essential milestones are mapped out, feedback teams help each other out. Each member has her own level of challenge, but nobody is alone. The milestones include set times for public recognition, social functions and praise for achievements and participation. Remember that effective recruitment and management of new members involve rights and obligations, task delegation, assessment of success, and full use of modern communications. But beyond all these techniques, remember that WIZO Federations must offer new members the challenge of sustaining WIZO’s first-class work in Israeli society and the possibility of contributing to the modern world’s social agenda, on issues of women, child welfare and youth.
Wizo Israel mega fashion show

Over 2000 people thronged into Hangar 11, one of Tel Aviv’s most popular social venues at the Tel Aviv port on a balmy February evening. The draw was a mega fashion show and major fundraiser organized by WIZO Israel with the theme “100 years of Tel Aviv, 100 years of Israeli Fashion”. Against a backdrop of black and white film shots of the early days of the City, Israel’s leading designers paraded their garments; all the designers, models and celebrity compères for the evening gave their services absolutely free, enabling as much money as possible to be donated to WIZO’s worthy causes. Highlights of the show were garments designed by pupils of WIZO’s Neri Bloomfield Academy of Design and Teacher Training in Haifa and a group of models wearing vintage outfits from WIZO’s second-hand clothing stores.

WIZO Israel Campaign for International Women’s Day

As violence against women is on the increase in Israel as well as everywhere else, complaints from Israeli women to WIZO provided the subject for this year’s WIZO Israel’s campaign for International Women’s Day. Women complained about the way women (and women’s bodies) were portrayed in some advertisements – in some for products which had no connection with women. Women’s groups declared that whatever product was being advertised, whether it was a bar of soap, a drink or a chocolate bar, some sexist image was included. WIZO Israel took up the cause and held a ‘competition’ for the ‘best’, i.e. worst ad, with the aim to bring pressure on the advertisers to withdraw the offending ads and asking women to boycott the products. The campaign engendered much media attention and it is hoped that the offending companies will act differently in the future.

New WIZO Calendar – a wonderful fundraising tool and gift

As one of its projects to celebrate WIZO’s 90th anniversary next year, the World WIZO Fundraising Department proudly announces the production of its 16-
month calendar – starting from Rosh Hashana this year, and going through to December 2010. The calendar shows both the Jewish and Gregorian calendar, and each page depicts a WIZO activity or project. The calendar is available from World WIZO Fundraising Department – see advertisement on page 25.

Friends of WIZO – Viva Italia! and Gideon Oberson fashion show

Friends of WIZO English-speaking WIZO group in Israel goes from strength to strength in their fund-raising efforts for various WIZO projects in Israel. Two outstanding events were held recently – the first a musical evening hosted by the Italian ambassador to Israel Luigi Mattiolo and his wife Stefania in their beautiful home. Two students from WIZO’s music center in Tiberias (sponsored by WIZO.uk) charmed the audience with their performances – Maya Amir with her beautiful voice, and violinist Vicky Gellman – almost a regular at WIZO events. The talents of these two girls are being nurtured thanks to the opportunities provided by WIZO. An additional guest at the evening was world-famous novelist Naomi Ragen, who enthralled the guests as she described how subjects for her novels ‘find her’ rather than the opposite.

At the end of the cultural program, guests were indulged with a lavish Italian buffet dinner.

The second event was the 5th annual Sponsor-A-Child Luncheon Fashion show – now a much awaited and popular event on the Israeli social calendar. As in previous years, the luncheon was a sell-out. Held in the garden of Karen Abrahamson in Herzlia Pituach, this year’s fashion show was presented by renowned Israeli fashion doyen Gideon Oberson and his daughter Karen, a well-known designer in her own right. Models walked along the cat-walk and around the tables, enabling the donors to see the beautiful designs at close range. Proceeds went to disadvantaged children and youth in WIZO’s day care centers, foster homes and schools.

WIZO Hadassim teacher wins award

Zeev Muchenik, a math teacher at WIZO’s Hadassim School and Youth Village
Was one of five teachers awarded the prestigious title “Teacher of the State”. One of Israel’s leading newspapers Yediot Acharonot, Mifal Ha’Payis (State Lottery) and the Union of Teachers sponsored the competition. Thousands of nominations were received and the final five were chosen after a complicated selection procedure. Zeev, who emigrated from Russia in 1989 soon adapted to the Israeli school system. He says he keeps a watchful eye on his pupils, and concentrates on helping weaker pupils. Former students and colleagues say he manages to make math a ‘favorite subject.’ One of his former pupils said that 17 years after being taught by him she knows he still teaches with the same enthusiasm and patience: “I just hope my two daughters have such a teacher!”

A joint project of WIZO Tel Aviv, WIZO Israel and World WIZO ensured that 42 children of bar and bat mitzvah age from needy families celebrated this important milestone in their Jewish life. Each child participated in synagogue services and visited the Kotel. The final event was a stylish party in a Tel Aviv venue, where the youngsters and their families were overwhelmed by the generosity bestowed on them by WIZO. Tallitot and tefillin were given to the boys and silver magen David necklaces to the girls, as well as many other gifts received as donations. Honored guest was Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv and former Chief Rabbi of Israel Meir Israel Lau, who told the children that their bar/bat mitzvah is only the beginning of their responsibility to be a contributing member of society. The children showed their appreciation with their grateful thanks and their pledge to act as responsible, contributing citizens.

The WIZO Hadassim ‘Dana’ basketball team won the 5th annual Dana Tournament by beating the Ostrovsky Raanana team 40-31. The tournament is held annually in the town of Ness Ziona in memory of the late Dana Zamorsky, daughter of World WIZO General Manager Haim Zamorsky. Dana was tragically killed in a road accident while serving in the Israeli
army. This year’s tournament was also held in memory of Ralph Klein, the team’s legendary coach, who died last year. As in previous years, the tournament was held under the sponsorship of World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben Dov and mayor of Ness Ziona municipality Mr Yossi Shvo.

Thirteen needy pupils from various WIZO schools were the recipients of grants amounting to NIS 13,000. The students had excelled in their studies and had volunteered for community work.

Raanana Street named after Rachel Kagan

A street (albeit a small one) was recently named after Rachel Kagan, in the Israeli town of Raanana after the Municipality decided that not enough of its streets were named after women. Rachel Kagan was one of the only two women (the other was Golda Meir) who was a signatory of the Declaration of Independence. Rachel Kagan immigrated to Palestine from Russia in 1919 at the age of 21. She immersed herself in the work of Histadrut Nashim Ivriot (The Association of Jewish Women), the forerunner of WIZO Israel, and was chairman of the Israel Federation from 1948-1962. In 1949 she ran on a WIZO ticket for the first Knesset and gained a seat, which she held until 1951. During her time as an MK she initiated The Equal Rights for Women Law – which was passed. This is just a very brief synopsis of a great woman, worthy of having a street named after her!

