International Aviv Seminar

WIZO Ashdod shelter
25 years of refuge

Sderot
The campaign continues

Michal Chelbin
WIZO School graduate,
now a famous photographer
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Cover: At the WIZO AVIV International Seminar: L to R - Idit Meleck (WIZO Australia) and Rose Krongold (WIZO Brazil) Photo: Yael Zur
2008 is certainly a year that we will all remember. Israel celebrated its 60th Anniversary and showcased the unbelievable accomplishments our young State has reached. This day was exceptionally special for WIZO for within the framework of its festive celebrations, the State of Israel recognized World WIZO’s past and present blessed work before and since the establishment of the State of Israel, and bestowed upon our movement the prestigious Israel Prize for lifetime achievement to improve and advance the Community and Society in Israel.

A young senator from Illinois, following in the footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King had a dream and made it come true by winning the Democrat Party’s nomination and then the hearts of all Americans, to become the first Afro-American President of the United States. He called for Change and convinced the public that Yes We Can.

Were not these words the driving force that motivated our Founding Mothers to change the status of women in their communities and the face of Zionism for ever? Have we not followed in their footsteps with our campaigns Making It All Possible and Together We Can Make A Difference?

However 2008 will mostly be remembered as the year the globalization bubble burst. The global economy is characterized as a totally interconnected marketplace, unhindered by time zones or national boundaries. But in November we learnt that globalization has a downside – the collapse of the American mortgage banks and consequently the US stock exchange caused a global chain reaction bringing the true merits of the global marketplace into dispute. Obviously as a member of the global village, it has an effect on Israel’s economy as well. This adds to the continuous security problems Israel is still experiencing, especially in the South. I am so happy that you all responded to my call at the EGM to support the traumatized educational staff in Sderot and the Gaza Belt. Sadly, another year has gone by and Hamas continues to launch Kassam and mortar attacks on a daily basis and disrupt the residents’ lives. The implementation of the second phase of the Sderot and the Gaza Belt campaign continues.

Over the years we have all experienced financial crises, however never on such an instantaneous global level. In order to guarantee the continuous operation of our organization, the World WIZO Executive conducted reassessments of budgets, needs and plans, and was forced to take and implement painful decisions.

However, I am more than confident that World WIZO is able to weather this storm, as it regards crises as a challenge and has always been able to adapt to the changes and needs of time, and be prepared for any eventuality.

The Joint Partnership Venture for Computer Training for Unemployed Women – is one example. Now in its second year after seeing nearly 40% of the first year’s graduates successfully placed, this project is tailor-made for many of the women left unemployed as a result of the current financial crisis. With few skills to suit the modern working place, this project enables them to find a new beginning and improve their circumstances.

I have always regarded World WIZO as a driving force of change and improvement in Israel and the Diaspora. Therefore I am confident that when the going gets tough – our chaverot, who are our backbone and strength will get tougher, rise to any challenge and lead our service recipients to a better future.

Helena Glaser
President

Visit our website: www.wizo.org
Once again we are holding our Annual General Meeting. No one could have foreseen that this MOR would be classed as an “Emergency” MOR purely for financial reasons since the whole world, including of course WIZO, has been swept up in what is being labeled as a Tsunami, totally by surprise.

But let us not get carried away (no pun intended), a natural Tsunami leads to hundreds of thousands of fatalities. Life comes to an end. A financial Tsunami, on the other hand, forces us to think, to evaluate, and to come up with alternative solutions. It will not be easy, but throughout the ages, as Jews, we have never really had enough time in one place to be completely at ease. We have always had one ear listening for trouble, be it anti-Semitism, or poverty. We have become experts at “Turning our Stumbling Blocks into Stepping Stones.” When hardship strikes, we stick together as a community supporting one another, especially aware of those who are in greater need than ourselves. Since standing together at the foot of Mt. Sinai, we have been a people, a community, and it is this unity which has kept us going whilst other civilizations have fallen by the wayside.

It is just not in our nature, nor in our tradition, to close our doors in the faces of those who are in need. But neither is it in our nature to just throw out a few coins, and close the door, thinking that we have done our share. No, we want more. We do not just want to give those in need another meal, we want to give them the knowledge and means to feed themselves in the future, and not just to feed themselves with food, but to feed themselves, and the rest of society, with knowledge and understanding. This is our secret; we do not just aim for the mediocre, we aim for excellence. We want the child, who did not know where his next meal was coming from, to have the opportunity to change the world and to make it a better place.

It is we in WIZO that are lucky enough to be in the position of the “go between.” We are the ones who can donate the money and influence the end result through our education system. I have initiated reductions and cutbacks in our schools, and believe me, I was practically reduced to tears. Every cut, for instance a cut in extra tutoring for Ethiopian pupils, is a loss that cannot be replaced. Maybe that very pupil was destined to become the first Israeli prime minister of Ethiopian background, our own Barack Obama. Maybe he could have been a doctor. He just needed to be helped to be at the same level as everyone else, and, due to financial considerations, that chance was being taken away from him.

I know that as we plan for the upcoming year, we will see the faces of our pupils before us when we make our decisions. We will work together to keep our children safe from the Tsunami which is threatening to impact upon their lives and their futures.

The song that was first sung by Frank Sinatra in 1945 is so pertinent to us in WIZO today:

When we walk through the storm we hold our heads up high,  
And will not be afraid of the dark.  
At the end of a storm is a golden sky  
And the sweet silver song of a lark.

Walk on through the wind, Walk on through the rain,  
And we’ll never walk alone,  
We’ll never, ever walk alone
WIZO.uk Chairman’s mission

As part of WIZO.uk’s 90th celebrations, Chairman Loraine Warren led a 38-strong delegation of devoted WIZO volunteers for a four-day intensive study tour of some of the Federation’s many projects in Israel. While on the mission, two dedication ceremonies took place: at the Gruss Community Center, Afula and at the Netanya Women’s Center. At the Afula center, a large multi-purpose hall and communications/media room were named in memory of WIZO.uk’s late executive director Marcus Fielding, and in Netanya, WIZO Woman of Valor pins were presented to WIZO.uk Finance co-chair Jill Shaw and her sister Liz Morris for their donation to honor the memories of their parents, the late Rosemary and Teddy Isaacs.

A few weeks earlier a ceremony took place to honor UK donors Len and Harry Klahr who also contributed to the renovations in Netanya in the name of their late parents.

Israel Youth Award Ceremony –

World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben Dov attended the Israel Youth Award Ceremony at the residence of the British Ambassador, Tom Phillips. (See article on the scheme in WIZO Review No. 319, Fall 2008, page 8). At the ceremony 187 Israeli pupils, having successfully completed three stages, were presented with the Golden Award. Pupils from four WIZO schools have completed the first stage (bronze) and are now starting the next stage (silver).
WIZO and Microsoft Joint Project

Contracts were recently signed between World WIZO, Microsoft, the Tapuach organization and the Israel Employment Services to extend the joint project for Computer Training for Unemployed Women for a second year. The Tapuach Organization and Microsoft provide computer training relevant to finding employment and basic usage of computers, WIZO offers the participants seminars and courses in self-confidence, and ability to project oneself in a positive manner, and the Employment Service provides job opportunities to enable the women to re-enter the workforce. In 2007, about 1300 unemployed women attended 86 such courses, each one of 80 hours; there was only a 3% dropout rate and close to 40% of the graduates found employment. Two graduates spoke at the ceremony: one is now taking bookkeeping classes to increase her employment prospects even more, and the other, a single mother of three, expressed her gratitude at the self-confidence and empowerment she now felt.

Border Moshav Youth Club Renovated

Thanks to a generous donation by sponsoring federation Argentina, the youth of Moshav Zarit can now enjoy a renovated clubhouse with new computer facilities. Residents of the moshav, nestled against the Lebanese border, are all too aware of the enemy just a few meters away from the moshav boundary. The new room was dedicated in a festive ceremony, and the plaque, honoring WIZO Argentina, was unveiled by World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben Dov in the presence of World WIZO Education Division Chairperson Ruth Rubinstein, and local dignitaries. Two boys from the youth club thanked the donors on behalf of all the youth on the moshav.

Australian MPs narrowly miss Kassam rocket

Shortly after World WIZO President Helena Glaser accompanied a delegation of Australian MPs on a visit to the Bruce and Ruth Rappaport Kassam Proof Day Care Centre in Sderot, a Kassam rocket landed on the outskirts of the town. The MPs who participated were Senator Mark Bishop, Senator Jancinta Collins, Senator Hellen Polley, Mr. Shyane Neumann, MP, and Mr. Jason Clare, MP.
WIZO at UNESCO workshop in Paris

World WIZO’s Chairperson of the Public Affairs and NGO Department Celia Michonik, was honored recently as she was the first Israeli to be invited to moderate a UN Human Rights Panel at UNESCO in Paris. Speaking to the audience, which consisted of women from many countries, Mrs. Michonik described the wide scope of WIZO’s work in the field of violence which, she noted, was present in all socio-economic groups. WIZO was one of 49 NGO (Non-government organizations) out of 400 present, chosen to lead a panel, and co-sponsored a workshop on the subject of ‘Violence against Women: Working Together to End this Human Rights Violation’.

Visit of the Brooklyn Borough President

While Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz was on an official visit to the city of Tel Aviv, at the request of Tel Aviv mayor Ron Huldai, his wife Jamie was hosted by World WIZO chairperson Tova Ben Dov at World WIZO Headquarters. Tova gave Mrs. Markowitz an insight into WIZO’s activities and took her on a short visit to a nearby WIZO day care center, which serves the medical staff (and others) of nearby Ichilov Hospital. Day Care Center director Orly Baruch explained about the enrichment education program provided for the children. Later in Tova’s office both Jamie and her husband were fascinated to hear about WIZO’s work in connection with the status of women and our lobbying in the Knesset for new legislation and laws on this subject.

Crystal Pedagogic Center

The World WIZO Pedagogic Center in Tel Aviv was recently named for Betty and Jack Crystal, who gave a generous donation to the center in honor of their 50th wedding anniversary.
Dear Helena

As our first delegate attends the International WIZO Aviv Seminar for the very first time, WIZO India is shell shocked at the happenings here in Mumbai where terror has shown its terrible face in the land of peace and nonviolence of Mahatma Gandhi. As the city bleeds we mourn the death of our WIZO friend and supporter of the WIZO chaverot here in Mumbai, Rabbanit Rivka Holtzberg and her dear husband Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg. You will remember Rivka as she was present at our founding meeting here in Mumbai when you were with us.

She encouraged me wholeheartedly to participate and inaugurate the activities here in India. WIZO chaverot will miss her deeply and will always have fond memories of her. I am personally going to miss her forever, and the women who interacted with her will miss her and her beloved husband deeply.

May their family members have the strength to bear the loss of the young couple. Pray that all the citizens of Mumbai will have the strength to recover from the horrendous events of the last few days.

Thank you once again for your phone call inquiring about all of us here, personally, and from the World WIZO headquarters, which is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Yael Jhirad, President WIZO India
A Safe Haven – 25th Anniversary

Tucked away in a secluded corner of Ashdod is WIZO’s Shelter for Battered Women, a safe haven for women and their children who have suffered abuse

Ingrid Rockberger
Photos: Yael Zur

* Faces of current residents of the Shelter have been concealed for privacy
“You cannot imagine the fear I felt. I tried to hide everything that was happening to me from both families. I did everything I could to please him: I cooked his favorite foods, I did my hair just the way he liked it – but nothing was good enough. He was clever enough to beat me so the bruises didn’t show. I was only able to express my feelings by writing. Day by day I wrote what was happening to me. I wrote letters to an imaginary friend and hid them in a drawer. I gradually began to tell our families. After 12 years I left him and came to this shelter with my children. Today, six years later, thanks to the help I received here, I have a job, I have self-confidence, and best of all, I have met someone really special who loves me and cares about me and my children.”

Tanya (not her real name) told her moving story to a large group of guests who had gathered to mark 25 years since the WIZO shelter for battered women in Ashdod opened its doors.

Gathered in the yard were past and present residents of the Shelter. Most emotional was seeing reunions between women who had been in the shelter together over the years and had come to give their support to the occasion. The whole event was organized by the current residents of the shelter, including making all the food.

Members of the World WIZO Executive and the Israel WIZO Executive attended, together with some of the members of the Friends of WIZO group, based in Herzliya Pituach, who have recently raised money towards the latest renovations.

Moving Event

Interspersed with the speeches some of the current residents entertained us with their singing – and very moving and poignant sketches about life in the shelter and the interaction amongst the residents – how they try to help and encourage each other… how they could not understand A, whose husband beat her all the time ‘but she needs him like an infusion.’ How B’s family was all asleep and one of the children woke up calling for his father – although he had witnessed what the father had done to his mother…

Michal’s Vision

The shelter was the vision of World WIZO Honorary Life President Michal Modai. Michal described, after she realized there was a need for the shelter, how hard it was to convince people that it was necessary: they did not believe that Jewish men beat their wives. Michal went from town to town asking each mayor to provide a location for the shelter. All had some excuse until Ashdod mayor Tzvi Zilker finally agreed to give WIZO a kindergarten building. The site had to be carefully chosen so as not to make it too easy for husbands to find their wives and children. The first major donation, which provided the funds to renovate the kindergarten and buy furniture and equipment, was secured by World WIZO Honorary Life President Raya Jaglom from Gina Fromer of New York, who recently gave another donation towards the current renovation and expansion of the kitchen. WIZO Hong Kong has also contributed to various projects within the shelter.

Family referrals

Due to space restrictions, at first three or four women and their children shared a bedroom and bathroom facilities. At that time, the philosophy was that it would be good for the women to talk with each other, share their experiences and offer each other help and support. However, it was soon realized that it would be better for each family to have its own privacy. Eventually, thanks to a further donation obtained by current World WIZO President Helena Glaser through WIZO.uk’s Honorary President Ruth Sotnick from the Poznansky family in the UK, a second floor was built, and today each mother has her own room with her children. Two families share an adjoining bathroom.

