Investing in People for Israel’s Future

The 24th World WIZO Enlarged General Meeting
INVESTING IN PEOPLE FOR ISRAEL’S FUTURE
INVIRTAMOS EN EL POTENCIAL HUMANO PARA EL FUTURO DE ISRAEL
INVESTISSONS DANS LE POTENTIEL HUMAIN POUR L’Avenir D’ISRAËL
INVESTIEREN IN DIE ZUKUNFT DER MENSCHEN IN ISRAEL
INVESTINDO NO POTENCIAL HUMANO PARA O FUTURO DE ISRAEL
Cover: The 24th World WIZO Enlarged General Meeting: Investing in People for Israel’s Future

Contents

04 President’s Desk

05 Chairperson’s Column

06 Then and Now
An absorbing comparison between 1948 and 2008 in the approach to Early Age Childcare, Education and the Status of Women, revealing little-known facts

12 Indian Dreams
Welcome to our new Federation!

14 WIZO Changed My Life
Three personal and touching stories from a Jewish Israeli young man, an Arab Israeli woman and an Ethiopian immigrant

22 AVIV Now
World WIZO Aviv Representative’s column and four portraits of today’s Aviv woman from around the WIZO world

26 WIZO Posters
A look at yesteryear

28 Behind the Scenes at WIZO
As they conclude their term of office, Brenda Katten, Chairperson Public Affairs & NGO Department, and Celia Michonik Chairperson, Fundraising Department, reflect on the past eight years

32 The Story of WIZO
Tribute to WIZO by leading Israeli poet Haim Hefer

34 Rosa Ginossar: The First Female Lawyer in Zion
A fascinating portrait of Rosa Ginossar, WIZO’s second president and the first female lawyer in the pre-state Jewish yishuv in Palestine

37 WIZO Around the World
Reports from our Federations across the globe

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President’s Desk

This edition of the WIZO Review will be distributed during the 24th World WIZO Enlarged General Meeting. About 1000 WIZO chaverot have come from all over the world to take part in this important WIZO celebration. They may differ in language, mentality and appearance but they share and unite in the WIZO spirit. Old friendships are rekindled, new friendships forged, valuable ideas and information are exchanged and a good time is had by all!

We chose the theme Investing in People for Israel’s Future as it summarizes and celebrates 88 years of blessed WIZO activity and reflects the WIZO concept in general. In addition, as WIZO has been involved in our beloved State’s history every step and inch of the way, the 2008 World WIZO EGM is marking Israel’s 60th year of independence and 40 years since the reunification of Jerusalem.

Notwithstanding, Investing in People for Israel’s Future has another significant meaning for me. I have said on many occasions that WIZO’s strength is in its ability to grow, evolve and develop in order to keep up with and adapt to the changes and needs of time, thus maintaining its relevance, continuity and vitality.

Our experience has taught us that only a continuous, strong and professional WIZO will guarantee its future and that of the projects and services it provides, and make it attractive to new membership. This leads me to the obvious conclusion that Investing in People for Israel’s Future also means investing in WIZO’s most precious commodity – its chaverot of all ages and walks of life that are to WIZO what the roots, stem, leaves and petals are to a flower – our WIZO Flower.

We must strive to broaden the scope of professionalism and skills of our chaverot in Israel and in the Federations through lectures, seminars and workshops. We must continue to provide them with innovative WIZO tools that will improve the level of effective and efficient work carried out by the Federations and WIZO projects and services.

At the 2008 EGM, we are paying tribute to our roots – our World WIZO Honorary Life members - and to our young saplings – WIZO Aviv International Seminar graduates – past and present – who are the living evidence how significant investing in WIZO human resources is for the future of our organization, the society in Israel and the Diaspora.

Many members of the current leadership of World WIZO and its Federations began their Executive WIZO ascent at an Aviv Seminar, and they have continued to grow and grow, to go from strength to strength and pave the way for those who will follow in their footsteps.

Every WIZO chavera has come to the 2008 EGM, either in person or in spirit, as every one of you is an integral part of the intricate WIZO tapestry that is Eretz Israel, the State of Israel and the Diaspora. You share in our past, present and future, you are a full partner to all we have achieved and have yet to accomplish.

I am proud and privileged to be your President and I look to the future with joy and hope.