Farewell to Hana

Hana Katz, long-time personal secretary to World WIZO President Helena Glaser died after a long illness. Many WIZO presidents knew Hana well, and it seemed particularly poignant that she died during the January Meeting of Representatives, enabling many of them to attend her funeral.

Helena Glaser writes this tribute to Hana:
Hana Katz was my office manager – the office of the President of World WIZO – but beyond that she was also my personal friend. It is hard to describe her many capabilities: she was full of life and unwilling to miss out on any activity. She loved and had an interest in music, theater, lectures, reading, sport, touring, folk dancing and was utterly devoted to her family and her work at WIZO – with me. Even after a terrible personal tragedy she found the will to carry on. She was enterprising and loyal and identified strongly with WIZO undertakings abroad.

Hana managed the office energetically and was involved in planning and implementing the annual meeting. Even when she fell sick and underwent treatments, her work remained her anchor and she continued to contribute as much as possible.

I miss her and will continue to miss her greatly. May her soul rest in peace.
UNITED KINGDOM

WIZO.uk quiz@home – an online success

Following last year’s success, WIZO.uk held its on-line supper quiz in January with the participation of 167 teams across the UK plus a team from Eilat in Israel. Aviv member Nicola Garcia hosted the winning team. Brenda Levinson, who hails from Newcastle, together with her family living in Israel plus those visiting from the UK, made up the Eilat team. Over 2,000 people, 400 more than last year, put their general knowledge to the test and raised over £35,000 to benefit children at risk in Israel.

Casino Night gamble pays off for WIZO

Held at London’s Bloomsbury Ballroom, WIZO.uk’s Casino Night attracted a guest list of 200 including a number of American supporters. Joyce and Edward Misrahi hosted this high profile black-tie event for the second year running. Joint chairs were Claire Zulman and Joyce Misrahi. Guests purchased chips to play the various gaming tables including roulette, blackjack and ‘Texas Hold ‘em’ poker, with all the chip money earmarked for WIZO. The evening also featured dinner and an auction with first-rate prizes, and benefited WIZO projects in Israel by a stunning £80,000.

Young WIZO gets creative at ‘Girls Night In’

Young WIZO.uk held a ‘Girls Night In’ for 40 supporters at the ‘Arts & Fun’ studio in north-west London. The girls nibbled on food, drank wine and found the artist within them as they decorated ceramics including mezuzot.

Jewish Women’s Week Campaign requests ‘more at the door’

The 62nd Jewish Women’s Week (JWW) campaign focused on domestic violence in Israel. Speaking at the launch, chair of Jewish Women’s Week Andy Epstein said, “Times are tough for everyone right now but for Israeli families affected by domestic violence and abuse they are even tougher. Thousands turn to WIZO because we can offer the essential services and skills needed by these women, children and young people, often the weakest and most at-risk members of Israeli society.” Guest speaker, broadcaster and principal of The Intelligent Sales Club, Grant Leboff, gave tips to the JWW captains and collectors to enable them to ask for ‘more at the door’. JWW awards were presented to Ros Redbart and Alison Saffer, co-captains of Mill Hill JWW. The Jewish Women’s Week door-to-door collection powered by some 1500 volunteer collectors throughout the UK raises funds for almost 100 WIZO projects in Israel. Last year’s Jewish Women’s Week raised a total of £256,000 almost 6% higher than the previous year.

Aviv lines up the talent

The grand final of Aviv’s ‘Who’s Got Talent?’ was held at north-west London’s Palm Hotel. Nine performers competed in front of a panel of judges, comprising singer Jonathan Ansell, formerly of pop opera group G4, his fiancée, TV presenter Debbie King, motivational speaker and business coach Andrew Risner, Israeli-born cellist Sagi Hartov and comedians Paul Kaye and Mark Maier and an audience of 150 guests. The performers included three singers, two comedians, a pianist, a ‘teenies’ rock group, an Israeli-born male tango dancer and a magician. Paul Kaye and Mark Maier compèred the evening, which included dinner and a pledge, with much hilarity. The winner, London singer Sandra Lee, who performed a varied repertoire from light opera, jazz and pop to Hebrew and Yiddish music, wowed the audience with her rendition of Puccini’s ‘O Mio Babbino Caro’
UK. Finalists of ‘Who’s got Talent’ L-R: Tango dancer Seda with her partner Ben Haim, Toby Rinkoff, Gavin Littauer, Zara Kadir, the winner Sandra Lee, Annabel Gaba, Jon Kadlick and Talis Collis. In the foreground, two of the three Black Widows teenies pop group Photo: John Rifkin.

UK. L-R: Margaret Fink, Maisie Goldman, Loraine Warren, Lily Abramson, Beattie Levene, Janice Livingstone and Joy Wolfe

(Oh My Beloved Father). Over £27,000 was raised in support of the WIZO.uk-sponsored Adi Project in Be’er Sheba.

Anti-Semitism in Recession – Could history repeat itself?

That was the question posed at WIZO.uk’s anti-Semitism panel held at WIZO House in London. The panel consisted of Board of Deputies President Henry Grunwald, John Mann, MP, chair of the All-Party Group against Anti-Semitism, Jake Hayman, of the One Voice movement, and Union of Jewish Students campaigns organizer Yair Zivan. Karen Pollock, chief executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust was in the chair. The consensus was that the rise in anti-Semitism was perpetrated by ignorance and would continue even if Israel ceased to exist, as the centuries-old mind-set of anti-Semitism had not died out. Henry Grunwald admitted to being more uncomfortable being a Jew now than ever before. John Mann told the audience that he had witnessed anti-Semitism ‘take a turn for the worst’ as far-right Nazism is “horribly organized to direct violence against Jews, every day and every week.” Yair Zivan spoke about the battle on campus for students’ hearts and minds. He said that lack of knowledge on campus about the past and criticism of Israel often cross into anti-Semitic rhetoric and he believes that a strong Jewish identity is important, giving people a sense of pride. In closing, Zivan was adamant, ‘Anti-Semitism is racism and we should demand that people who call themselves anti-racists should stand up and condemn it in all its forms.”