Nurit Kaufman, head of WIZO Israel’s Department of Family...
Violence, explains: “the Ashdod shelter can take up to 12 mothers and their children. The families are referred to the shelter by the Centers for Treatment and Prevention of Violence in the Family”. WIZO has three of these centers out of 67 around the country. In almost every town in Israel there is a center or a specific social worker, who works for the Department of Social Work that deals with violence in the family. Before a woman is offered a place she has to decide she wants to be transferred to a shelter. It is very important that the social worker meets with her first, tells her about the shelter, what is going to happen there, the accommodation and the ‘rules of the house’, because it is a very difficult decision, and if you don’t know what you’ll be facing it is even more difficult.

Sharing responsibility
“Every woman that comes has to know that she will be responsible for keeping her own room clean and tidy, taking her turn in the cleaning of the rest of the building and also taking her turn to cook for everyone in the shelter. She cannot just go in the kitchen whenever she wants, and cook whatever she wants; there are lists of tasks to be divided up so that all the chores are evenly shared. There has to be rules or a system, otherwise there would be chaos. They all eat together in the big dining room.”

The children attend the local schools and kindergartens. A recent addition to the Ashdod shelter is a small building which operates as a day care center for the babies and toddlers.

Counseling
Nurit stresses, “We would never place a family in a shelter in their hometown, but in a different city, to make it difficult for the husband or partner to find them. While at the shelter they have counseling by special social workers for the mothers and separate ones for the children. They do individual therapy, group therapy, therapy with animals, play therapy – all methods to help them…because today we know that children who live in families where there is violence, who are witnesses to violence even if they are not abused themselves, go through trauma. The mothers get legal aid; the shelter has its own lawyer who meets with the woman and together they work out what she should do. They can stay for up to six months, but if there is a need to stay longer there is a meeting with the social worker from the woman’s hometown municipality and if agreed, she might stay longer.”
**How it operates**

The Shelter in Ashdod operates in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and offers a protective framework for the battered women and their children, whilst preparing them for an independent life, in which they will be free of violence. The women and their children undergo a rehabilitation process with the assistance of the professional staff, including psychologists, social workers, para-professional personnel and WIZO volunteers trained in providing assistance to families that have been victims of domestic violence.

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**The next stage**

“Once it is time for a woman to leave the shelter and she decides not to go back to the abusive partner, she gets some money from the Housing Ministry and is offered assistance in a Center for the Treatment of Family Violence wherever she moves to. Most of them prefer to find an apartment and stay in the same town where they were in the shelter, where their healing process took place. Also they don’t have to move the children’s schools again and they feel safe. Major WIZO donor Ruth Rappaport has established a fund to help the mothers when they leave the shelter.

They have to find work; if they don’t have a profession or trade the social worker tries to find a training course for them. And of course they get alimony from their partners and maintenance money for their children - and that’s why we need the lawyers - also to arrange full or partial custody of the children with their mother.”

Contemplating about whether there is more violence in the family now than in the past, Nurit adds: “I feel now that there is much more awareness of family violence – that is what we have tried to do for a number of years, and by raising awareness we get more women to come forward and neighbors also report their suspicions, but we don’t really know (and it is the same in all western countries) if there is actually more violence.

Heaven Glaser and Gina Fromer’s niece Marisa Fox-Bevilacqua on a visit to the shelter in July 2008

What is important is that every woman should know that there is a legal solution for her situation if she wants it, and that solution doesn’t have to be divorcing that abusive man. It could be ‘I want to be a better woman, I want to take some time out and see the options for me.’”

Nurit Kaufman is a social worker and has been working with family violence cases for more than 30 years. Before coming to WIZO nine years ago, she worked in a shelter for battered women in Herzliya for 19 years, where she eventually became the director.

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1. “Gila”, who gave a spontaneous performance on stage of a song called ‘My Home’ she had written. She had spent some time at the shelter when she was 5 years old, and told the spellbound audience “this was the only home I knew”
2. Display of jewelry made by current occupants of the shelter, and offered for sale at the anniversary event
3. Three current residents enact life in the shelter
I know how hard our WIZO chaverot work all over the world to raise much-needed funds. And the most important thing is to know how that money is spent. You will all remember at our EGM in January that, due to the chronic situation in Sderot and the towns and villages bordering Gaza, we held an emergency campaign to raise extra funds. As usual, our chaverot did not disappoint us and $1 million was raised for extra projects in this part of the country which has been suffering from Kassam rockets for seven years.

Helping the Educators

Our first thought is always for the children, but after consultation with educational professionals, it was felt that the priority was to help the educators themselves. They are mostly women: kindergarten teachers, caregivers and school principals, and as a women’s movement, part of our ideology is to help women. In a way they were the most traumatized - because they always had to be strong. The children had to go school, so they said to themselves, do we just have to be educators - that is educate children to pass their tests, or do we also have to recognize that these children are different from those in the center and north of the country. This means that we have to find time to give sympathy and understanding to these children, to show we understand what they are going through. Whenever the alarm went off they had to appear calm and in control, whereas inside they were tensed up and of course worried about their own families. They had to have a lot of strength, and not everyone was able to sustain it. The idea to give them special attention was really because no one else was working with them.

We originally planned to take families away for weekends to our schools and Beit Heuss, but this proved to be impractical, so we hosted groups of educators and welfare cases for short seminars at Beit Heuss, where we gave them courses on how to cope with living under such pressures and trauma, as well as special workshops to help them relax. We also gave them some much

Money Well Spent!

In the spring issue of WIZO Review I outlined the plans for the Sderot Campaign, for which $1 million was raised at the EGM. This is how our plans are being implemented

Helena Glaser
Photos: Moshe Bitman
needed leisure sessions - such as karaoke - where they could really enjoy themselves and ‘let their hair down’.

During the summer vacation when our schools and youth villages were empty, we filled them with the educators and their families, and families from the towns and villages bordering Gaza. We arranged a fun-packed vacation for them all. There were special activities for the children, who were greeted by clowns and refreshments on arrival - all planned to immediately create the right atmosphere.

**A Quiet Night**

We were all so moved when one of the mothers said, “At least tonight I will have a good night’s sleep in peace and quiet, and if I hear a noise I don’t have to worry that the alarm is going off. I am just looking forward to the **quiet**.

However, the families were not completely relaxed, as one of the fathers said, “We know it is only temporary. We know that during this (cease-fire) time they will get more arms and get themselves ready for the next round, which will be worse.”

These families were so grateful to us, because, as they said, “No one else was thinking about us.”

**Special programs**

We organized special and separate programs for the children and their parents, including social activities such as days out and cultural events, but also group counseling. We made sure each family had quality time together. One of the women is director of education for the Eshkol Region (in the Negev) and one of the programs she thinks is very important for the children is music.

“A performing group was established with some of the children,” she relates “they were going to perform a concert at a neighboring town. They were at the bus stop when the alarm went…they ran to hide and as soon as the alarm was over they got up, went to the bus, arrived at the concert hall and sat down and started to play. Where in the world do you have such a situation which children have to go through?”

**Relaxation Rooms**

It is always wonderful to have ambitious plans, but sometimes in reality things don’t work exactly as you want, so you have to adapt accordingly. We originally wanted to create separate relaxation rooms in the Sderot and western Negev schools for the staff, but due to lack of space, this was impossible. So, instead, we are renovating and adapting existing staff rooms - to create a more comfortable atmosphere. We are re-furnishing the rooms with modern, comfortable armchairs and sofas, and providing TVs and music centers wherever there is room. We were lucky to discover in one place that a new school is being built, and were able to get the plans adapted to accommodate one of these larger purpose-built relaxation rooms.

**New pedagogical center**

Our third project in the Sderot Campaign involves the WIZO Margaret Thatcher Day Care Center. When the alarm sounded, it was impossible for the caregivers to get all the children and themselves to the shelter in time, so we have transferred these children to our reinforced Bruce and Ruth Rappaport Day Care Center. We recently signed an agreement with a subsidiary company of the city council to renovate the Thatcher DCC and convert it into a pedagogical center. We will provide pre-natal services and different programs for parents and children, and training courses for our caregivers and educational personnel for the early age. There will be four classrooms, the shelter and the director’s room - every corner will be utilized.

The current program has funding to cover two years of activity, but I do not consider it worthwhile doing all these renovations for only two years, therefore I want to put aside any other monies I receive for a fund to ensure this project’s continuation for five years. This is going to be a very exciting, very unique project, badly needed by the population, and, most important, money well spent!

As we were putting the finishing touches to this edition during Chanukah, Hamas did not renew the ceasefire and resumed rocket bombardment. The Israeli government could no longer tolerate this situation and started a military operation with the aim of achieving long-term calm on the southern border.
No one could have asked for a more dynamic, involved group of young women - or for better weather - for the 2008 WIZO Aviv International Seminar. More than sixty women from sixteen countries took part in this exceptionally successful gathering, held from November 30th to December 4th.

"I had been to Israel before, and had traveled Israel from top to bottom," says Cheryl Cameron from Hadassah-WIZO Calgary in Canada. "I thought that I was just going to another seminar with lots of women and we would be sharing ideas about fundraising. Wow, was I wrong. From the start of the seminar I knew that this was not going to be just an ordinary four-day gathering, but something that would awaken emotions within me that I had not felt in a long time."

Cheryl's reaction was typical of the more than sixty young women who gathered together in Tel Aviv for the 2008 WIZO Aviv International Seminar. From the orientation session, where representatives from WIZO Federations from Australia, Canada, Holland, Bulgaria, Germany, India and the United States sat on the floor to get acquainted with delegates from South Africa, Brazil, Greece, Israel, Italy, Panama, Sweden and the UK, to the Festive Closing Luncheon, the participants revelled in each other's company and soaked up the sights and sounds of WIZO and Israel.

WOW!!!! All I can say is that as a group, the women from AVIV can do amazing things! What a special time we had! The energy that was generated from our group during the AVIV Conference was extraordinary. 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. If the festivities at the opening dinner were any indication of the days ahead, I knew we were off to a successful start. We danced all night and even made the Jerusalem Post!

The lectures we heard addressed the “whole” WIZO young leader. The trips to Yad Vashem, the Western Wall and 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 run carefree inside the Kassam-proof WIZO 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 WIZO Nachlat Yehuda School and Youth Village.

I am 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. As a relative “newcomer” to the beautiful State of Israel, I believe that the energy to go back to our federations and inspire the volunteers comes from seeing the people we help and the lives that we change. I know I can speak for every Aviv participant when I say that we left the Seminar infused with the responsibility and necessity to advance the status of women and to strengthen the ties between Israel and the Diaspora.

I only wish we had more time to talk, to embrace the Israeli culture, to get to know each other, to exchange information, and to learn more about how, as individuals, we could do more for such a remarkable organization. If you didn't make it to the Aviv Seminar this year, you must plan to come next year. I guarantee that the time you spend in Israel will enrich your life.

Marci Waterman
Aviv Representative to the World WIZO Executive
From Rabin to the Palmach

Unforgettable experiences followed one after another. Everyone placed a single rose on the rough stone of the memorial to the late Prime Minister Rabin in the heart of Tel Aviv. Then it was on to the Palmach Museum - a state of the art experience which made the Aviv women feel as if they were actually taking part in Israel’s War of Independence. At the festive opening dinner one representative from each Federation displayed her country’s flag, to enthusiastic applause from the audience. Sylvie Pelossof, Chairperson of the Department of Organization and Education officially opened the Seminar and read greetings from World WIZO President Helena Glaser. World WIZO Executive Chairperson Tova Ben Dov and Aviv Representative to the World WIZO Executive Marci Waterman also spoke. Then it was time to dance, and dance they did.

From Tel Aviv to Jerusalem

The next day, after getting many tips from organizational consultant Daniel Segre, it was on to Jerusalem, and a joyous celebration on Mt. Scopus. This was contrasted by a sobering visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, and then a heartwarming reception at the Freddie and Susi Bradfield WIZO Center, sponsored by WIZO.uk, complete with a fast-paced ballroom dancing performance by children who study at the Center and singing by a choir of senior citizens, most of them new immigrants from Russia. After an emotional visit to the Western Wall, the tour ended with dinner near the Mahane Yehuda Market.

Women in the IDF and Fundraising

The following day featured a memorable session entitled “Daring Women: The New IDF Leaders” with Brigadier General Yehudit Grisaro, Women’s Affairs Advisor to the IDF Chief of Staff and a number of women combat soldiers who gave a fascinating account of their army experiences; an inspiring talk by veteran education expert Avraham Infeld; and the introduction of the WIZO website’s Aviv section and the idea of an Aviv Seminar Graduates’ On-Line Forum by Michal Be’eri, Director of World WIZO’s Information Technology (IT) Department, with WIZO Sweden’s Madeleine Morne volunteering to take up the challenge. The evening featured a night on the town, and when the DJ started playing Israeli tunes and hits by the rock group ABBA, the delegates forgot how tired they were and danced up a storm.

Delegates received certificates at the close of the seminar

Lighting memorial candles at Yad Vashem

They could have danced all night
Down to Sderot
On Day 3, armed with “Need WIZO Now!” Sderot T-shirts, they boarded the buses for a special journey south to Sderot and the unique Bruce and Ruth Rappaport WIZO Day Care Center, sponsored by WIZO Switzerland - the first in the country to be totally fortified against missiles. Though the streets were deserted and signs pointing to shelters were in evidence everywhere, the DCC was alive with babies, toddlers and preschoolers enjoying the chance to pet small animals, climb on special equipment in the sensory-motor room, and work with dough. Their caregivers were the target of the Aviv delegates’ admiration for their bravery and devotion.
The next stop was the WIZO day care center at the Hatzerim Air Force Base.