Helena Glaser, President
World WIZO
Raya Jaglom, Honorary Life President World WIZO
Michal Modai, Honorary Life President, World WIZO
Tova Ben-Dov, Chairperson World WIZO Executive
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It is hard to imagine that four years have passed since the last World WIZO Conference. During the last four years, we have gone through the trauma of a war, have seen an increase in poverty, our Prime Minister Ariel Sharon incapacitated by health problems and a new government sworn in, with new ideas, on a platform that promised to help the poor, though this has yet to happen. We have seen 10,000 citizens, who lived in Gaza, evicted from their homes and overnight become refugees in their own country. We have experienced an intifada and terrorism and seen our soldiers kidnapped, yet contrary to all rules of international law, have not received any word on their fate.

As the proud operators of over 800 institutions and projects in Israel we play a part in every facet of life in our country. Every time there is any type of incident, someone in our WIZO family, whether directly or indirectly, is affected, since the map of WIZO is the map of Israel, and we are working hard to improve the lives of its people. But at no time during the last four years have we in Israel, and in WIZO, felt alone with our troubles. We have always known that we have a sisterhood, which may be far away, but is a part of us. I am referring, of course, to you, our WIZO family around the world.

At no time, during the past four years, have I felt alone with the problems that could have overwhelmed me. I could telephone every one of you and immediately find, not only a sympathetic ear, but hands on help and assistance. At the same time, I have heard from you about your problems in the federations, the changing often hostile conditions that you have to cope with, and have tried to keep you involved in all that is happening here, so that you have the information that you need, aware of the saying, “Knowledge is Power”. We are not only a partnership, as a partnership suggests two bodies helping each another. We are ONE. When you hurt, we hurt, and when we hurt, you too feel the pain.

We have also enjoyed many sweet moments together over the last four years – the opening of new projects, scholastic achievements by our pupils, prizes and awards. We have made a difference to so many lives, and this Conference is our moment to share our love for one another, for Israel and for WIZO.

And when, after these few days come to an end and we all return to our respective homes, we will take with us the love and caring, together with the WIZO vision, which will motivate us during the next four years.

I wish you an enjoyable and fruitful Conference.

The President, Chairperson, World WIZO Executive
And the entire WIZO family
Expresses sincere condolences to
World WIZO Honorary Life President
Mrs. Raya Jaglom
On the death of her dear husband
Josef aged 104
1903-2007
Then and Now: WIZO Schools and Youth Villages

What was WIZO’s educational approach in the schools and youth villages after WW II and in the early years of the State?

The first goal was to absorb the children who survived the Holocaust, and to enable them to be integrated into the country. This meant to teach them Hebrew, and to introduce them to Jewish and Israeli culture. Another emphasis was the role of physical labor, which was an inherent part of our educational approach. In all of our youth villages the kids learned how to work in agriculture.

A good example of this was the large number of children who arrived from Europe at WIZO Hadassim. Among the first was Shevach Weiss, who arrived without any family, and later became a professor and Speaker of the Knesset. **At that time, the meaning of work was first and foremost agriculture.**

There wasn’t anything else. If you wanted to be absorbed in the country as an Israeli, to be like the native-born sabras, the first thing was to learn how to do physical labor, and that meant agriculture. This was the means of striking roots in the land of Israel. Most of the youth villages had agricultural land where various agricultural skills were taught.

In 1950-51, we also began to absorb waves of immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa. Most of them arrived together with their parents. However, as is related in books such as “Scapegoat” (Tarnegol Kaparot) by author Eli Amir, who came on aliya from Baghdad with his family in the early 1950s, families that lived in immigrant transient camps decided to send their children to a kibbutz or a youth village to hasten their process of integration in Israel.

Yes, in the 1950s and 1960s, the youth villages were at the center of the Israeli ethos, which stated that, in addition to preparation for agriculture, the education you receive would prepare you to confront the national tasks facing the State of Israel. This continued a tradition which began even in the 1930s and 1940s. Yitzhak Rabin, who was born in Jerusalem and spent his early childhood in Tel Aviv, was sent to the Kadourie School, a boarding school in the north which educated towards these national values.

Ammon Eitan, a veteran educator in the WIZO and kibbutz school systems, gave us a fascinating insight into the differences between the educational approach in 1948 and the reality of 2008.

What was there an encounter at the WIZO schools and youth villages between the native-born Israelis and the new immigrant youth?