Manchester group celebrates Diamond Anniversary

Earlier this year the Naomi Coleman WIZO Group held a luncheon for 140 people in Manchester to mark 60 years of working for WIZO. The group, formed in 1948 as North Manchester Young WIZO, changed its name to honor Naomi Coleman, a former chairperson who passed away at the age of 38. Lily Abramson, the only remaining founder member still active in the group, and Beattie Levene who joined in 1949 and who has been chairperson on and off for over 30 years attended the luncheon. Maisie Goldman, another stalwart for the last 50 years was also present. Each received an award for their outstanding commitment from WIZO.uk Chairperson Loraine Warren who came from London for the Diamond Anniversary lunch. Manchester WIZO Chairperson Margaret Fink awarded certificates to all group members. Janice Livingstone, whose late mother Cecily Manson, belonged to the group for many years and was a great friend to both Beattie and Maisie, opened the lunch. Over £3,000 was raised for the purchase of safety equipment at the WIZO Day Care Center located in Ashkelon’s Barzilai Medical Center.

CANADA

CHW Toronto says thanks for the memories at the 84th Annual Bazaar

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) Toronto Center welcomed visitors to its annual bazaar for the very last time. Over the years, due to competition less shoppers have attended, and less volunteers are available. The forward-thinking committee members realize they have to find ways to attract the younger generation with different fund-raising ideas in line with 21st century technology. This year, over 8,500 people still came in search of bargains and to bid farewell to the popular bazaar, which has raised a handsome $561,368 for the women and
children of Israel. Without the generous backing from corporate sponsors, this spectacular bazaar could not have come to fruition. The following companies and individuals have all supported this most lucrative event: Dancap Productions and the Benjamin Group, BMO Nesbitt Burns, Nancy Pencer and RioCan, Larry and Judy Tanenbaum Foundation, TD Canada Trust, Apotex, Edna Levitt 50 + Fitness, Transglobe Property, Great Gulf Homes, Nortown Air, Camp Timberlane, Azuria Group, Renée and Ralph Wolfe and Family, Michael Bellman and Holly Pencer Bellman, David Mart Investments, Basman Smith and Fabricland. Caterers, Risa, donated a celebratory cake. The Pilarski and Pillersdorf families’ kindness in providing warehouse space over the years was also gratefully acknowledged. Thirty-five past bazaar chairpersons attended the ‘Bazaar Memories’ celebration, including one who chaired the 1958 bazaar. An exhibit of bazaar memories commemorating the long and fruitful history of the Toronto Hadassah-WIZO Bazaar was on display.

**USA**

**NEW YORK**

**Come Get Lucky at Capitale**


**Kicking off for ‘Children for our Children’**

Amy Miller Gross and Haley Binn hosted a ‘Kick-Off’ breakfast for over 40 young women at Ms Gross’s home for the WIZO 2009 Children for our Children Spring Fashion Show & Luncheon. World WIZO Public Affairs and NGO Department Chairperson Celia Michonik in New York attending sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations, was the special guest.

**Mira Sofer’s Purim Luncheon**

WIZO USA Vice President and Regional Chair Mira Sofer hosted a Purim luncheon in her home for over 40 members of the New York Board of Directors and Executive Board. Celia Michonik, chairperson of World WIZO Public Affairs and NGO Department spoke about her work at the United Nations.
WIZO USA President Evelyn Sommer reported on the pressing requirements of WIZO in Israel.

NEW JERSEY
Purim Dance Party
Over 100 people attended WIZO New Jersey’s Purim Dance Party. The festive event was organized under the leadership of chapter chairpersons Ariela Spialter, Bat Sheva Halpern and Sheree Mandelbaum with the help of Mira Rappaport, Alice Klein and the Purim Party Committee.

FLORIDA
Community Bat Mitzvah celebrations
Over 900 guests attended WIZO Ilanit Tikva’s seventh annual Community Bat Mitzvah at the Diplomat Hotel in Hallandale, Florida in March. Twenty-six beautiful young women filled the room with songs and prayers. Under the close supervision of teachers and rabbis, the girls met twice a week for six months to learn the importance of the role of the Jewish woman in society and to take part in different mitzvah projects preparing them to become WIZO leaders of tomorrow. After the ceremony, the 26 young stars of the evening attended an elegant dinner where they and their guests danced till midnight.

WIZO Florida Annual Gala Dinner
WIZO Florida’s Annual Gala Dinner, under the leadership of WIZO USA Vice President Jana Falic and Rebecca Schapiro, was held at the Fairmont Turnberry Isle Resort in Aventura FL. The gala began with rousing performances by world-renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman and eminent pianist Rohan De Silva, which met with an enthusiastic standing ovation from the 250-strong crowd. Special guests included Fima & Nily Falic, Sisel Klurman, Dr. Irving & Cherna Moskowitz and Senator Paul & Sandy Steinberg. WIZO Florida President Anita Friedman spoke eloquently of Israel’s current situation. Granddaughter of U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson, Claudia Brod, received the Joseph Handleman Light of Philanthropy Award presented to her late grandfather in memoriam. The dinner also recognized the courage of two Israeli security guards, Alex Nepelvich and Mikhail Popov, who saved many lives after subduing and killing an Arab attacker outside a Jerusalem yeshiva in 2007. They received the Shomrei Israel Award to stirring applause. Their trip to Miami was made possible by the generosity of the Falic Family. Jana Falic’s and Jael Toledo’s emotional fundraising appeal resulted in pledges of over $500,000 for WIZO.

Margie’s Membership Drive is a gift
WIZO Florida Membership Chairperson Margie Szerer celebrated her 40th birthday by hosting the WIZO Yonit Membership Drive at her lovely home where Rebbetzin Olivia Schwartz gave a meaningful lecture on ‘celebrating Torah’ instead of bringing birthday gifts, Margie requested
that her guests donate to WIZO. Inspired by Margie’s selflessness, many existing chaverot upgraded their WIZO membership to gold and diamond status and others joined the warm WIZO Florida family as new members.

**LOS ANGELES**

**Brain surgeons do not do facelifts**

Tel Aviv-born Dafi Shlangar, author of ‘Brain Surgeons Don’t Do Facelifts” shared the experience of living with a brain tumor and signed copies of her book for a crowd of WIZO members at an event hosted by Hannah Rubinstein in Beverley Hills, California.

**SAN FRANCISCO**

**Musical evening at Judith’s home**

WIZO Nativ held a musical evening featuring vocalist Ronit Widmann-Levy who sang Ladino Romansa accompanied by guitar virtuoso Daniel Akiva. The event was hosted by Judith and Joseph Perl and organized by chapter chairperson Galit Rand, member Nili Tzarnotzky and former chapter chairperson Ronit Melamud. WIZO USA National President Evelyn Sommer reported on WIZO’s achievements in Israel and the international arena.