The sun was setting by the time the Seminar participants arrived in Neot Kedumim, a special nature reserve in the Modi’in region. There, in the twilight, they were received by representatives of the JNF, and two Aviv women read the “Planter’s Prayer” before each of the delegates proceeded to plant her own tree on a nearby slope. Finally, the buses arrived at the WIZO Nachlat Yehuda School and Youth Village (sponsored by WIZO Switzerland), where Director Dr. Hezi Yosef welcomed the group and invited them to tour the dormitories.

“WIZO in every breath I take”
On the last day, Eyal Offenbach presented a fascinating overview of the Zionist-Arab conflict; Celia Michonik, Chairperson of World WIZO’s Public Affairs & NGO Department, spoke about WIZO’s activities at the UN; and Brenda Katten, Chairperson of the World WIZO Public Relations Department, reported from the “Hasbara Frontlines.” Finally, the delegates shared their unique Aviv projects with each other.

“I want to thank everybody for being here and for giving me so much inspiration and motivation,” said Sharon Overweg of WIZO Netherlands, as each federation’s representatives were called up to receive their certificates. “I want to share one more thing with you. It’s about my heart…When I love someone I give them a piece of my heart. I gave a big piece of my heart to WIZO this week.” Delegations sang songs and passed out presents characterizing their home countries. More photos, more goodbyes. “I feel WIZO in every breath I take,” said Remona Divekar of WIZO India, summing up her reaction to the 2008 WIZO Aviv International Seminar. She was not alone.
My connection to WIZO goes back to my childhood as my mother was a WIZO member,” says Ofra Fuchs, coordinator of the senior women’s club at the WIZO Miami Beach Community Center in Ramat Gan. “I remember that during family gatherings my mother would place the WIZO donations box on the table and no one would leave without placing some coins in the box,” she recalls. Hence it was only natural that after retiring from her work as a kindergarten teacher, Fuchs arrived at the neighborhood’s WIZO center asking to volunteer. Fuchs, a vigorous woman in her 70’s, declares she was prepared to do office work but once introduced to the senior women’s club it was “love at first sight.”

The Senior Women’s Club
“Older people are somewhat similar to young children, but with one variation. Children’s characters can be molded while the senior women I work with should be accepted as they are. They can be very stubborn sometimes. There are 120 members in
Spotlight on a WIZO Project

Seeing the women arrive at the center on a Monday morning, wearing their best clothes, cheerfully chatting with each other and later on working out energetically during their gym class is a proof of the positive impact being a member at the club has on their lives.

Uri Goldman

something for everyone

“This center offers a variety of activities for all ages, even for babies,” boasts Goldman. “Our community is quite heterogeneous and consists of single moms and new immigrants alongside conventional Israeli families. Therefore this center tries to answer the needs of all people. Issues such as financial difficulties or violence within the family are taken care of discreetly and people who need help know they can count on us. Being acquainted with the city’s welfare department and social services I can address each problem with the proper solution,” says Goldman.

Teens at Risk

The center for youth at risk which was founded as part of this positive approach provides a practical solution for teens that dropped out or were thrown out of school and live on the streets.

“These teens would arrive at the center and often disturb our activities. Yet instead of expelling them from our premises I decided to solve the problem in a more constructive manner by providing them with their own place - the center for teens at risk. They arrive at the center three times a week in the afternoon, watch TV, play video games and basically hang out with each other. I have noticed that in recent years kids come to the center at a younger age while in the beginning it was aimed for 17 and 18 year olds. The center is operated by a social worker, psychologist and a youth counselor, and our doors are always open for them,” he says. “They confide in me and often ask for my advice. There was a time when I even helped them organize a birthday party, and it was so successful that they couldn’t stop thanking me”. Goldman says that without WIZO’s support none of these projects could be realized. One of the most important projects he initiated that relies solely on donations is the Bar Mitzvah project. “I have noticed that many of the kids in our neighborhood have grown estranged from their Jewish heritage. Often these kids’ parents are new immigrants raised in communist countries where practicing Jewish ceremonies was forbidden. Others come from poor families and their parents simply cannot afford throwing a Bar Mitzvah party for their child,” explains Goldman. “The participants in this project get free tutorials for their Bar Mitzvah ceremony and they are also taken on a tour to Jerusalem and to...
visit the Supreme Court and the Knesset where they learn that religion is not above the law. This project is in its third year now and is extremely successful."

The Inbal youth movement - part of the general community
The Miami Beach WIZO center maintains close ties with the community around it, and the Inbal youth movement is definitely the highlight of its activities. “This youth movement has operated now for 20 years,” Goldman says with pride. “We had some good years during which Inbal consisted of 300 members and years with only 40 members. Still I kept going because this movement is part of our tradition of being part of the community, and I budget its activities regardless of the number of its members. This year we have 150 members and hope the numbers will grow. I believe our children need to learn social skills, and being part of a youth movement provides them with these skills. Our younger generation tends to spend long hours near the computer or the television set, and we feel obliged to get them out of the house. The children do not pay for their membership and all the activities are free of charge,” he concludes.

“This year we started from scratch because the center was closed during the previous year and the youth movement was not active,” explains Lee Cang, 23, the youth movement coordinator. Cang, a delicate looking young woman with long brown hair is the moving force behind “Inbal,” and her goal is to bring it back to its old days when every other kid in the neighborhood was a member.

“Some of the parents have good memories from the time they were part of the movement, and they are happy to cooperate with us.

Keeping the tradition
The Inbal youth movement is also in charge of organizing ceremonies such as the annual Memorial Day for IDF soldiers.

The women keep in shape with hula hoops

The Center offers a variety of activities for all ages

Inbal Youth in action
Spotlight on a WIZO Project

Independence Day and special activities for the children on Purim.
“People arrive from all over town to take part in these events, and we feel committed to do our best and start preparing for them three months in advance,” says Cang. “On Independence Day the program is based on local talent, and the Inbal youth movement coordinates the event. I hope this year we will not fail to keep up the tradition and the high standards expected of us.”

The original two floors of the building were not enough to accommodate the numerous activities of the center, therefore a third floor was built and extensive renovations carried out as a joint project between WIZO (1/3 of the costs) and the Ramat Gan municipality (2/3). Mayor Tzvi Bar (recently elected for a 5th term) cannot emphasize enough how the Municipality values the project and WIZO’s involvement, particularly WIZO Miami. He feels it provides a major service to the community, and the name is known throughout the city.
The third floor was dedicated in the Fall in the presence of the Mayor, city dignitaries, World WIZO President Helena Glaser, World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben-Dov and members of the World WIZO Executive.

Dedication of the third floor
Joyce Numann: The Guardians of Dutch Jewry

A whole generation of Dutch Jewry was lost in the Nazi Holocaust. Joyce Numann and her colleagues ensure that WIZO Holland plays a major role in maintaining the community and dealing with the challenges of the 21st century.

Joyce Numann would like to bring all Dutch Jews and non-Jews to Israel, to see the country for themselves. Since this is not possible, films, eyewitness reports and other WIZO activities are the realistic alternative.

As president of WIZO Holland, tell us about your background. Were you born in Holland, and did you have a Jewish education?

I was born in 1954 and raised in Amsterdam in a family of six children. As a child, my father emigrated with his family from Baden-Baden, Germany, to the Netherlands to escape Nazism.

After the war my father’s grandmother went to the USA to see her children who lived in the same town as my mother and her family. As a survivor of Theresienstadt her story was written in the daily paper. My mother’s parents were Dutch immigrants and they got in touch with this Dutch lady, who showed her grandson’s picture to their eldest daughter. A year later ‘the eldest daughter’ (my mother) went to the Netherlands, met the young man, and they fell in love. She emigrated from the USA to marry my father. A real love story!

We were members of the Progressive Jewish Congregation where
Interview with a WIZO President

I attended Hebrew School on Sundays. Although fully integrated in the non-Jewish community, we continued to practice Judaism. We celebrated Shabbat (I did not attend school on Saturday, which my non-Jewish classmates did at the time) and most of the Jewish holidays. In my teenage years, I participated in the Habonim Zionist youth movement.

How was your family affected by World War II and the Nazi period?

During the war, my father’s family was in hiding. Regardless of their limitations they remained active in the Resistance throughout the war. Unfortunately my father was arrested. Luckily he was able to escape though a series of favorable circumstances and heroic actions, just before he was due to be transported to a concentration camp. Many of my father’s immediate family did not survive the Shoa (Holocaust). My generation is reminded daily of the loss of approximately eighty percent of the Jewish population in Holland.

Did you grow up within the Jewish community?

We are still in the process of rebuilding the infrastructure of the Jewish community. In doing so we are continually reminded that we have been deprived of essentially a whole generation of Dutch Jews. Because of this, most of the executive functions are filled by a small group of active Jews, who fill different functions in a number of organizations.

When and why did you join WIZO?

I fell in love with a law-student, who also happened to be the son of the founders of our congregation. He had just returned from a year studying in Israel, and we were married shortly before my twentieth birthday.

After high school I completed my training as a secretary, and continued to specialize in notary work. In traditional fashion, I stopped working a few years later when our first son Marc was born. Our second son Philip was born two years later and our daughter Jessica completed our family four years after that. We raised our children in The Hague, with the exception of four years spent in Curacao, in the Netherlands Antilles. During our time there my husband worked as a judge in the court of justice. We were readily welcomed as members of the Jewish congregation. Curacao is still one of our favorite holiday destinations.

WIZO became part of my life only after our return to Holland in 1992. In response to numerous requests by Annelies Cohn, I became secretary of her board in The Hague, one of the 12 WIZO branches in the Netherlands. When she became President of the Federation in 1996, I became her successor in The Hague.

What did you do in WIZO before becoming president?

During that time I combined my WIZO obligations with the part-time management of a successful bridal shop that my sister had started in Amsterdam. It was one of the busiest times of my life: I worked at least three to four days a week, was actively involved with my three teenagers at home, and supported my husband in a busy time in his career. He became a justice of the Supreme Court and, in addition, was involved instrumentally in the pursuit of regaining Jewish properties lost during World War II.

My sister and I both suffer from a form of juvenile polyarthritis, which is hereditary. Because of this condition, we decided to sell the bridal shop. Initially this gave me more time for my hobbies: I am an avid reader (I particularly love reading novels), and thoroughly enjoy museum exhibits and concerts. After ten years of active involvement in the regional WIZO board, I was looking for more of challenge. The timing was quite convenient as I now had more time for WIZO. I joined the executive board of the federation, unaware of what the future held. At the time I could not have foreseen that our then president Helen Lion, would become seriously ill. Consequently I assumed her position and her responsibilities with little preparation.

The support of my fellow board members made it possible for me to make the transition very smoothly.

“An ultimate goal is to appeal to younger generations in the hope of strengthening our organization”
Joyce Numann

Symposium about Networking in March 2008
What are the challenges facing WIZO and the Dutch Jewish community today?
I have currently been the president for two years. WIZO is an ongoing learning process; the many aspects of the role of president keep me on my toes. During the first two years of my presidency, the executive board focused on professionalizing WIZO. If we wanted to attract the younger generation, we had to accommodate their requirements. We did so by investing in symposia, workshops, and in an intranet that provides a variety of protocols, documents, agendas and so forth. In particular we have created an advanced database which provides a clear overview of our members and donors.
In addition to this goal, we also invested in enhancing WIZO’s image through the modern design of advertisements, folders, invitations and a new website. In order to be taken seriously as a charity organization in the Netherlands, we must fulfill strict guidelines issued by the government. This requires focusing special attention on the uniformity of accounting practices among our branches.
In addition to our fundraising, we proudly represent WIZO at events held by non-Jewish organizations in the Netherlands. We feel this is also an extremely important aspect of our role, as our organization is the largest Zionist and Jewish women’s organization in the country.
Is there anti-Semitism in Holland today, and if so, how do you cope with it?
As president of WIZO Netherlands, I can definitely say I am aware of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, especially in the media. I actively support initiatives to react to the anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist press. Another reason for my awareness is my involvement in the boards of organizations such as the Dutch Center for Information and Documentation regarding Israel (CIDI). That being said, I do not feel any negative sentiments towards Jews in my daily life and my country’s policies. However, in social situations I do encounter a lack of understanding regarding Israel’s politics. To me, this makes my work for WIZO even more important because I show them a completely different side of Israel. Israel guarantees my sense of safety and I feel that, not living in Israel myself, it is my duty to contribute in some shape or form. I am extremely grateful that the members of WIZO collectively are able to do so.

What are your goals for WIZO in the coming year?
Nothing quite compares to visiting Israel and seeing it for oneself. I visit Israel at least once a year for extremely valuable AGMs and conferences; the information provided there proves extraordinarily useful throughout the year. Ideally I would love to show people Israel so that they too can see it with their own eyes. As this is unrealistic, WIZO Netherlands has produced a film about the importance of WIZO and some of our projects. This will provide us with another medium to inform people about our work. I have been invited to present the film to non-Jewish organizations. Above all, the film is intended to both recruit new members and donors, and to inform our current members of our projects. An ultimate goal is to appeal to younger generations in the hope of strengthening our organization.