**EUROPE**

**AUSTRIA**

**Dancing the Viennese Waltz at the Bal Paré**

In celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the State of Israel, WIZO Austria supported by the Jewish Community of Vienna and ‘Moadon – Club of the Esrim ve Schloshim, (twenties and thirties) organized the Bal Paré, held in Vienna. The majestic city hall ballroom provided the perfect venue for the elegant affair, which opened with a charming dance performance by 20 couples from the Zwi Perez Chajes School, but the pace soon quickened from their refined waltzing as the band ‘Or le Israel’ stirred the gathering into a whirl of Israeli dancing. Patrons for the evening were the Mayor of Vienna Dr. Michael Häupl and the Israeli Ambassador to Austria, HE Dan Ashbel together with his wife, Zahava. Sonia Kato, on behalf of Vienna’s vice-mayor, Renate Brauner, delivered the keynote speech underscoring the importance of supporting educational institutions true to the WIZO ethos that ‘the children are our future.’ WIZO Austria’s Dr. Yana Hauptmann welcomed the guests with an impassioned speech and HE Dan Ashbel affirmed his commitment to WIZO, praising the organization as a shining example of women power working to improve Israeli society. Due to Dr. Yana Hauptmann’s initiative, the proceeds of the ball and of other WIZO events of the past year will benefit a day care center for the children of Rehovot in Israel.

**FINLAND**

**Ladies serenaded at annual dinner**

More than 90 women attended the annual Ladies Dinner, where four senior members of the Helsinki University Male Choir serenaded the guests and two beautiful and gifted musicians from the community, cousins Mira Ormala and Jenny Liebkin, entertained the gathering. The raffle, with its first class prizes ranging from theater tickets and restaurant vouchers to perfume, was very well supported. The Board members prepared a delicious fish and dairy buffet.
for the guests, and the Finnish chaverot are grateful to the restaurant owners, Sirkku and Boaz Efrat, for their generosity in letting them use their premises for the dinner.

The much-heralded Helsinki Bazaar

Over 100 members of the community including children, husbands and friends helped to organize the WIZO Bazaar in Helsinki. They donated and collected merchandise and manned the numerous stalls to ensure that this year’s bazaar was as successful as ever. Over 1,000 visitors came to the bazaar for the amazing bargains in everything from Jewish delicacies to antiques.

The new Aviv group ‘WIZO Angels’ were received with great enthusiasm as they made their debut wearing beautiful wings made from real feathers and the Hazamir Choir of the Jewish community added to the festive atmosphere.

FRANCE

A child from a mixed marriage - Who am I?

How do you answer the questions of a boy raised as a Jew, but who discovers on his bar mitzvah that he is not actually Jewish? What do you say to a child whose parents do not share the same religion? These were just some of the questions posed at a topical seminar that took place at the Reuilly Hall in Paris. Participants included Rabbi Malka of the Consistoire Central de France, Rabbi Rivon Krygier of the Masorti Movement, anthropologists, writers, researchers and psychologists. The WIZO France Women and Judaism Department, under the directorship of Jane Zimero and her team, organized the seminar.

Service with a smile at the Golden Tulip

Parisian bargain hunters headed to WIZO France’s annual Chanukah Bazaar at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Paris where they met with an immense selection of gifts, toys, jewelry, crockery, leather goods, home-baked pastries and Judaica. Industrious WIZO chaverot had come from all over France to lend their support to serve the eager shoppers with a smile.

New president believes a woman’s place is at WIZO

History teacher, mother of three and long-serving activist in the Jewish Scouts Movement as well as over 30 years as an active member of the WIZO Creil branch, Joelle Lezmi is the new president of WIZO France. Joelle has put the reinforcement of WIZO membership at the top of her agenda, particularly targeting women of the 28-40 year age group. She believes in the membership campaign motto, “From 25 to 95 years old, your place is at WIZO”. Mindful of the current economic climate, Joelle hopes to increase smaller budget events such as lectures and discussions that will draw in new activists in
addition to continuing to offer the prestigious events supported by corporate donors. Like her predecessor, Nathalie Cohen-Beizerman, Joelle is committed to making women’s voices heard by forging links with other Jewish organizations, particularly the CRIF.

Breaking the silence
Three hundred people attended a conference on domestic violence held at L’Espace Reuilly in Paris in January, entitled ‘Let’s break the Silence’ organized by WIZO NOA. The forum focused on breaking the taboo surrounding domestic violence within the Jewish home. One victim courageously addressed the audience by saying, “My dear ladies, I beg of you, don’t take the abuse like I did for too many years. Do not be afraid of what people may say. Do not be afraid of tomorrow. You are not alone.” Under the auspices of the Chief Rabbi Gilles Bernheim, Secretary of State for Family Issues, Nadine Morano and David Kornblutt, Israel’s Ambassador to UNESCO, the conference included rabbis, community leaders, social workers, psychiatrists and child psychologists charged with the important task of examining an issue which for too long has been deemed unmentionable.

WIZO Berlin boys play soccer
Boys will always be boys regardless of their age - and boys love soccer whatever their age. The ‘boys’ whose ages ranged from 21 to 60 competed in the WIZO Champions League at WIZO Berlin’s Seventh Indoor Soccer Tournament with the energy of teenagers. Teams of six to nine players eagerly handed over their money for the opportunity to fight for the Challenge Cup. At half time, there was a friendly match between two youth groups, which met with cheers from the enthusiastic crowd. Serving refreshments to players and spectators, WIZO members kept order on the sidelines in this fun-filled happening for all the family.

Berlin bows to vintage fur fashions
They say that everything comes back into style, and this theory was proved at WIZO Berlin’s Vintage Fur Fashion Show. Women resolved to don their minks once more as they watched a stunning parade of 36 vintage fur coats, jackets and stoles all with surprisingly reasonable price tickets. Held at the popular Al Sarago Italian Restaurant, chaverot enjoyed good wine, delicious food and great conversation. Through the generosity of Andreas and Marcus Gerekos of A&M Gerekos Pelz Style, Mr. and Mrs. Kai-Alexander and Christiane Moslé, WIZO Berlin put on an excellent evening’s entertainment where women upheld the tradition of ‘eat, drink and be merry – and spend money for WIZO’.