Things You Didn’t Know About Me
Family: My husband Ernst Jona Numann is a justice at the Supreme Court of the Netherlands. We have three children, whose names are Marc Ezra (31), Philip Nathan (29) and Jessica Chana (24). Marc is married to Sharon (30), and together they have a son, Levi. Marc is an architectural engineer, Sharon is a teacher, Philip is a personnel officer and Jessica is completing her studies in Communications Science.
My parents-in-law, who met only after the war, grew up in Berlin and both escaped to the Netherlands. My mother-in-law and her parents were caught while hiding, and brought to Bergen Belsen (like Anne Frank). They survived. My father-in-law lost his parents who remained and brought to Bergen Belsen (like Anne Frank). They survived. My father-in-law lost his parents who remained in Berlin.
Ernst’s parents married in 1949. One of the witnesses at their chupah was Otto Frank, Anne’s father. Ernst’s mother was one of the very first members of WIZO Holland, right after it was founded in 1948.
Hobbies: I’m an avid reader. A book I recently enjoyed was the Liberated Bride, written by A.B. Yehoshua. I also love going to museum exhibits and concerts. I am a big fan of Kandinsky and Joseph Israels, a major Dutch painter. As for music, I particularly admire Mozart and Schubert...and Barbara Streisand! My favorite movie actors are Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks.
Holidays: One of our favorite holiday destinations is Curacao. We also love going to Italy, which is the perfect combination of culture, untouched towns and villages, beautiful scenery and delicious food.
Israel: I visit Israel at least once a year for the WIZO AGMs and conferences. To me, it feels like a second home. Subsequently I feel a responsibility to contribute to the maintenance and development of Israeli society through my work with WIZO.
Alona in the Bedroom, Ukraine 2006
Michal Chelbin: “Strangely Familiar”

“Strangely Familiar” is the name of an exhibition of photos by Michal Chelbin at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. We were particularly excited to visit the exhibition, not only because Chelbin is a rising star in the artistic photography world, but also because she is a graduate of two WIZO schools.

Hillel Schenker
Photos: Michal Chelbin

The photos of acrobats, dancers, vagabonds and immigrants taken by Michal Chelbin in Israel, Russia, the Ukraine and the UK, are a striking collage of images that leave a lasting impression on the viewer. Long after you have seen them for the first time, they continue to haunt. We wanted to find out something about the person behind the camera, so we carried out the following discussion with the Haifa-born photographer who currently lives in New York.

Why did you decide to focus on images from Russia and Eastern Europe in your photography?
While I was still a student I began to take photos of Russian immigrants in Israel, who I found to be a fascinating subject. I did work with them in a studio, and also with a number of families in their homes. I found them very tough, yet also very warm-hearted. These contradictions are extremely interesting. I also found the locations and their places of origin of great interest.

Do you come from that background? Is this in any way a return to your roots?
My father does, but that was many years ago. I was born here in Israel.

My interest in these subjects didn’t really begin from an exploration of roots, but rather my interest in taking photos of people who are not part of the mainstream, but fringe images. At the time I was doing a project on circus people, and I happened to find myself in Eastern Europe. One thing led to another.

What attracts you to the fringes of society? You have said that you feel closer to David Lynch than to Frederico Fellini. What does that mean?
I meant that Lynch (Blue Velvet, Twin Peaks) is less theatrical in his films than Fellini. Lynch describes the oddities of everyday life, and that’s what I feel close to. Our lives are not happening in a theater, or in the creative mind of a director. It’s happening here and now.

Like a little girl with a camera in her hand

“When I photograph, I’m a different person, practically without any inhibitions, which is something I always wanted to be but couldn’t,” says photographer Michal Chelbin. “I’m still kind of a little girl when it comes to the moment of the photography itself. I want it right now, without compromises, without waiting. I can photograph for an entire day without eating or drinking. My husband, Oded, teases me and says that since our daughter Danielle was born, he’s a father of two girls.”

From “Strangely Familiar”, an article in the Haaretz magazine section, September 5, 2008.
Photo-Art

A special approach to photography

“From the pictures alone, we can’t usually discern what kind of acts these men, women and children perform. Are they acrobats? Contortionists? Tight-rope walkers? Do they work with dogs, birds, horses, monkeys? Are the kids second or third-generation circus performers? Are they merely seeking a diversion, or have they found in these troupes a refuge — economic, social, familial or otherwise? Chelbin gravitates toward her subjects in part because of their connection to an unusual, exotic realm of activity… Sometimes they are in costume, sometimes not. Sometimes the costumes or settings hint at their specific roles, but more often they don’t… She typically meets her subjects for the first time without a camera in hand. She then visits their homes or other familiar settings and accompanies them on outings to lakes and woods, shooting over days or even weeks. She doesn’t, however, photograph them in the act of displaying their skills… With little supporting information to go on, we reflexively fill in the blanks and ride the images’ narrative momentum wherever it leads…”

From Leah Ollman’s introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition.

What you are doing is taking people as they are, and composing a staged photo?
Yes. I do it in their natural environment or home, but the scene is staged.

Why is it that the people are almost never smiling in your photos?
Most of the subjects who appear in my latest exhibition and book are used to performing before an audience. Their look is like a
performer’s mask. Most people project a type of mask when they are being photographed, and performers tend to wear a false, unreal smile. I decided to neutralize that tendency with my images.

I asked them not to smile, and to show their real selves.

One very striking photo in the collection is that of men wearing skirts here in Israel. Who are those men? (Laughs) That’s a group of Russian acrobats who appeared in a circus near Afula. They are dressed like Scotsmen in kilts for a humorous sketch. In the performance they also wear shirts, but for the photo they just have the kilts.

The fact that you went to the WIZO High School for Art and Design in the Name of Henrietta Irwell in Haifa, now the WIZO Leo Baeck High School for the Arts (sponsored by WIZO Panama, WIZO Belgium & Luxembourg and WIZO Uruguay) was of great interest to us. Why did you choose to go there?

I was born in Haifa, and I originally went to a large, very impersonal high school. I wanted to go to a smaller, more intimate high school, and that’s how I discovered the WIZO School, without actually planning to study art or photography. It was there that I discovered photography, and to be behind the camera was what most suited my shy personality. I discovered that was a way to gain confidence, and to learn how to approach people.

And then, after you graduated, you decided to continue your studies at The Neri Bloomfield WIZO Academy of Design & Education in Haifa.

First there was the army, where I served as a photographer for the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, which seemed like a natural next step. When I was released I did a little newspaper photography, and then decided to develop further. The truth is that I was always interested in staging, creating scenes, a more artistic direction. So I decided to study photography at the WIZO Academy.

The head of your department at the Academy was Micha Kirshner, one of Israel’s leading photographers. Micha was a great influence. He is a photographer with a tremendous amount of experience. What really suited me was that at the Academy they allowed students a great amount of creative freedom, while they also knew how to give us a sense of direction, and were critical when necessary as well. It was definitely a formative experience, which helped me to reach where I am today.

What are your plans for the future?

Right now I’m working on three different projects. I’m going to publish a book on wrestlers, and also working as a freelancer with The New Yorker and other magazines.

Today you live in the States. Do you define yourself as an Israeli photographer?

First of all, I’m an Israeli. But as a photographer I don’t try to get into labels, but to communicate to a widespread audience. My subjects are very universal. Photography is an international language, and one of the places where my last book was distributed was Japan.
Only for the second time in Israeli history is a woman, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, one of the leading candidates to be the next prime minister of Israel. The first was of course Golda Meir, who was elected prime minister in 1969 and was reelected in 1974.

In the recent municipal elections held in November, 2008, a record number of 30 women ran for mayor of their cities and towns throughout the country. At first glance, this sounds like a major advance in removing the “glass ceiling” which prevents women from advancing in politics.

However, when the results came in, it turned out that only the three serving female mayors, Yael German in Herzliya, Miriam Fierberg in Netanya and Flora Shushan in Mitzpe Rimon were reelected. All of the other female candidates failed in their quest for municipal leadership.

When we look at the Knesset, we see that 17 female Members of Knesset (MKs) were elected to the 17th Knesset in March 2006. And when Meretz chairperson Dr. Yossi Beilin resigned from the Knesset last month, he was replaced by Dr. Tzvia Greenfield, an enlightened Orthodox woman (a story in itself, since she is a member of a predominantly secular party who believes in the separation of religion and state), so there are 18 female MKs in the outgoing Knesset.

The 17 elected female MKs (out of 120) places Israel in the 73rd place in gender equality – 14.2% of the members of parliament are women. If you compare that to the current leader, Rwanda, which has 39 MPs (out of 80) 48.8%, and Sweden, 165 female

Women in Politics
Will Tzipi do it? Can Israeli female candidates break down the glass ceiling? WIZO is running a number of courses to face this challenge

Adi Ronel
Photo: Avi Hayoun

Israel – only 73rd in number of female parliamentarians

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Two special courses

To overcome this, WIZO Israel’s School for Women Leadership in Politics organized two special courses for female candidates. The first one was devoted to the municipal sphere, which was publicized throughout the press and the WIZO branches. The highlight was a public event held at WIZO House in Tel Aviv on September 11, 2008, under the heading “I am running, and I will win.” It featured a panel discussion with nine female candidates who were running for the leadership of their municipal councils in Or Yehuda, Be’er Anei Ofarim, Givatayim (two candidates), Ganei Tikva, Petach Tikva, Savion, Shoham and Tel Aviv-Jaffa.

In addition, a special innovative course was organized for female candidates for the Knesset. “The uniqueness of this course,” says Stella Avidan, who coordinated the project, “is that we understood that women who want to run for the Knesset have to already be involved in the political process and the political parties. We wanted to give them tools, to teach them how to cope with political interests and needs within their own parties.”

The goal – to double the number of female MKs

A steering committee to organize the program was set up with the participation of representatives of nine different parties – Kadima, Labor, Likud, Meretz, Shinui, the Green Party, Yisrael Beiteinu, Hichud Haleumi (National Union) and the National Religious Party. WIZO was represented by Gila Oshrat, the Chairperson of WIZO Israel’s Division for the Advancement of the Status of Women, Sarit Arbel, the Director General of WIZO Israel, Ronit Erenfreund-Cohen, the Director of the Division for the Advancement of the Status of Women, Tamar Niv-Cohen, responsible for WIZO’s School for Women Leadership in Politics, Stella Avidan, the Coordinator of the School, lawyer Irir Gazit, responsible for WIZO’s legal aid service and Shana Schecterman, WIZO Israel’s lobbyist in the Knesset.

The goal of the program was to double the number of female Knesset members in the 18th Knesset. A three-day course was run at Kibbutz Shfayim, and the instructors consisted of Israel’s leading political consultants. “We taught them how to run an Internet-based campaign, how to create a campaign website, how to fundraise for a political campaign, and what is legal and not legal in the area of political donations,” says Avidan.

Reality politics - facing the cameras

One of the most important workshops was on how to appear in front of the camera, what to wear, how to talk to reporters and how to appear on radio and TV. “These were hands-on workshops,” says Avidan, “where the participants carried out exercises which were evaluated, what the mistakes were, and how to overcome the errors. There was a marked improvement between the first and the third appearances before the cameras when it came to body language, posture and intonation, really important things.”

“Politics is a profession, like any other one,” says Avidan, and the participants all felt that the program was very helpful, and have asked for and received follow-up support as well.”

Ronit runs for mayor

Ronit Erenfreund-Cohen, Director of WIZO Israel’s Advancement of the Status of Women Department, took a leave of absence in order to run to be mayor of Yavneh. “I had a good chance of getting into the second round,” says Erenfreund-Cohen, “which would have placed me in a good position to defeat the current mayor. However, at the last minute flyers were circulated in the name of rabbis in support of a third, religious candidate, attacking me because I am a woman, and my partner is a woman. That turned out to be the difference, and the religious candidate made it into the second round and lost to the incumbent mayor.” The campaign wasn’t a total loss, since Erenfreund-Cohen, who already served on the council for one term, increased the strength of her faction, and intends to run again five years from now. She says that there are two major obstacles that women have to overcome. The first is that because of the security situation, an extra value is placed on a military background. “However,” she adds, “having a high rank in the army is no guarantee for success as a civilian leader.” The second problem is the unwillingness of the Orthodox religious, and particularly the ultra-Orthodox Haredi sector to support a female candidate.

Hillary and Angela

“There is a positive wind blowing from the West,” she says, “which affects us. Hillary Clinton was considered a worthy candidate to be president of the United States, and now she has been appointed secretary of state. And there is also the example of Chancellor Angela Merkel in Germany, and other heads of state. If Tzipi Livni becomes prime minister, I hope that we will be able to leverage that achievement for further advances for women in politics.”

“It is claimed that men are more focused and goal-oriented than women” says Avidan, “but that also makes them more rigid. Women bring a more holistic approach to politics, and they have a greater capacity to listen to others, hear their problems and to try to solve them. Women also have the advantage of usually coming from social activity, from direct experience in the field.” Both Avidan and Erenfreund emphasize the leadership and inspiration that department chairperson Gila Oshrat gives to all of this activity. “Our goal,” concludes Avidan, “is to eliminate the glass ceiling – to achieve equality.”

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From the editor

Shalom,
Farewell, but not Goodbye

After 18 stimulating years as editor of WIZO Review, it’s time to say farewell

Hillel Schenker

B ack in the Fall of 1990, after returning from three years as Israeli representative of New Outlook magazine in New York, I responded to an advertisement stating that an international organization was seeking an editor with a command of both Hebrew and English and at least five years of editorial experience plus knowledge of the Zionist and Jewish worlds. So I sent in my CV and didn’t give it another thought.

A few months later I received a phone call from WIZO. “Why are you calling me?” I asked. “Because you responded to our ad” said Rachel Ben-Ezer, who turned out to be the chairperson of WIZO Review. “But wouldn’t you prefer a woman for the position?” “We don’t discriminate,” she responded. Which is how I became editor of WIZO Review.

Discovering WIZO

I began working at WIZO House in December, 1990, and my first task was to learn about WIZO, the Women’s International Zionist Organization. Having come on aliya from the United States, I had been totally unaware of WIZO’s existence in my youth, since the organization was only established in the U.S. in 1980. During my first 13 years in Israel on Kibbutz Barkai I learned a lot about sheep, avocados, bananas, teaching children and youth, and even editing (the English-language magazine of the kibbutz movement), but didn’t really expand my knowledge of WIZO. However I did discover that there were many WIZO day care centers throughout the country.

Meeting the WIZO “aunts” on the Golan Heights

In 1973, when the Yom Kippur War broke out, I served for eight months on the Golan Heights in the Combat Engineering Corps of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Towards the end of October my unit was ordered to accompany the Golani infantry units which recaptured Mt. Hermon from the Syrians. On the way to what was probably the longest day in my life, riding on an armored half-track heading towards the battle, in the middle of nowhere, we encountered a group of WIZO ladies known affectionately as dodot (aunts), who were providing food, even ice cream, and a friendly smile to the soldiers.

Scud missiles and chair(wo)men

So when I began working at WIZO, I was almost starting from scratch.

I received a crash course in more ways than one. A month later Iraqi Scud missiles were landing on Tel Aviv, and the annual World WIZO Plenary, now known as the AGM (Annual General Meeting) was held.

The first issue of WIZO Review that I edited, No. 260 Winter/Spring 1991 featured a child in a WIZO day care center wearing a protective plastic anti-gas mask on his head, holding on to his teddy bear. The issue was titled “After the War – Life Goes On”, and it dealt with WIZO’s activities during the war, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the historical WIZO conference in Hungary, Soviet Jewry and an exhibition at the Diaspora Museum devoted to WIZO’s co-founder and first president Rebecca Sieff.

After the issue came out, I received a letter from Prof. Alice Shalvi, the noted feminist, educator and eventual Israel Prize Winner, congratulating me on an excellent magazine, but with one complaint. “Why does it say Michal Modai is Chairman?! It should read Chairwoman or Chairperson.” And now it does.

Tremendous contributions to Israeli society

In 2006 I received an excited phone-call from Prof. Shalvi, with warm congratulations for the special issue devoted to WIZO’s 85th anniversary, which featured a 20 page well-researched history of WIZO entitled “The Saga of a Movement: WIZO’s First 85 Years.” She said that it would become a tremendous resource about the contribution of women to all phases of Israeli society. I myself was extremely impressed by all I had discovered about the contributions that WIZO has made, and continues to make, in so many areas of Israeli society: education, immigrant absorption, social welfare, women’s rights, consumers’ rights and in helping to maintain Jewish communities around the world.

It was totally understandable to me why WIZO was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize on Israel Independence Day in 2008.
for its “efforts to promote gender equality and (its) struggle to promote humanitarian, social, cultural and educational issues while focusing on the central position of women in society and the need for equality between the sexes within Israeli society.”

**Entering the age of the new media technologies**

As a veteran journalist with over 30 years of experience and a Masters in Communications, I have accompanied WIZO Review’s transformation into the age of the new media technologies. The first issue back in 1991 had only the front and back cover in color. Now all pages are in color, we use the most up-to-date digital graphic and print technologies and we have a web-based edition and a special in-house subscription data-base program created by the new WIZO IT (Information Technology) department.

Looking towards the future, I consider the existence of WIZO Review to be an essential vehicle for education, information and general outreach to current and new members, potential donors and community leaders in Israel and around the world. The technologies may change, but a vibrant magazine is an absolute necessity for a vibrant movement.

**Shalom**

It has been a privilege to edit WIZO Review these past 18 years, and to meet and work with an extraordinary group of dedicated women (and some men), both volunteer leaders and activists and dedicated staff. Shalom v’hitraot.

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**Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend…**

**2008 WIZO pins**

Who wouldn’t be proud to be seen wearing the new WIZO 2008 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...
Getting To Know You -
Making New Members Feel At Home

New members are the lifeblood of all organizations. WIZO’s future depends on gaining new members, and this article describes how they can be welcomed

Briana Simon
Photos: Yael Zur
At times we need to remind ourselves why it is so important to cultivate new members in our organization. New members bring with them new ideas, new energy, new expertise, and diverse, wide-ranging experiences which can add to existing programs and activities; new friends; a pool of potential new leaders to carry on the work toward achieving our organization’s objectives; and extended commitment. Some new members will have no trouble getting involved as soon as they join. Others, on the other hand, may not be sure about what is expected of them, or may hesitate to attend an event because it means dealing with a room full of unfamiliar faces. What steps can be taken to put new members at their ease - to draw them in and make them feel welcome?

**A Planned Approach**

Using a methodical approach to make new members feel welcome, a timetable of activities, promotes uniformity and motivation. The timetable should include a carefully designed, well-timed and appropriate flow of information and invitations. Here is an example of a five stage timetable:

**Stage 1:** Acknowledge receipt of their application form within a day. This sets the tone for your relationship, and makes your organization look highly responsive to new members.

**Stage 2:** Send them a welcome pack. Since there are many things you could include, be careful not to overwhelm them. You might want to consider sending some items by mail and some by email, directing them to your web site for more information, or sending them a list of what is available and asking them to indicate what they would like to receive on a request for information form. Then again, this form can be sent during Stage 1, so the pack that arrives contains exactly what they require.

**Stage 3:** After they have had an opportunity to look over the material, have someone telephone them and personally welcome them. In the course of this call, it is wise to include the following:

- Verify that their contact details are correct. There is nothing more annoying than having your name and contact details incorrect.
- Find out their expectations. Why did they join? What do they feel is of value in the organization? It is essential to understand their personal needs.
- Check that their perceptions are correct regarding the organization to prevent misunderstandings.
- Encourage them to participate by putting them in touch with someone who shares their interests or by inviting them to an event.

**Stage 4:** After three or four months, send a ‘new member satisfaction survey’. Phone to explain its importance and to make sure that it has arrived.

**Stage 5:** Call each new member six months after they have joined to verify that they have received some value from their membership. Remind them that their ideas and opinions are welcome. Tell them about this month’s events. If they have not yet started to get involved, suggest ways that they could start.

**Other Possibilities**

- Identify five things that most new members do during their first six months in the organization. After three months, see who has done less than two of the items on this list, and encourage these people to get involved.
- Promote networking. Use icebreakers at the start of an event to encourage interaction. Introduce a buddy or mentoring system.
- Organize special events for newcomers. Have a special new member session at the beginning of the year so new people can meet other new people. If members are geographically dispersed, have a new member teleconference.
- Publicize new members. Send a list of new members to the local chapter if appropriate. If they haven’t attended the next meeting or two, have someone call to encourage them to get involved. Have a new member column in your newsletter or on your web site. Put distinctive stickers on their name tags, and ask current members to go out of their way to make each new member feel welcome.

A new member’s first year is the best opportunity to lay the foundation for long-term affiliation. Conversely, their first year is also the year that most new members are likely to leave. Do not wait until the end of the year to find out if a new member is happy. By then it will be too late.

This article and the one following are from the World WIZO Organization Department’s “Lapid” publication, which is now being incorporated into WIZO Review. “Lapid” is geared to office holders, leaders and graduates of Lapid and AVIV Seminars, and to every chavera who would like to enrich herself regarding subjects connected to organization and education.
Professor Gabriela Shalev - Our Woman at the UN

What does it take to be an effective ambassador to the UN from the State of Israel? Professor Gabriela Shalev’s friends and professional associates maintain that her calm demeanor and her extraordinary intelligence are two qualities that will help her to succeed at her new post

Livni: “Important to appoint a woman”

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni’s appointment of Shalev was a sign of Livni’s determination to give the post to a woman with sterling credentials. At the Cabinet meeting at which the appointment was approved, Foreign Minister Livni stated, “It was important to me to appoint a woman to represent Israel in such an important place. In addition, her extraordinary talents will enable her to deal with the challenges facing Israel. Professor Shalev is internationally respected; she has fulfilled many public positions in Israel, and the appointment committee determined that her impressive reputation and background, as well as her personality, make her a fitting candidate for the position of ambassador to the UN. I am confident of her ability to represent Israel faithfully, and I wish her success.”
Some commentators criticized the Foreign Minister for choosing someone who lacks political experience; but others said that her appointment could have a positive impact on international public opinion. *Jerusalem Post* commentator Calev Ben-David wrote that since Israel has a militaristic image, women who serve as Israel’s advocates abroad can have a positive influence. Though the diplomatic corps is disturbed by the fact that one of their number has once again not been chosen for this prominent post - her predecessor, Dan Gillerman, was also not a career diplomat - supporters of Shalev believe that being a fast learner, a person who works well with others, and an expert speaker will offset her lack of experience in foreign policy.

**The value of hard work**

Born in British Mandatory Palestine to German Jewish refugees, Shalev was raised with a strong belief in the value of hard work. She served in the IDF, reaching the rank of lieutenant. While studying at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where she earned a bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree and a doctorate in law, she helped support her family. After her husband, an Israeli army officer, was killed in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Shalev raised their two young children on her own, and did post-doctoral work at the Harvard Law School. A friend described Shalev as a persistent worker who nevertheless is able to find time for friends and students, and is as comfortable discussing art, classical music and opera as she is debating points of law.

The ambassadorship was not the first government position offered to Shalev. She turned down a number of prominent appointments, including attorney general and judge. Even so, she has taken on many important public responsibilities. Shalev has been Chairperson of the Israel Broadcasting Authority and a member of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors. She has also served as a visiting professor at such prestigious universities as Tulane, Temple and Boston College in the United States.

**Following in the footsteps of Dan Gillerman**

The previous Israeli representative at the UN, Dan Gillerman - whose wife Janice served as Deputy Chairperson of the World WIZO Tourist Department prior to her husband’s posting, and made a point of attending WIZO events during their sojourn in New York - is a former businessman who, when he relinquished his post, was hailed as an experienced diplomat with outstanding rhetorical skills. Commentators noted that Gillerman succeeded in improving Israel’s status at the United Nations. Regarding following such a highly esteemed predecessor, Shalev was not perturbed. “I am pleased to come after the excellent ambassadors we have had. Danny Gillerman was one of them. Each individual brings something unique to the position. There were ambassadors who were less famous who did excellent work - Yehuda Lancry, for example, who was a well-loved and accepted ambassador, though he did not appear often in the media. He did much effective diplomatic work behind the scenes, and to this day he is remembered here.”

**The appointment of a woman to this important position on the frontlines of Israeli diplomatic activity in the international arena is another step forward for all Israeli women. She is clearly a worthy successor to Israel’s first ambassador to the UN, Abba Eban**

“As a woman, a professor and a proud Israeli”

On September 8, 2008, Prof. Gabriela Shalev presented her diplomatic credentials to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. On this occasion she declared, “As a woman, a professor and above all as a proud Israeli, I am happy for the opportunity given me to contribute to the state in the complex international arena of the United Nations”. In various interviews since taking up her post, Shalev has declared that one of her first goals is to reach out to some of the many of the 192 UN member states with whom Israel has no connections. By supporting some of the issues of other countries, she hopes to ‘make new friends.’ The appointment of a woman to this important position on the frontlines of Israeli diplomatic activity in the international arena is another step forward for all Israeli women. She is clearly a worthy successor to Israel’s first ambassador to the UN, Abba Eban.
Making History

Doreen Guinsberg was there in the early days of the State when World WIZO transferred its headquarters from London to Tel Aviv, and when the last illegal immigrants were brought from Cyprus to Haifa

Doreen Guinsberg

As Israel celebrates its 60th anniversary I look back at those momentous days of 1948/49. As the National Organizer for the South African Women’s Zionist Council (WIZO South Africa), I was sent to Israel to participate in the first World WIZO Conference that took place in Tel Aviv in January 1949 after the establishment of the State of Israel. That same month saw the opening of the first Knesset and, the following month, the end of Aliyah Bet (the illegal immigration), with the arrival of the last boatload of immigrants from the transit camp in Cyprus.

Sailing from Haifa to Cyprus

WIZO Haifa arranged for me to sail on the “Atzmaut” (Independence) to Cyprus to bring back the last of the illegal immigrants who, with the aid of the pre-State Haganah and Palmach undergrounds, had defied the British ban on immigration.

As we sailed out of Haifa harbor late on a raw February afternoon in 1949, our captain pointed to the fleet of derelict craft lying at anchor off the far end of the pier. These small, vulnerable boats had sailed, with hundreds aboard, while running the gauntlet of the British Navy.

That night we slept in the ship’s hold. There were four decks, one below the other, each fitted with hundreds of tiered bunks. The next morning we sailed into Famagusta Harbor in Cyprus, lying in the shadow of its enormous black fortress. It took the entire day to clear the camp. That afternoon there was a small ceremony in Famagusta – the handing over of money to be used for building a playground for children, a present from the Government and People of Israel to the People of Cyprus in recognition of their help and kindness to the internees held by the British for so many years on their island.

“Goodbye Mr. Bevin”

After the ceremony we went out to the camp, situated in a dreary part of the island. High barbed wire fences with look-out towers for the guards surrounded the entire camp perimeter. The excitement was electric as the last groups, clutching their meager belongings, gathered outside the gates to wait for the last transport that would take them home.

Someone was carrying a broom draped with an old coat and hat. On the hatband was written: “Goodbye Mr. Bevin” (Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary in the post-war years). Wine and biscuits were handed round and the young British guards were obviously embarrassed when pressed by their former prisoners to join in the celebration. A symbolic key was handed to the British Commander to close the gates of the camp behind the last of the immigrants. It was a moving moment of laughter and tears. When we returned to Famagusta everyone was already aboard the “Atzmaut” and we sailed for home.

An unforgettable welcome

Never will I forget our arrival in Haifa. Israel’s new navy escorted us into the harbor amid the hooting of all the boats. What a grand welcome it was for those who for years had been harassed and humiliated! It was as if the whole country had come to the harbor to meet us – crowds on the decks and the roofs of the harbor sheds – and there below on the dock there was a small group of WIZO women manning tables laden with cakes and sandwiches and hot coffee to welcome yet another group of newcomers. It was symbolic of WIZO’s role in the special task of immigrant absorption that continues to this very day.