WIZO Germany Gala hails 88 years of WIZO and 60 years of Israel
Among the 400 guests welcomed at WIZO Germany’s gala by Rachel Singer, president of WIZO Germany, at the Hilton Frankfurt Hotel were Mayor Petra Roth, Hessian Prime Minister Roland Koch, politicians, personalities from the world of culture and business, members of the community council and Jewish community. Hosted by Andrea Kiewel and Volker Hirth, patrons for the evening were Charlotte Knobloch, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and Israeli Ambassador Yoram Ben-Zeev. Israeli magician Lior Suchard left the audience awestruck with his mind-reading gift and singer Einat Sarouf charmed guests with a medley of evergreen tunes. After an excellent dinner, the WIZO Badge
of Honor was awarded to Miriam Gertler. A board member since the founding of WIZO Frankfurt in 1958, Miriam Gertler is famed for the concerts she organized at the Old Opera where big names such as José Carreras, Leonard Bernstein and Montserrat Caballé amongst many others, were recruited to perform for the benefit of WIZO. At the end of the evening 670 sponsorships were announced. Rachel Singer thanked all the donors and sponsors of the evening. Among those were Amigo Spiel & Freizeit, Bank Hapoalim, Bank Leumi, Bank Sarasin AG, Robert & Nicole Faktor, GbR Ehrlich & Rosenfeld, Miriam Gertler, Ardi Goldman, Goldman, Sachs & Co, Dr. Dieter & Simone Graumann, Prof. Dr. Salomon & Maruscha Korn, Ann Kathrin Linsenhoff, Pepa Lis, Ester Lisker, Mayer Produktion GmbH, Christian & Daniela Oetker, Porsche Zentrum Frankfurt, Micky Rosen, Jakob & Diana Schnabel, Rachel Singer, Wolfgang & Marion Steubing, Leo & Maria Taubenblatt, Triton Training GmbH, Alex & Mirjam Urseanu, Ronny Weiner.

A roaring trade at WIZO Frankfurt’s bazaar

It was standing room only in the foyer and ballroom of the Ignatz Bubis Community Center when WIZO Frankfurt hosted their two-day annual bazaar. Founding member of WIZO Frankfurt Dr. Gitta Guttmann greeted visitors, proudly pointing out that WIZO Frankfurt was now in its 50th year. Frankfurt’s Mayor Jutta Ebeling and Dr. Budde spoke on behalf of the sponsors. Executive board member of the Jewish community Dr. Dieter Graumann presented WIZO with a check from the community and encouraged everyone to ‘spend, spend, spend’ for such a worthy cause. Throngs of visitors eagerly did just that at the many stalls selling Israeli produce and cosmetics, toys, gifts, costume jewelry, and books. Among the many attractions were the flea market and ‘WIZO Outlet’ where bargains were in abundance. Customers queued patiently for raffle tickets, attracted by the great prizes on offer: trips to New York and Israel. Both the children’s theater and the special raffle for a ‘Bulgari’ wristwatch were also extremely popular. Such activity creates an appetite, which was sated by the sweet and savory delicacies – cakes, bagels, falafel, Russian borscht and gefilte fish. The café and wine bar did a roaring trade as bargain hunters rested their purses and tired feet with sit-down refreshments. The chaverot, who worked tirelessly for months before the bazaar, were clearly pleased with the fruits of their labor. Every hard-earned Euro goes towards the Theodor Heuss Family Therapy Center in Herzliya, where single parents receive professional assistance, love and dedication.

Munich’s ‘One night for Children’ beats the recession

Under the patronage of Charlotte Knobloch, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Munich WIZO held its ‘One night for Children’ gala dinner in the atrium of the HVB Forum. Over 200 guests, including members of Munich’s high society and media representatives enjoyed music, dancing and a first class dinner prepared by chefs from Käfer, Munich’s famed restaurant. Evening hosts Alexander-Klaus Stecher and Dana Leshem told guests that just by a sponsorship of 500 Euros, a child gets the chance of a better life for one year. In her address, WIZO Munich President Helene Habermann’s quoted a wise phrase from the Talmud, “Do something good and you will receive it twice.” The audience responded with very generous pledges in support of Israeli day care facilities. The outcome was a recession-beating total of
over 57,500 Euros in what was an extremely profitable evening.

GREECE
Aviv turns 46
With the participation of almost 100 women who had braved the inclement weather, WIZO Athens celebrated 46 years of Aviv at a joyous birthday party held at the Cultural Center in Athens. Members lit the candles on a big birthday cake and chaverot who had served WIZO for twenty years or more were honored for their long-standing volunteerism. In her welcoming speech, WIZO Greece President Heather Nahmias outlined the achievements of the past year and her expectations for the year ahead despite the difficult economic climate of today. A hearty lunch was served accompanied by music and dancing. Amid all the celebrations, the prevailing theme was a heartfelt wish for peace and security in Israel.

HOLLAND
A taste of Israel is music to the ears
Held in the city of Twente in eastern Netherlands, at the most beautiful synagogue in Holland, WIZO Twente’s annual music festival and sale of Israeli products was a new experience for the many non-Jewish guests who attended. The music festival featured Israeli wine tastings and a restaurant selling traditional Jewish food, which drew in the crowds eager to taste something delicious and different. The applause for the Jewish music concerts and screening of WIZO Holland’s home-produced film was overwhelming.

WIZO Holland celebrates International Women’s Day
WIZO Holland celebrated International Women’s Day at the ‘International Information Center and Archives for the Women’s Movement’ (IIAV) in Amsterdam earlier this year. The IIAV, founded in 1935, is the largest center for women’s issues in the world, and the unique collection and library includes a wealth of information on the cultural heritage of women and all issues relating to women with the aim of collecting, preserving and sharing women’s history. WIZO chaverot enjoyed listening to the story of IIAV founder member Rosa Manus, (1881-1943), a long-time Jewish activist for women’s rights and friend and assistant of Dr. Aletta Jacobs, the famous first lady doctor in the Netherlands, who was also Jewish. Rosa Manus inherited Aletta Jacobs’ valuable book collection, which now belongs to IIAV. WIZO members enjoyed the introduction and guided tour of this very interesting and important institution. After lunch, there was a heart-warming programme with music and stories relating to women and spirituality, called “The Chambers of the Heart.” (For more information on the IIAV, visit www.iiav.nl).

ITALY
Raising funds for Children at Risk
World WIZO Fundraising Department Chairperson Esther Mor, traveled from Israel accompanied by World WIZO Early Age Department Chairperson Hassida Danai to attend a dinner for ‘Children at Risk’ with one purpose in mind – to raise funds for the children who are so desperately in need of WIZO’s care. Esther Mor delivered her speech in fluent Italian, wherein she spoke with passion about WIZO as a vibrant and modern women’s movement. She explained the moral, medical, psychological and cultural assistance that WIZO provides to at-risk children. Her words were reinforced by a screening of a film in Italian featuring the Italian Federation-sponsored Ma’alot Day Care Center, which has more than once been the target of a terrorist attack. The ‘Dreidel Trio’ with the excellent violinist Marco Valabreg, entertained the guests with Klezmer and Sephardic music and the ‘Ha Kol’ choir that sang a medley of Jewish songs received great applause. Esther Mor complimented Adei-WIZO on a wonderfully-organized evening and
David Meir Epstein leads a fundraising session with WIZO India members

congratulated incoming National President Roberta Nahum and paid tribute to Past President Ziva Fischer. She thanked the many participants, members of the Italian Jewish Community for their generosity and all the volunteers who work so diligently for WIZO and Israel.