Doreen Guinsberg, an active member of WIZO Haifa, came on aliya in 1959. A designer by profession, she established the Design Department at the WIZO Municipal High School for Art and Design in the name of Henrietta Inwell, Haifa (sponsored by WIZO Belgium and WIZO Uruguay). She taught there until her retirement. She now divides her time between Haifa, Switzerland and South Africa.
Friends of WIZO in 5769

Friends of WIZO launched its fall 2008 (5769 according to the Hebrew calendar) season activities with a gala event at the home of Mrs. Liz Harris in Herzliya Pituach, where 15 new members joined the group. Brunch was hosted by the Executive of Friends of WIZO together with Liz Harris; the event was opened by Friends of WIZO Chairperson Esther Mor. Three women from WIZO’s two battered women’s shelters gave a very moving description of how WIZO had saved and changed their lives. A black Hebrew* who arrived in a shelter just a month previously told how her husband had molested and even threatened to kill her. Another was an Israeli-American woman who had worked for Lehman Brothers and was let go during the financial collapse. On the spot one of the guests said that he would try to help her get a job with his connections. The third was a young Israeli-born woman with five children. Three Nahal soldiers (a special branch of the IDF which combines being a soldier with agricultural and social service), all of them graduates of the WIZO Hadassim School and Youth Village (sponsored by WIZO-Hadassah Canada), described their work as counselors with the 11th and 12th graders at WIZO Hadassim. The finale was a presentation by four students from WIZO Hadassim of a song “We’re going to wash your cares and dirt away”. The song accompanied soaps they had created in a brilliant rainbow of colors, each one of which has a little surprise in the middle – a toy. Their prize-winning invention was a tremendous hit, and everyone present bought between 3 and 6 soaps for their children and grandchildren (see item on page 41).

*A community of approximately 2000 African Americans, originally from Chicago, who say they are descendants of the tribe of Judah, and who live in Dimona

Meeting the Baroness

“I had the privilege to be invited by MK Dalia Itzik – the Speaker of the Knesset - to a small gathering she hosted in honour of Baroness Hayman, Lord Speaker of the House of Lords during her recent visit to Israel, “reports World WIZO President Helena Glaser. “The Baroness told me that her mother had been an active member of WIZO.uk.” Baroness Helene Valerie Hayman, PC, is Lord Speaker of the House of Lords. As a member of the Labour Party she was a Member of Parliament from 1974 to 1979, and became a Life Peer in 1996. She has been involved in health issues, serving on medical ethics committees and the governing bodies of the National Health Service and health charities. In 2006, she won the first election for the newly created position of Lord Speaker of the House of Lords. The main functions of the Lord Speaker are to take the chair in debates held in the chamber of the House of Lords, to advise the House of Lords on procedural rules, to take formal responsibility for security in the areas of the Palace of Westminster occupied by the House of Lords and its members, to speak for the House of Lords on ceremonial occasions, and to represent the House of Lords as its ambassador in the UK and overseas.

Party for WIZO Retirees

The annual party for WIZO workers who have reached retirement age was held at WIZO House on December 25, 2008. The retirees were greeted by World WIZO President Helena Glaser, World WIZO Executive Chairperson Tova Ben Dov, World WIZO Director General Chaim Zamorsky and Chairperson for the WIZO Pensioner Organization Margolit Shalem. The dance troupe of the WIZO Miami Beach Community Center and singer Anat Geva, Director of the WIZO Israel Division of Culture and Guidance, entertained.
Men’s Hotline
During the past three years, the Center for the Treatment and Prevention of Violence in the Family in WIZO Jerusalem has operated a unique, national hotline that provides responses to the needs of men who are involved in the cycle of violence in the family. The volunteers who staff the hotline provide support and advice to men and their families without the need to reveal themselves or to be absorbed in some form of treatment. Towards this year’s International Prevention of Violence Against Women Day in November, a special e-mail address was added to the telephone service, and the information was circulated throughout the WIZO network and to the general public.

The address is: kav-lagever@wizo.org

Lived in Fear, Died in Fear
On November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, WIZO Israel held a special ceremony to remember those women who were murdered by their partners during the last year. Under the heading “Lived in Fear, Died in Fear”, the event took place in the courtyard of the Tel Aviv Cinematheque. WIZO erected a mourning tent which remained standing throughout the day. Inside the tent were two coffins on which were engraved the names of sixteen women who were murdered during the past year. Tova Ben Dov, Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive and Brigadier Yehudit Grosio, who is advisor to the Chief of Staff on women’s affairs, lit 16 candles in memory of the women. Members of Knesset Zehava Galon and Gideon Saar, addressed the participants. “We are talking about the 16 women, as if it was their fate, said M.K. Galon. “We have to declare an all out battle against violence and to set heavier punishments” said MK Saar.

Israeli Dreaming from a California Intern
There are a number of Israeli-based programs for young people from abroad that provide interns to worthy Israeli NGOs (non-governmental organizations). The World WIZO Fundraising Department has been particularly blessed with a number of very successful interns. Nicole Whitaker interned with WIZO via Stagerim, a young professionals internship program, run by the Jewish Agency. She says it’s a very independent program for people who want the experience of living in Israel, helps them to find a placement, and gives them a small, monthly stipend.

“I graduated from UCLA with a degree in psychology,” she says, “and also worked in a hotel restaurant as the administrative manager. Last year I was in Israel for the first time, for just a week, I loved it, and knew I wanted to come back. I wanted to do something different, to enter the non-profit world in the area of development and programming. Stagerim was my entry, and I found WIZO on my own and really liked what I saw. The World WIZO Fundraising Department was a perfect fit for what I was looking for, and I worked there for a total of four months.” During this time, she had an opportunity to visit a number of WIZO projects, and says that she would love to have an opportunity in the future to spend time with and perhaps work with the kids at the WIZO Hadassim School and Youth Village.
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Upon her return to the States, she hopes to find a job in a similar field. She will also contact WIZO Los Angeles, since she knows they have a Young WIZO group, and she even recognized some friends there in a photo. Esther Mor, chair of the department, and resource development associate Annette Crandall already miss her, and say that she has been a wonderful asset for WIZO.

Prize for Young Entrepreneurs

A group of 9th grade students at the WIZO - Hadassah Canada Hadassim School and Youth Village won 4th prize in a European competition for young entrepreneurs, which was held in Stockholm, Sweden. The product they invented is called “Surprise Soap”, a soap created to encourage children to wash their hands, with a prize in the middle. This is the 19th year that the contest has been held, with the participation of 33 countries. The Israeli representative in the competition won first prize in the Science-Tech contest in Haifa. First prize in the European contest went to a group of students from Germany.

Letter of Praise

The following letter was sent to WIZO Canada, and we felt it should be shared throughout the WIZO world:

My name is Miriam Grunwald, I made Aliyah just over a year ago from Canada, where I lived for 37 years (originally I am from Chile). My dream was to make Aliyah with my family, because I feel Israel is home, and here we are.

I started volunteering at World WIZO a few months ago, in the Fundraising Department, and yesterday I had the privilege to visit the Hadassim Youth Village, sponsored by Hadassah-WIZO Canada. I felt I had to write a note to all the members of WIZO Canada because I was so impressed with what I saw. Hadassim is a beautiful place, it is well looked after and the people who work there apparently do a magnificent job. It is sad that we should need these type of places, but it is wonderful that there are groups like yours that are raising the money to maintain such a place. The concept is really good and it seems to be working very well for the children and youth.

So, I just wanted to wish you Yishar Koach and to congratulate you on a wonderful job, and Please keep it up!!!!

Miriam

They Came From Africa

At the request of Janet Olisa, wife of the Nigerian Ambassador to Israel, Esther Mor, chairperson of World WIZO Fundraising Department together with Hassida Danai, chairperson of World WIZO’s Early Age Division arranged a visit to a WIZO foster home for the wife of the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, who was in Israel on an official visit.

The entourage went to Beit Hapaamonim, a unique foster home for deprived and underprivileged children run by WIZO. Here, children from the age of 8 days to 3 or 3 ½, most of whom are sent to the home by court order live in a warm family atmosphere.

Dame Patience Goodluck Jonathan and her delegation of State Governors’ wives were so impressed by the home, that they all spontaneously gave generous donations towards the upkeep of the project.
UNITED KINGDOM

WIZO.uk Literary Lunch with celebrity authors
September saw authors Simon Sebag Montefiore, Joanna Trollop and Gyles Brandreth share their literary expertise with guests at WIZO.uk’s Literary Lunch. WIZO.uk projects in Israel will benefit from over £20,000 raised at the event. The lunch committee was chaired by Angela Landau.

Leeds Aviva & Anne Frank groups - a force in fashion
In Leeds, two WIZO.uk groups, Aviva and Anne Frank, joined forces to stage a fashion show making a handsome profit of £5,000 earmarked for essential services to the people of Israel.

WIZO Manchester Open Day
The Annual WIZO Manchester Open Day, held this year as part of WIZO’s 90th Anniversary celebrations, raised over £33,000 for WIZO projects supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged families in Israel.

Leeds Marie Apte Group’s Coffee Morning
There was no shortage of calories at Leeds Marie Apte group’s coffee morning at the home of Pam and Sam Goldman where a mouth-watering array of home-baked goods proved to be just too tempting. Group coordinator Maxine Brown introduced guest of honor, Pearl Goldberg and opener, Debbie Stewart. Hostesses were Marie Apte’s Shirley Berwin, Pam Goldman, Shirley Myerson and Bernice Pearlman. The group raised almost £1,400 including £400 alone from their cooking and baking for the event.

Sprinting for success in London’s Royal Parks half-marathon
Young WIZO.uk supporters joined 12,000 runners in the Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon one sunny day in October. The eleven-strong energetic Young WIZO team raised in excess of £8,000 towards WIZO’s Beit Shemesh Day Care Center near Jerusalem, which provides education and therapeutic services to vulnerable children. Young WIZO coordinator Vivi Citronenbaum said: “This, our first Young WIZO half marathon, was fantastic fun and everyone enjoyed running and raising much-needed funds for WIZO projects in Israel. The 13-mile half marathon takes in the four royal parks of central London, starting and finishing in Hyde Park and winding through St James’s Park, Green Park and parts of Kensington Gardens.

Glasgow WIZO Gala Dinner celebrates 80 glorious years
One hundred and fifty guests gathered at Glasgow’s Trades House to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Glasgow WIZO as well as Israel’s 60th and WIZO.uk’s 90th anniversary. Many past and present WIZO chairpersons attended the dinner hosted by Deirdre Bernard, co-chair of the Scottish WIZO Council. Guest speaker, former Foreign Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP expressed his admiration for the work done by WIZO in Scotland and his hope that peace would come to the Middle East. Flora Glekin, chair of WIZO Glasgow Central and Edith Eder, a vice-president of WIZO.uk, read out a heartfelt message from World WIZO Public Relations Department chair Brenda Katten who had been due to
speak at the function but had to cancel due to family commitments in Israel. In her message, Brenda spoke of how, despite the fact that Israel faces challenging times, there is much to celebrate, as Israel is a leading light in the fields of science, medicine and hi-tech.

Leeds Blanche Dugdale WIZO remembers Sheila Lewis

Leeds Blanche Dugdale WIZO held a coffee morning in memory of the late Sheila Lewis. Family members attended, including Mrs. Lewis’s two daughters-in-law, Nicola and Anne. In a warm tribute, Anne said, “Sheila was very aware of the responsibilities incumbent upon the stronger members of the community to support those who were weaker or disadvantaged.” And Nicola added, “All that is great about charitable work is exemplified by the efforts of Blanche Dugdale, putting others before self.”

Jewish Women’s Week opens doors for Israeli youth

WIZO.uk’s 2008 Jewish Women’s Week (JWW) campaign has raised a staggering £255,000 through its network of 1500 volunteer women collectors. The 2008 JWW Campaign, ‘Help us Open Doors’ symbolizes the doors of opportunity that WIZO helps to open for thousands of disadvantaged children and young people in Israel.

Andy Epstein, JWW chair explained, “These children may have had a disadvantaged start in family life through poverty, hardship or lack of education; they may have come from a single-parent family or a dysfunctional household. They may have been led astray into truancy, drugs or crime but if they are lucky enough to meet up with WIZO they have the chance to turn their life around.”

Friends of WIZO.uk Charity Golf Day tees off for special needs children

As part of WIZO’s 90th anniversary celebrations, the Friends of WIZO.uk held a charity golf day at the Hartsbourne Country Club in September with the participation of over 100 players and guests, raising the sum of £24,000 towards the continued care of children with special needs at three WIZO day care centers at Kiryat Shemona, Ashkelon and Ashdod. The women’s winning team was Paula Morris, Anne Orman, Lynn Leader Cramer and Gill Collins. The men’s winning team was David Carmen, Stephen Latner, Jeff Ward and Dudley Leigh.

Canada Hadassah-WIZO elects a new president

Two hundred delegates attended the 39th National Conference of Canadian Hadassah WIZO where Terry Schwarzfeld from Ottawa was elected 20th national president in the organization’s 90-year history. Toronto’s Maria Dan fills the newly-created position of first vice president. Terry outlined her aims and objectives for the next three-year administration, ensuring that CHW continues to support projects dedicated to the ‘C’ (children), ‘H’ (healthcare) and W (women). Themed ‘Igniting the Power of Women’, the three-day convention featured numerous guest speakers and enlightening sessions. Highlights included an engaging presentation by Prof. Mor-Yosef, director general of the Hadassah Medical Organization who spoke during the...
‘Focus on Israel’ session. Nicole Wurcker, a housemother at CHW Hadassim Children and Youth Village gave a moving talk. She was accompanied by two former students, Mirit and Or, who sang Israeli songs and shared their personal stories of the difference Hadassim had made to their lives.

Three Canadian women, Mayor Melissa Blake, Christine Wandzura and Olympic gold-medallist Hayley Wickenheiser were honored at a special luncheon recognizing their contributions to the community. At a gala dinner evening CHW welcomed Israel’s newly appointed Ambassador to Canada, HE Miriam Ziv, who was visiting Western Canada for the first time in her new role. Gail Asper, philanthropist, inspiring role model, and the force behind the creation of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (to be completed in 2011), received the Rebecca Sieff Award, the most prestigious award CHW bestows. Outgoing national president, Sandy Martin of Calgary, reflecting on her three-year term, paid a special tribute to her.