SWITZERLAND
‘Parlez moi d’amour’ in Lausanne
More than 200 guests enjoyed an excellent dinner held in March at L’Octogone in Lausanne. The highlight of the evening was an uplifting performance of ‘Parlez moi d’amour’ given by the distinguished actors, Michel Leeb and Caroline Silhol. Present at the evening were Antoine David, president of the community, Israel’s Ambassador to Switzerland Ilan Elgar, and Anne Argi, president of WIZO Lausanne and WIZO Switzerland.

INDIA
Remembering friends and honoring bravery
In their first meeting after the Mumbai terror attacks, WIZO India assembled to pay homage to the late Rabbi Gabi Holtzberg and his wife, Rivki – herself a well-loved WIZO India member, both murdered at the Chabad Center in Mumbai. Chaverot also prayed for Moishe, the toddler son of Gabi and Rivki, heroically saved by his nanny, Sandra Samuel. At the meeting, Assistant Police Inspector Mamta More and Police Sub Inspector Bharati More addressed the chaverot on how to remain alert in threatening situations and shared their recollections of those awful days. WIZO India President Yael Jhirad congratulated the brave police officers who risked their lives to save others. WIZO medals were presented to the two police representatives and to the senior police inspector of the area worst affected by the terror.

A triple event – like the tricolor of the Indian Flag
In January, WIZO India chaverot gathered at the Knesseth Eliyahoo-Habonim Room. Each member had fixed an Indian flag to the walls in celebration of India Republic Day. Present at the meeting was special guest from Jerusalem David Meir Epstein together with his daughter Raya. After a rousing rendition of the national anthems of India and Israel, David Meir Epstein, introduced by Remona Divekar WIZO India’s first Aviv president, conducted a fund raising session wherein he emphasized WIZO’s significance and spoke of the special relationship of all WIZO chaverot throughout the world not only with Israel but also with each other. Mr. Epstein invited each member to think of a fundraising idea. Members offered many novel suggestions including a community kitchen, a kindergarten, an old-age care center and personality development training programs for women in health care. Members enjoyed Mr. Epstein’s session and were empowered and enthusiastic in their efforts for the good of Israel. In the second part of the meeting, chaverot sang traditional Indian songs for India Republic Day, which was even more poignant coming in the wake of the recent terror attacks. It being a national holiday, the children accompanied mothers and grandmothers, all dressed in the tricolor of the Indian national flag, to witness the special attraction of WIZO. Afterwards, President Yael Jhirad invited Daisy Pingle and Rivka Moshe to highlight the Bene Yisroel traditions of Tu B’shvat in a session conducted in English, Hindi and Marathi. Elizabeth Elijah gave the vote of thanks. As Diana Korlekar concluded, the meeting was a triple event – just like the tricolor of the Indian national flag.

No bad hair days at WIZO India
At WIZO India’s meeting in March, the topic was hair care and how to manage a ‘bad hair’ day. Members participated in a quiz and discussion on healthy hair and gift hampers of hair care products were given to all those present by sponsoring companies, Dove Haircare and Unilever.
WIZO India members, Sylvia and Daisy spoke on the significance of the Hebrew month of Adar and the Purim holidays. Chaverot also showed great interest in WIZO Israel’s campaign to ban advertisements of a sexist or offensive nature. They have pledged their wholehearted support to identify advertisements showing women in a distasteful manner in the Indian media and to boycott the products of any offending companies.

The Knesset Eliyahoo Synagogue celebrates its 125th birthday

In 1884, Jacob Elias Sassoon and his brothers built the splendid Knesset Eliyahoo synagogue in memory of their father. Today, 125 years later, it is the cultural and religious center for the vibrant Mumbai Jewish community. It was there that World WIZO President Helena Glaser established the WIZO India Federation in October 2007, and the Federation now holds all its events on the premises. Guests of honor at the celebration for the 125th anniversary included India’s President HE Pratibha Devi Patil, HE Governor of Maharashtra Mr. S.C. Jamir, the Chief Post Master General Mr. M.S. Bali, Israel’s Ambassador to India HE Mr. Mark Sofer and founder of Midrash Ben Ish Hai Rabbi Ya’aqob Menashe. WIZO India President Yael Jhirad also attended along with many WIZO India members. Mr. Solomon Sofer, president of the Knesset Eliyahoo Synagogue 125th Anniversary Committee also extended an invitation to World WIZO President Helena Glaser, but she was unable to attend. In her congratulatory message, she lauded the Knesset Eliyahoo Synagogue, its congregation and the entire Mumbai Jewish community with wishes for continued strength and stability – just like the revered building itself. The anniversary was also marked by the release of a first day cover postage stamp.

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

A warm WIZO welcome for new Israeli Ambassador

Incoming Ambassador to Israel, His Excellency Daniel Gazit hosted WIZO-OSFA executive board members and close friends of the organization to a reception at his residence where they warmly greeted the new ambassador and his wife. Daniel Gazit had previously served in the embassy as first secretary of culture twenty years ago and is familiar with WIZO work. WIZO-OSFA President Mrs. Clara Gersberg thanked the guests and WIZO-OSFA Honorary President Mrs. Amalia Polack proposed a toast. In her closing speech at the reception, Mrs. Lorena Davidzon, president of the new group of professional women, WIZO Joven, remarked how grateful she was to be surrounded by her colleagues and said, “we are very proud to belong to WIZO and we promise to work and strive for its continuity.” The ambassador and his wife were clearly impressed by a presentation of WIZO’s work and the passion of those who give of themselves for WIZO and the people of Israel.

BRAZIL

WIZO Rio Grande do Sul chooses new executive

WIZO Rio Grande do Sul has chosen its new executive for the next three years. Over 200 chaverot gathered to enjoy a festive luncheon and show by the local Shalom Band at the Hotel Plaza Sao Rafael to celebrate this important occasion. Former chapter president Mrs. Suzana Starosta passed on the leadership role to Eugenia Berlim with an emotive speech promising
BRAZIL. WIZO Pernambuco Aviv Group at Beit Lubavitch

BRAZIL. L-R: Eva Solewicz, Leila Gonik, Lucia Balassiano

BRAZIL. Helena Kelner, Suzana Starosta, Eugenia Berlim and Sarita Lea Schaffel at the festive luncheon

BRAZIL. Budding artists at Parana’s 18th WIZO Bazaar

to continue her mission by taking her place on the new Board. New president Eugenia Berlim promised to do her utmost for WIZO in order to reinforce the values, objectives and international links of the organization. WIZO Brazil Executive officers, Sarita Lea Schaffel and Helena Kelner traveled to Porto Alegre to join in the celebrations.

Bible Day seminars impress university educators

Three major Bible Day seminars organized by the education department of WIZO Rio examined the various aspects of ‘Women’s Rights in the Bible’. In the first meeting, ‘Adam and Eve – their conceptions, life in paradise and subsequent punishment’ was presented by Norma Sion Chapter chavera Belinda Matalon. WIZO Brazil President Sarita Schaffel, on behalf of her Rio group Kalaniot, presented the essay ‘Be fruitful and multiply’. Bela Gudel presented ‘Sarah – a Woman of the Bible’ for the Yardenia Chapter. Geny Bluvol from the Genny Dahis Chapter discussed Mitzvot (good deeds) and Fani Israel of the Aliyah Chapter spoke about ‘Women’s Rights and WIZO’.

At the second meeting, an equally large audience filled the WIZO Rio hall to consider Jewish women’s fight for legal rights beginning in the Bible. WIZO Rio’s past president Suzana Grinspan, representing her Shalom Chapter, delivered a magnificent lecture focusing on the Get (Jewish divorce document). Ana Antabi of the Ahava Chapter revealed interesting particulars of ‘The Jewish wedding and its evolution throughout the ages’. Lina Koslovsport, Ida Cynamon and Sarita Horn from the Galil Chapter depicted ‘Mitzvot, Women, their duties and longings’ by donning the costumes of both secular and orthodox women. Yamit Chapter’s Alzira Vitarovskovsky spoke on ‘The Jewish Wedding, its customs and different traditions’ and WIZO Rio President Silene Balassiano on behalf of the Menorah Chapter talked about the now abolished punishment by ancient Jewish clergymen upon Jewish women who had committed adultery. The Irit Chapter’s Eva Zylbergeld and Zilda Burd explained the suffering of the Agunah - the ‘chained’ woman unable to receive a divorce. In closing the second meeting, Mrs. Dora Margulies talked about ‘Contemporary Jewish women, their victories and challenges’ on behalf of the Ora Rosa HaIlin Chaper. The Bible Day program concluded at a third meeting with the presentation of a diploma to each lecturer by the center’s vice-president Mrs. Lucia Balassiano. Guest of honor Professor Doctor Mrs. Helena Lewin, coordinator of Jewish studies at the prestigious Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ) was so impressed by the presentations that she invited some of the chaverot to present their lectures at the University Jewish Studies branch. Those chosen presented their essays at the Fifth Brazilian Conference of Jewish Studies on Anti-Semitism and on ‘Women’s Rights in the Bible’. WIZO Rio President, Mrs. Silene Balassiano was invited to coordinate the round table of this important conference.

The 18th WIZO-Parana Bazaar

Held late last year, at Parana’s Israelite Center, this joint venture with the local Jewish school named after Salomao Guelman, featured less sales stands than in previous years but this did not detract the Jewish community from joining in the fun and having a great time. All enjoyed the typical Israeli luncheon and the youngsters were more than happy to participate in the leisure activities specially designed for children.

Celebrating Sukkot at Beit Lubavitch Synagogue

WIZO Pernambuco Aviv members in north east Brazil celebrated the festival of Sukkot
in the Beit Chabad Sukkah. Rabbi Alex Mizrahi delivered an excellent speech focusing on this important festival and recited the Lulav Brachot.

CHILE

Bat Mitzvah Preparations WIZO style

Last year, WIZO Chile held two Bat Mitzvah preparation courses, which culminated in proud moments for WIZO chaverot, parents and friends and, of course, the girls themselves at ceremonies that took place in the Sephardic Community Temple. The participants in the first course were Mijal Baron, Mijal Budnik, Keren Codriansky, Nicole Davidoff and Regina Husid. Six girls participated in the second course, celebrating their religious ceremonies in various synagogues across the city. The girls, Melanie Corenstein, Katia Farcas, Valentina Fischman, Yael Goldstein, Nathalie Miller and Claudia Pollak, were taught and guided by Tamara Baron, Vicky Rosenblitt, Francine Tempel, Sima Rezepka, Raquel Hasson, Yael Hasson, Miriam Silberman, Angelica Villalobos, Ethy Kornfeld, Rivka Bortnick and Andrea Jacobovsky.

Homage of the WIZO Generations

The fashion show entitled ‘Homage of the WIZO Generations to the 60th Anniversary of Israel’s Independence’ took place in front of a packed audience. Chaverot Perla Aron and Raquel Hasson read the poignant words from M’dor le dor (from generation to generation) noting that the vision of WIZO founder Rebecca Sieff became reality thanks to the Zionist spirit and perseverance of WIZO women. Susy Baron, president of WIZO Chile, paid tribute to 17 founders of WIZO Chile and the mothers of four or five generations of WIZO women for their values, and the love and commitment they gave to their children and to the movement. The great-grandmothers honored were Ruth Roizblatt, Marta Bercovich, Judith Klein, Marina Silberman, Aída Jeifetz, Eva Weiss, Ilse Tichauer, Ruth Stern, Liselotte Goffman, Oretta Sarfaty, Ursula Silberstein, Natasha Panat, and Rosa Kiverstein. The great-great-grandmothers honored were Ana Guiloff and Ana Libedinsky. Each of them received a beautiful present from the WIZO chaverot. After this touching ceremony, the 2009 Spring/Summer collections of well-known Chilean fashion designers met with great enthusiasm.

COLOMBIA

The Ana Sredni Open Bridge Tournament

For more than 10 years, WIZO Bogotá has held the Ana Sredni Open Bridge Tournament, sponsored by the children - Isaac, Celia and Clarita - of the late Ana Sredni. This eagerly awaited event is famous among the bridge players in Bogota and one of the most prestigious bridge tournaments in the city, with the participation of around 120 players. The
event begins with an appetizing luncheon in the Centro Israelita de Bogota, after which the tournament takes place in the Salon Multiple where the participating players enjoy a cordial afternoon of bridge.

MEXICO
Israel in our hearts
Ever mindful about Israel, WIZO Mexico invited Dr. Esther Shabot, a specialist in Israel and Middle Eastern affairs to address chaverot the day after Israel held its elections to allay some of their fears for Israel’s security. The phenomenon of growing anti-Semitism, not only at grass roots level but also in intellectual circles as a result of the recent conflict in Gaza was also discussed by Rafael Zaga Kallach, president of ‘Tribuna Israelita’.