Ronald Lauder, president of the Neue Galerie, addressed guests by video-link from Israel where he praised WIZO for its crucial work. The dinner was chaired by Caren and Dr. Arturo Constantiner, Mira and Laurence Rappaport and Jamie and David Mitchell and featured a recital by pianist Roman Rabinovich and violinist Shir Levy. Mr. Scott Guterman, deputy director of the Neue Galerie, which also serves as a private museum, spoke about the tragic history of the famous painting by Gustav Klimt that was stolen by the Nazis and returned to its rightful owners after the war. Richard and Dana Kirshenbaum were presented with the WIZO Wall of Life award for their long-time support of WIZO. Daria Myers, president of Origins, accepted the award on behalf of Ronald Lauder for his continuing commitment to WIZO, Israel and the Jewish people.
WIZO Young Leadership celebrate their great cause

The WIZO Young Leadership group celebrated Rosh Hashanah with a ‘Youth for Youth for a Great Cause’ party that drew over 300 guests. The event, which was an outstanding success, was organized by a group of devoted chaverot.

FLORIDA
Honoring Regina Brandwayn

Under the leadership of WIZO Florida Vice President Beverly Koplowitz and Head of Fundraising Ruthy Benoliel, WIZO Florida celebrated its annual opening campaign dinner at the Trump International Beach Resort in September with guest speaker Ambassador Alon Pinkas, former consul general of Israel in New York. At the dinner, tributes were paid to woman of valor Regina Brandwayn and distinguished donors. WIZO Florida President Anita Friedman presented Mrs. Brandwayn with an award for her 60 years of devotion and dedication to WIZO. Over 50 VIP donors received attractive awards distributed by Ruthy Benoliel and Anita Friedman. WIZO presented Samuel Falic with an award in appreciation of his generosity in donating all of his bar mitzvah gifts to the organization. WIZO US Vice President Jana Falic made a heartfelt appeal for donations, after which the generous audience pledged in excess of $125,000.

HOUSTON
Wine, Women and WIZO

WIZO Houston held an enjoyable event for new members, entitled ‘Wine Women and WIZO’ at the Kathryn Risley Boutique in Houston. The triumphant and hugely entertaining evening hosted by Dorit Aaron, Tali Blumrosen, Susan Bono, Loring Goldberg, Laurie Lee and Marcy Midlo featured a talk by author Louise Parsley.

AUSTRIA
Helena saves the day at the Palais Epstein

Vienna’s Palais Epstein, an imposing neo-renaissance building built in the late 19th century was the perfect venue for WIZO Austria’s celebration of Israel’s 60th anniversary and 88 years of WIZO. Invitations to the event were issued by the President of the Austrian Parliament, Mag. Barbara Prammer who joined guests
of honor Israel’s Ambassador to Austria Dan Ashbel and his wife Zahava and World WIZO President Helena Glaser, who stood in for Israel’s Minister of Education Dr. Yuli Tamir, who cancelled at the last minute. The WIZO film ‘It’s all about love’ was screened, Mag. Prammer spoke about the history of the venue and Ambassador Dan Ashbel delighted the gathering with his warm and generous praise of WIZO’s work over the past 88 years. Dr. Hava Bugajer gave a comprehensive summary about the wonderful WIZO movement. Helena Glaser told the audience that despite its hundreds of projects and tens of thousands of service recipients, WIZO maintained a warm relationship with each individual long after they had outgrown the need for WIZO’s care – just like a family relationship. She paid tribute to WIZO Austria’s steadfast commitment to Israel. Just like in the words of the Mishna Tora, (Maimonides) ‘charity should be given cheerfully, compassionately and comforting,’ so it is done through WIZO and its chaverot throughout the world.

BELGIUM-LUXEMBOURG
Always busy in Belgium
The weeks preceding Rosh Hashanah are always hectic and WIZO members from all over Belgium and Luxembourg were rushed off their feet with their traditional sale of flowers for the festivals. In Antwerp, under the leadership of Liliane Einziger, the committee prepared a sumptuous buffet for 100 ladies at the annual Sponsors’ Lunch where well-known singer Myriam Fuks enchanted the gathering with Yiddish songs. Assisted by a happy band of helpers, Agnes Diamant oversaw the second-hand clothes sale, where visitors clamored for a designer outfit or vintage garment at the knock-down prices that make this eagerly-awaited annual event a real money earner. The Brussels chapter organized their annual High Tea at Knokke Le Zoute sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Jean Kluger under the patronage of F. Goldman, R.Grajower, L. Guterman, H.Fischgrund, T.Jacoud and I. Rozenbaum. At a conference organized by Lea Guttermann at the home of Mrs. Michèle Levy, a reception was held to honor the guest of honor Princess Léa of Belgium.

Something to share - ‘WIZO Forever’ is launched
WIZO Belgium-Luxembourg chaverot have certainly come up with a recipe for success with their new magazine, ‘WIZO Forever’ based on the premise that WIZO women learn from one another. The magazine includes anecdotes, shared advice and the
wisdom of experience from older members, insight and organizational tips from middle-aged members and the more spontaneous energetic creativity of the younger WIZO member. Such ingredients when mixed with a little ‘spice’ and an abiding love of Israel and the desire to create a better world are the perfect mix for a magazine that will certainly become the ‘bible’ of the Belgian WIZO woman.

FRANCE

WIZO France enjoys a laugh with Rabbi Jacob

WIZO France, in a joint venture with Hadassah France, presented the premiere of the musical comedy ‘The Adventures of Rabbi Jacob’ at the Palais des Congres in Paris. All 3,800 seats in the theater were occupied as an enthusiastic audience roasted with laughter at this highly entertaining and profitable event.

WIZO France President Nathalie Cohen-Beizermann spoke eloquently on WIZO’s vital role in providing for the people of Israel and a heart-rending video presentation was shown illustrating the daily anguish of the inhabitants of the southern city of Sderot who live under the fear of rocket fire from the Gaza Strip.

Fifty-fifth WIZO Book Festival

On a sunny afternoon in October, WIZO France held their 55\textsuperscript{th} Book Festival and 30th WIZO Literary Prize Presentation in the exquisite setting of Paris’s Pavillon Dauphine. Many celebrated writers attended to support WIZO and present their work. Israeli authoress Shifra Horn was the 2008 WIZO literary prize winner for her book ‘Ode to Joy’. The book festival was organized by Clarisse Lacroixniere and her dynamic team.

FRANCE

FRANCE. WIZO France President Nathalie Cohen-Beizermann surrounded by her organizational team

FRANCE. Israeli author Shifra Horn, WIZO France’s 2008 literary prize winner

FRANCE. Clarisse Lacroixniere surrounded by her team at the 55\textsuperscript{th} Book Festival

GERMANY

WIZO Berlin’s Sponsor a Child is a knock-out

The unique glassed courtyard of the Berlin Jewish Museum provided a magnificent backdrop to a festive gourmet dinner enjoyed by almost 200 guests, made possible through the generosity of the Albeck and Zehden families of Berlin. An American Auction for two tickets to a boxing match with boxing champion Arthur Abraham in Berlin raised additional funds. The celebrated boxer donated a pair of autographed boxing gloves to the winner of the auction. After dinner and formalities guests partied to 70s and 80s hits played by DJ Ronan Nussbaum and songs by the talented young Israeli singer, Shai. As ever, WIZO Berlin’s Sponsor a Child was a great triumph, not least for the 260 Israeli children who will have a guaranteed place in WIZO kindergartens in the coming year.

GERMANY

FRANCE.

WIZO Berlin Chairperson Michal Gelerman and boxing champion Arthur Abraham
Ruth Borenstein receives Order of Merit

WIZO Germany President Rachel Singer and Vice President Diane Schnabel joined dignitaries, family and friends at Hannover City Hall to witness the Order of Merit of the German Federal Republic bestowed on Mrs. Ruth Borenstein for her many years dedicated service as chairperson of the small but efficient Hellen-Hannover WIZO group, known for its bazaars. A generous donor herself, Ruth tirelessly flew the WIZO flag encouraging people to be active, never passing up an opportunity to find new friends for WIZO and Israel. Hauke Jagau, President of the Region of Hannover, presented the justly deserved accolade.

Frankfurt's Charity Fashion Show dazzles the crowd

In her welcome speech at Frankfurt WIZO’s ‘Fashion & Cocktail’ fashion show, WIZO Germany Vice President Diana Schnabel informed the 350 assembled guests that proceeds from the evening would enable the new building for the Theodor Heuss Family Therapy Center to be accessible for the physically disabled. RTL TV presenter Jennifer Knäble introduced the 35 models, all WIZO members and family members from aged eight to over 70 who took to the catwalk with great panache. The models, sporting the latest luxury brand Vertu mobile phones were styled to perfection by hair designer Matthias Scheffler and exciting makeup by Mary Kay Cosmetics. A welcome surprise was loyal friend of WIZO and charming television presenter Andrea Kiewel, who took on the role of super model. The fashion show was crowned by ‘the last picture show’ – a stunning vision of chic evening fashions by Ella Singh. In red and black chiffons from Kubu, a truly magical display by the models was met with thunderous applause, as choreographer Inbar Oppenheimer was presented with a bouquet. Such a stupendous show could not have been possible without the organizing committee, in particular Anita Schwarz and Ines Dabrowski. The question asked by an appreciative audience hungry for more was unanimously ‘When is the next fashion show?’

GREECE

WIZO Thessaloniki honors Bat Mitzvah girls

Family, friends and WIZO chaverot attended the delightful Bat Mitzvah ceremony of six lovely young ladies: Foulia, Hana, Lydia, Mary, Natali and Sara, at Thessaloniki’s Synagogue of Monastiriotes. Rabbi Eliaou Shitrit was joined by President of the Community Mr. David Saltiel and WIZO Greece President Flora Michael in blessing the girls, one of whom is Flora Michael’s granddaughter and another the granddaughter of WIZO Thessaloniki secretary Daisy Varsano. Reading a passage from the Torah, the six young ladies vowed to continue the Jewish tradition in the same exemplary manner of their parents and grandparents. Lighting the menora candles each girl gave a speech about their family history and their aspirations for the future and sang melodious traditional Hebrew songs. The ceremony concluded with the opening of the Ark as the girls accompanied their proud fathers who paraded the sacred Torah scrolls around the congregation.

HOLLAND

WIZO Holland’s Jubilee Day attracts record crowds

A staggering 2,000 people flocked to the Amsterdam Hilton to participate in WIZO Holland’s 60th Anniversary Jubilee
Day. WIZO Holland President Joyce Numann-Dorlacher welcomed visitors and introduced WIZO Holland’s very first film production, which gave an overview of WIZO’s activities both in Holland and in Israel.

The day’s program included workshops on: ‘Art and Fundraising’ presented by the Jewish Historical Museum director, ‘Conducting for Everyone’ by a well-known Jewish conductor, ‘Women’s emancipation within Judaism’ by a recently inaugurated female rabbi and a presentation by an orthodox female doctor of psychology who has campaigned for the advancement of the status of Jewish women for many years. As well as live musical performances, attendees enjoyed an interview with a celebrated Dutch film director by a young Jewish authoress, and three Jewish authors were on hand to sign their books.

For the children, the WIZ-O Kids Club kept the toddlers happily occupied and the six to twelve year olds showed off their talents in the Song and Dance Workshop. Ladies were pampered at the beauty parlor and the well-stocked bazaar reported brisk sales of Jewish and Israeli handicrafts. The director of Sotheby’s in Amsterdam officiated at the auction.

The day concluded with the launch of WIZO Holland’s remodeled state-of-the-art website: www.wizo.nl, which only proves that it is not just the tulips that put on an impressive show in Amsterdam!

**HUNGARY**

Celebrating Israel at 60 in Budapest

The mood was jubilant in the Jewish Community Hall when WIZO Hungary held a festive dinner party to celebrate Israel’s 60th anniversary with special guests Aliza Bin-Noun, Israel’s Ambassador to Hungary and Professor Dr. Josef Schweitzer, the retired Chief Rabbi of Hungary.

**ITALY**

Adei-WIZO elects New President

In October, Adei-WIZO held its general assembly with the participation of all the Italian branches. Elections are held in the Italian Federation every three years and 2008 marked the end of the third term of Ziva Fischer as national president. Ziva will remain on the executive as head of Adei-WIZO’s Public Relations Department. Mrs. Roberta Nahum from Rome was elected national president and two vice-presidents were also elected: Silvia Di Chio, from Turin and Silvana Ester Israel from Verona (for a second term). The heads of various executive departments were also elected.

**Eighth Adei-WIZO Literary Prize in memory of Adelina Della Pergola**

The 8th Adei-WIZO Literary Prize, dedicated to the memory of one of the Italian Federation’s outstanding leaders, Adelina Della Pergola, was held on the second day of the Adei-WIZO General Assembly at the Galleria Civica d’Arte Moderna in Turin. Many national and local dignitaries attended and this most esteemed event received much press coverage. The awards were presented with great enthusiasm by celebrated writers and intellectuals Alberto Cavaglione, Filippo Tuena and Giorgio Van Straten. The first prize went to Daniel Mendelsohn for ‘The Lost. Search for Six Million’; second prize ‘Melnitz’ by Charles Lewinsky. The third prize went to Nathan Englander for ‘The Ministry of Special Cases’. Formalities aside, the assembly offered chaverot from all over Italy the opportunity to get together, to discuss important issues and delight in the wonderful world of WIZO.
Sapphires and Rubies as Stockholm celebrates 75 years

Over 100 guests attended the 75th anniversary celebrations of WIZO Stockholm held in a magnificent hall located on Stockholm’s spectacular waterfront. Vice Chairman of WIZO Stockholm Mrs. Wivianne Nisell officially opened the evening. Among the other speakers were Mrs. Eva Cederbaum, a distinguished member since 1952, who gave a personal account of WIZO and its crucial role in bettering Israel’s tomorrow, and WIZO Sweden President Gila Bornstein who extended good wishes to the Stockholm branch. The new Israeli Ambassador to Sweden, Benny Dagan attending the anniversary dinner with his wife Irit, quoted the words of the prophet Yeshayahu “Behold I will set your stones in fair colours and lay your foundations with sapphires” and wished WIZO many, many sapphires and rubies on its foundation and milestone.