Increased membership is our future
Just as a caterpillar turns into a magnificent butterfly, that is the metamorphosis that women undergo when they become WIZO members. To ensure the solid continuity of WIZO, attracting new members and strengthening the commitment of existing ones is crucial. This was the theme adopted by the Mexican Federation in its major recruitment campaign this year as 70 new chaverot were inducted into the WIZO Mexico family with a warm and welcoming ‘shalom’.

‘And a child will guide us… and you will answer to your child’
The Bible Day subject focused on educating the Jewish child in Mexico in present times. The speaker kept the audience riveted with her vast knowledge on the bible, linking the ancient scriptures to modern day. She talked about the first child mentioned in the bible, as well as the children of Jacob, Moses and his sister Miriam. “In the spirit of Tikun Olam (repairing the world), it is the small deeds we do that make the world a better place, so we should set examples of goodness for our children in an ever-changing world with the challenges faced by the Jewish people”.

Tu B’shvat visit to Piedra Grande
To celebrate Tu B’shvat, the organization department, together with the cultural committee organized a visit to Piedra Grande, a very poor community located 40 minutes away from Mexico City. Piedra Grande houses a training center where people learn to live with dignity using the natural resources that surround them, with emphasis on ecology. The community learn how to build their houses, how to grow their own produce and how to respect the natural balance of their surroundings.

Saying goodbye to Bahie
WIZO Mexico is a shining example of camaraderie and cooperation as elder and younger members work together for the common cause. Nowhere was this more evident when 80 chaverot of all ages got
together to learn from one another on a trip to San Miguel de Allende, a charming region three hours away from Mexico City. For three days filled with joy, emotion and interesting seminars, accompanied by WIZO Mexico President Bahie Zaga whose term of office is ending, the women bonded in true WIZO fashion in their shared commitment to Israel.

‘Project Education’ brings furniture into the classroom
With the well-being of children high on the agenda, the Mexican federation through their ‘Project Education’ made an official delivery of classroom furniture to the Telpochcalli Elementary School in Mexico. Welcomed with gratitude by the education authorities of the State of Mexico as well as the teachers and 376 pupils of the school, WIZO Mexico chaverot were quite emotional as they handed over their special gift, knowing their endeavors provide the children with a comfortable environment.

SOUTH AFRICA

Johannesburg closes the year in high spirits
Celebrated entertainer Harry Sideropoulos was back by popular demand, joined by the lovely Janette Odendaal to help WIZO Johannesburg terminate a busy year. WIZO members partied all morning to the music as hilarious Harry and Janette took everyone on a big band journey that met with thunderous applause from the 250 guests present at the morning event, which included a delicious breakfast.

Sacrificing the family heirlooms for WIZO
WIZO Johannesburg hosted their Collectables Market reminiscent of the ‘sacrifice sales’ of 1967 and 1973. Members of the community ‘sacrificed’ beautiful family heirlooms including silverware, brass, porcelain, objets d’art, vintage fashions and exquisite jewelry. Johannesburgers, including many of the city’s antique dealers, turned up in their droves to the market held at the Norwood Hyper Mall in March to purchase investment pieces at bargain prices. Brisk sales brought handsome profits for WIZO projects in Israel.

Joy and nostalgia at Glenlinks Bride of Yesteryear competition
It was hailed as the event of the year and everyone wanted to take part. The brainchild of Alice Butkow and Sheila Levine from the Glenlinks Branch, the Bride of Yesteryear competition saw a deluge of old photographs pouring into the WIZO office. The happy winners were Louis and Judy Harris who were feted at a sparkling event held in November as part of South Africa’s celebration of Israel’s 60th anniversary.

Cape Town Bible Day and Rebecca Sieff Awards
B’Noth Zion WIZO held their annual World WIZO Bible Day and Rebecca Sieff awards in December with special guest speaker, well-known executive and philanthropist, Mendel Kaplan. Rebecca Sieff Awards were...
SOUTH AFRICA. The ladies of WIZO
L-R: Shelley Konforty, Shoshi Shachar, Sandra Mindel, Zee Bergman, Janine Rabbie. Seated in front is Nava Gonen

WIZO Matan – a gift of a group
New WIZO Victoria President Anita Bejerano places special emphasis on the creation of new groups within the WIZO family. These groups aim to cater to people of different ages and from different backgrounds, to ensure a new generation of active WIZO volunteers. WIZO Matan, aimed at women aged between 28 and 40, was formed on 1st February 2009. The word matan means ‘gift’ in Hebrew, symbolizing WIZO’s mission and goals. WIZO Matan will be holding a number of exciting and interesting events, functions and activities including cooking demonstrations, movies and discussions on time management, the value of laughter, healthy shopping and how to stay sexy.

With the backing of the WIZO community, and the co-presidents of the group, Keren Loyer and Tali Chabat, WIZO Matan will surely succeed. To encourage their involvement in WIZO Victoria, members of Matan are being invited to events run by other groups.

Blessing in the Chag Campaign
The aim of this campaign is to acknowledge the women who have been members and volunteers in WIZO Victoria for many years but due to their age or health can no longer attend monthly meetings. The campaign reinforces the fact that that they are not forgotten, and that their years of hard work are appreciated. WIZO Victoria keeps in touch by visiting these members three times a year – at Purim, Shavuot and Rosh Hashanah, bringing them a gift that is relevant to the Chag (festival), festive balloons and a message of thanks. This gesture not only touches the individuals themselves, but their families as well. In many cases, it will lead to a relative joining the Australian WIZO family. The Wills and Bequests Department run the campaign, with volunteers from Aviv and veteran groups. It is hoped that these visits will result in the ladies remembering WIZO in their wills.

Paving the Roads of Hope
WIZO Australia President Jo Gostin was delighted to be the guest speaker at the March WIZO South Australia AGM held in Adelaide. This year, WIZO Australia will be launching a new campaign entitled ‘Pave the Road of Hope’, where members and supporters will be ‘buying bricks’ to ‘pave a road’ starting at WIZO Australia’s flagship project Ahuzat Yeladim and linking all the Federation’s projects. WIZO South Australia co-President Miriam Millingen, who celebrated a special birthday last year, had requested donations to be sent to WIZO in lieu of birthday gifts. She was thrilled when Jo dedicated the first brick in her name.

presented to Katie Noach, Elsie Menasce, Riva Merskey, Kayle Nocky, Ada Sher and Annette Milliner-Giladi.

AUSTRALIA

WIZO around the World is edited by Tricia Schwitzer