Participants enjoyed a sumptuous dinner with entertainment by a variety of artistes ranging from a very talented seven-year-old classic piano virtuoso to contemporary musicians and dancers. The highlight of the evening was the performance by celebrated Swedish performers, Lill Lindfors and Dan Ekborg.

WIZO Sweden, despite its small size, is great in its contribution to the State of Israel sponsoring six day care centers, an activity center, a women’s club and hotline.

Finding the perfect gift in Lausanne

In Lausanne, the WIZO Gift Market had plenty to offer, selling toys, books, food, Israeli wine and delightful presents. The children of the Gan Chlomo Kindergarten and School who had their very own stand were delighted to learn that the profit from their sale of cakes was enough to support one child for one year in a Swiss WIZO day care center in Israel.

Delightful dinner in Geneva

The Swiss WIZO Federation, together with Maccabi and Keren Kayemet L’Israel, hosted a dinner for 250 guests in Geneva’s Hotel President where the very talented international actor and comedian Michel Boujenah delighted the audience with his excellent one-man show. Amongst the guests of honor were Ruth Fayon, celebrating her 80th birthday, and the Mayor of Geneva, Mr. Didier Tornare. It was a very successful and entertaining event.
**INDIA**

One year old and thriving

At a joyous event to celebrate WIZO India’s first anniversary in October, WIZO India President Yael Jhirad delivered World WIZO President Helena Glaser’s warm greeting and welcomed Ms Orna Savi, the new Consul General of Israel to India, inaugurating her as an honorary member of WIZO India. Ms Savi addressed the gathering on ‘the role of women in modern Israeli society’ emphasizing the significance of providing equal opportunities for career women. She applauded WIZO for its outstanding contribution and mentioned that her own children attended a WIZO kindergarten. Guests of honor included Mr. Solomon Sopher, Chairman and Managing Trustee of The Sassoon Charities and Allied Trusts and Mrs. Asha Sawant, Vice Chairman of The Association of Women Entrepreneurs Industrialist of Maharashtra State and District Chairperson of Cancer Detection of The Lions Club. Both Mr. Solomon and Mrs. Sawant were inducted as patrons. Guests watched movies of the critical work carried out by WIZO in Israel. Students from WIZO families were awarded WIZO medals for their outstanding academic achievements in the past year. They also entertained the gathering with a selection of Hindu songs. Mrs. Sheba Nagaokar, a founder member of WIZO India, generously donated the celebration cake.

Since its birth in October 2007, WIZO India has held several interesting meetings and women have flocked to become members. Recent activities include a vegetable-carving workshop by Mrs. Sushila Pansare where chaverot learned new ways to decorate the table for the chagim (Jewish festivals). A vegetarian Succoth dinner was held in the succah of the Magen David Synagogue. Members and their families participated in the special High Holiday traditions of the Bene Yisroel Community and sang songs for the festival in the Marathi language. Exactly one year to the day when World WIZO President Helena Glaser visited India to bring the WIZO India Federation to life, a new ‘baby’ was born in October 2008 – a WIZO group in the city of Pune, 180 km. from Mumbai, truly a new beginning in a new region.

**SOUTH AMERICA**

**ARGENTINA**

Drawing, painting and sculpture at the Spring Saloon

The ‘Spring Saloon’ contest took place at OSFA WIZO Argentina’s headquarters, where many well-known artists put their talent to the test in the three categories of drawing, painting and sculpture. The contest was organized by OSFA WIZO Argentina Chairperson, Ruth Stecher, with Nora Recepter, herself a well-known painter, acting as curator. The jury, composed of three teachers from the High School of Arts in Quilmes made their selection from a host of excellent entries, and prizes were awarded to the artists who produced the
three best works. Seventy guests enjoyed inspecting the artwork and enthusiastically raised a glass of wine in honor of all the talented artists.

Music and Solidarity
Mrs. Carlota Meta, a great friend of WIZO Argentina, provided the wonderful hall where the melodic strains of classical music rang out from seven orchestras in a remarkable concert. The orchestras, all comprised of youngsters from poor neighborhoods, are part of an educational program from the Buenos Aires City Education Ministry. The Orchestra Retiro consists of 108 musicians, 70 of which presented a jubilant program under the baton of Master Carlos Polizotto. The talented youngsters are all receiving scholarships from local government as part of the educational program. For WIZO Argentina, the concert was an excellent way to raise its profile in the wider community and a good example of its commitment to the education of youth.

BRAZIL
Visit by World WIZO Chairperson
WIZO Brazil was honored by a visit of World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben Dov. Her eventful schedule included meetings with many community leaders, Aviv groups and local dignitaries. She addressed 800 worshippers at a Reform synagogue, enjoyed lunches with members where she spoke of WIZO’s commitment to the people of Israel and praised the Brazilian Federation for its valuable part in keeping the WIZO dream alive. In a radio interview for Band Network, Tova outlined the protection WIZO offers to youngsters and women at its institutions in Israel. Mrs. Tzipora Rimon, Israeli Ambassador to Brazil and Rabbi Michael Schlesinger were among the many guests greeting Tova at WIZO Sao Paulo to celebrate Israel at 60.

WIZO Parana forms new Aviv group
WIZO Brazil has formed a new Aviv group in Curitiba. WIZO Brazil Honorary Life President Ana Marlene Starec traveled to Curitiba for the inauguration of the new Aviv group, whose 15 enthusiastic young members will certainly ensure the success of this new WIZO Parana chapter.

WIZO Rio Grande do Sul goes green
In September, on the day Brazil celebrated International Arbor Day coinciding with the beginning of spring, WIZO Rio Grande do Sul sponsored the planting of five trees at Carlos Simao Amt Square in Porto Alegre, a site assigned by the Municipal Ecosystem Agency. Attended by many local authorities, community leaders and the general public, WIZO members carried out a beautiful symbolic tribute to nature.

WIZO Rio de Janeiro celebrates Rosh Hashanah in high spirits
WIZO Rio sector held a delightful evening to celebrate Rosh Hashanah in honor of Henny Landau. Guests enjoyed a traditional festive dinner and heard the rousing sound of the Shofar (ancient ritual horn) played by Felipe Cusnir. They listened to a cabalistic insight given by Banot Group member Sandra Strauss and cheery chaverot showed off their customized WIZO T-shirts. Members also gathered at WIZO Rio’s head office to celebrate the New Year with traditional Rosh Hashanah songs performed by Vozes da WIZO choir, conducted by Mauro Perelman under the supervision of Morah Sarinha Lewkowicz. Rebbetzin Melina Schreem delivered an optimistic talk entitled ‘The Joy of Living’. Mrs. Rose Dahis, represented by her aunt Mrs. Rosa Beznos, was presented with a World WIZO ‘Sponsor A Child’ pin by WIZO Rio past President Mrs. Suzana Grinspan.
Standing room only for Yehoram Gaon

The WIZO Sao Paulo group, Tzeirot, in a shared venture with Keren Kayemet L'Israel (Jewish National Fund) sponsored a fantastic evening production of the Yehoram Gaon show in Sao Paulo. The popular Israeli singer and actor’s performance took place in September after months of planning by the dynamic Aviv group under the supervision of Nava Politi, Iza Mansur and Helena Nasser with the participation of every WIZO Sao Paulo group in ticket sales and sponsorship. The theater was filled to capacity.

WIZO Pernambuco goes to the movies

In August, the WIZO Pernambuco Aviv Group sponsored the exhibition of two motion pictures, as part of the 12th Jewish Movie Festival in Recife. The event was welcomed by the local community who were most supportive and very excited by the newly formed Aviv group’s first campaign.

WIZO Pernambuco's Bazaar Israel 60

WIZO Bogota’s ‘Bazaar Israel 60’ in celebration of Israel’s 60th anniversary was held at the Carmel Country Club in September. The well-organized bazaar was packed with attractions for visitors.

Tova praises Brazil and Chile WIZO chaverot

“I have to admit I embarked on my mission to Brazil and Chile with some trepidation. This was my first visit to Latin America and my main concern was how I would communicate with the chaverot, as I don’t speak Spanish. I need not have worried. Many of the chaverot spoke fluent Hebrew; in Chile they learn Ivrit b’ivrit (Hebrew in Hebrew) in a Jewish school founded in 1930. Also many of them spoke Yiddish.

I was so overcome by the warm welcome in both countries, where I immediately felt at home. I was so impressed by their love and devotion to WIZO and the State of Israel. It was so gratifying to see the wonderful Aviv girls and their deep feelings and interest in their projects. They all realize the importance of Jewish education, and the State of Israel and Zionism are so important to them. I was overwhelmed by the closeness and vibrancy of the communities and I truly felt that the continuity of the Jewish people is alive and well in Brazil and Chile.”

Tova meets with warmth and friendship in Chile

World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben-Dov visited WIZO Chile in August. Her mission took in meetings with various audiences where she brought greetings from Israel and spoke about WIZO’s essential services to the people of Israel. At an evening reception at the home of Sira and Salo Rezepka, Tova met with major donors. The Israeli Ambassador to Chile and his wife, the Israeli Consul and military attache also attended. Tova visited the delightful 1,400-pupil Chaim Weizmann Colegio Hebrew Jewish School where posters of Israel hang on the walls. Dedicated to the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, the evening gala, ‘Night of WIZO Friendship’ was a truly Israeli affair with the hall and flowers all in blue and white. Five generations of past presidents who all spoke of their delight at the development of WIZO in Chile joined in the festivities. Tova attended a meeting with Mr. Pablo Varas Fuenzalida, Director of the Women’s Division in the Chilean Parliament who expressed interest in WIZO’s work for the advancement of women.

COLOMBIA

Taking a tumble at Bazaar Israel 60

WIZO Bogota’s ‘Bazaar Israel 60’ in celebration of Israel’s 60th anniversary was held at the Carmel Country Club in September. The well-organized bazaar was packed with attractions for visitors.
all the family including an exhibition of whimsical sculptures by Israeli artist David Gerstein and numerous stalls selling Israeli handicrafts, jewelry, fancy goods, toys and candies. ‘Kafe Kapulsky’ kept appetites sated with its mouth-watering assortment of gateaux donated by ladies of the community and ticket sales were buoyant for the raffle prize of a Dell laptop computer. Bouncing castles and inflatables provided soft landing for some energetic tumbling by the children whose smiles warmed the heart and made all the hard work worthwhile.

**MEXICO**

**WIZO Mexico – a movement in perpetual motion**

The Jayeinu Group held their two-yearly golf tournament, the proceeds of which resulted in the donation of two special beds for children with respiratory problems at the INEA hospital’s Dr Fernando Katz Paediatric Wing. Among other WIZO Mexico events, Astrologer Letty Sacal gave an illuminating lecture linking Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to astrological forces. Rabbi Abraham Tobal spoke of the significance of Succoth at a meeting that took place in the succah of the Monte Sinai Community.

The theme of the annual Book Day was ‘The Book versus Technology’ in which doctor of comparative literature Linda Shabot, writer and journalist Jose Gordon and 18-year-old Jessi Saba presented their arguments. The Javerut Group held a bowls tournament, and the Noar Group sold 300 tickets for a concert featuring London’s BBC Philharmonic Orchestra playing the music of the Beatles. Famous department store Sak’s Fifth Avenue Mexico lent their valued support to the Aliyah, Arazim and Shalom Groups who put on an elegant and unique Fashion Show. After months of planning, the ‘Renaissance to Four Pianos’ concert was music to the ears of a rapt audience. The most important event in WIZO Mexico’s calendar was the Education Project with over 1,000 participants including the Israeli Ambassador to Mexico, Mr. Yosef Livne and his wife, Norma.

**PANAMA**

**Second Latin American Art Sale is a masterpiece**

One weekend in September, WIZO Panama’s Sarie Hanono and Atid groups presented their second exhibition and sale of Latin American Art at the Hebrew Cultural and Charity Center. Over 1000 invitations were sent out, each with a CD sample of some of the art works for sale and posters and flyers advertising the event were distributed to every WIZO group in Panama. The Saturday evening
Everyone a winner at Etgar’s Golf Day
In September, WIZO Johannesburg’s Etgar Branch, in conjunction with CHOC (Children’s Haematology and Oncology Center) held a very successful Golf Day. Over 120 enthusiastic golfers joined Etgar ladies at the Kyalami Golf Course in Johannesburg, eager to play their best game. There were fabulous prizes for everyone but the biggest winners of all were WIZO and the children of CHOC.

Gifts galore at Durban’s Yom Tov Market
WIZO Durban’s Yom Tov Market is the ideal place to shop for that perfect High-Holiday gift and it has become something of a tradition and much anticipated event for Durban ladies. This year was no exception and it was resplendent with floral arrangements and gorgeous gifts in time for the pre-Rosh Hashanah trade.

AUSTRALIA
Campaign fundraiser goes countrywide
So successful was WIZO Australia’s national series of gala fundraisers held in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane for their campaign ‘Light a star over a WIZO child’, that this winning formula will most certainly be repeated in the future. In celebration of Israel’s 60th and WIZO’s 88th birthday, WIZO Australia took their gala fundraiser countrywide with guest speaker Juval Aviv who was accompanied by his wife, Tsila. Juval, a world-acclaimed expert on international terrorism and author of the book ‘Vengeance’ on which Steven Spielberg based his film ‘Munich’ enthralled audiences in the four major cities of Australia with anecdotes, stories and personal experiences. The stunning Israeli singer Osnat Zeno delighted audiences with her music. Not only did these sell-out functions raise WIZO’s profile in the community, they brought in significant revenue to aid the already considerable contribution WIZO Australia makes to Israel.