There definitely was a positive, welcome encounter between immigrant and native-born Israeli youth. Actress Gila Almagor wrote about this in her book, “The Domim Tree is...
native-born Israelis and come from a better socio-economic background. There are places where this creates problems, but there are others where the outcome is very positive. Most of the children arrive today as a result of a referral from the Social Welfare Ministry or municipal social workers. The youth village boarding schools provide an answer to children whose families are facing financial difficulties or are dysfunctional. This is frequently the last possible answer for these youngsters to develop and escape from the difficulties at home. This has forced the youth villages to develop additional educational tools to successfully face these challenges. The counselors and house-mothers have to provide many more individual answers to the youth, some of whom have psychological and learning difficulties. We have to find ways to motivate these children and to provide them with a meaningful and varied daily routine.

We retain a high educational standard, because our goal is to ensure that all the children who study at WIZO schools will obtain a 12th grade education, and will pass their matriculation exams and receive a graduation certificate. Given the increase in the number of families who have fallen below the poverty line, we believe that the need for youth village education is even greater than it was in the past. Has the educational curriculum changed significantly since the early days of the state? It's clear that agriculture is no longer a primary goal.

We now have a policy in all of our schools and youth villages that a graduate of our system must have a matriculation certificate. This wasn't a goal in the early days of the state, in the WIZO or the kibbutz schools. Today, a matriculation certificate is considered a basic entrance tool into Israeli society and for further development in higher education. The curriculum in all of our schools follows the requirements of the Ministry of Education. And special study tracks have been developed in accordance with the knowledge and the initiatives of the educators in our schools. These include advanced agricultural tracks, such as the tissue culture of the WIZO Gardening and Landscape Technology Youth Village (sponsored by WIZO Switzerland), and cinema, graphics and art, which didn't exist in the past.

We also have special tracks for children with learning difficulties which enable them to complete their matriculation studies. We don't want to rest on our laurels. Our goal is to be at the cutting edge of the new educational developments. This helps to increase the attractiveness and competitive ability of our schools and youth villages. We know that the key is the stories that our graduates tell to their friends and their younger brothers and sisters. As long as we create a positive educational and social experience in our schools and youth villages, they will continue to attract future generations of youth.

Amnon Elan was a member of Kibbutz Hamadiya in the Bet Sha’an Valley where he was principal of the high school. In 1987 he left the kibbutz and served as director of WIZO-Hadassah Canada Hadassim School for 15 years. For four years he was the director of the WIZO Municipal High School for Art and Design in Haifa (sponsored by WIZO Belgium & Luxembourg and WIZO Uruguay), and now is the director of the informal education track of the World WIZO Educational Division.
Then and Now: Early Age Childcare

Has early age childcare changed since the early days of the State?
We live in a very dynamic, changing environment. Not only every decade, but almost every year there are new methods and approaches. Today we live in a very varied and competitive environment, with changing security requirements, and we constantly have to adapt to the changing times.

WIZO’s approach to early age childcare in the early years was based on the idea of baby homes, which were meant for children who lacked any family structure; they were established for children who were abandoned because of economic circumstances.
The first WIZO day care center was established in 1932 in Tel Aviv, and today there are a total of 170 day care centers throughout the country.

In those first years, was there an assumption that the mother of a young child was a working mother?
From the very beginning the goal was to provide a service for working mothers. This was an integral part of the pioneering ethos and the belief in equality between men and women that guided the founding fathers and mothers of the state.

Today we don't think in terms of working mothers only, but rather of a young family, where both parents go out to work. Thus we are providing a service to the entire family.

Today we believe in providing universal solutions to everyone, but also in providing individual solutions for specific communities.

WIZO is also providing services for children who have had to leave their homes and live in a boarding school arrangement. This is quite similar in many ways to the WIZO baby homes that existed in the 1950s and 1960s.

In 2008 we believe in a holistic approach which provides a series of services to children, parents and the community.

We have day care centers and multi-purpose day care centers, and have added home visits to the families of the children who are attending WIZO day care centers. This is a new model we have developed together with the Ministry of Social Welfare.

We want to see the family as a partner in finding educational solutions for their children.

What is the focus of the Early Age Childcare Division today?
The central theme of our division this year is working with the parents. We see the parents as an essential component of our work, since we view the child as being within the context of his or her family. Even in stronger sectors of the society there are situations where children are neglected.

The parents are devoting all of their time to work, and their children are emotionally neglected.

We recently opened an advice hot-line as a general service.
Before the establishment of the State, the very existence of that. Today, the reality and the proportions are different. In the late 1940s and 1950s, immigrants were the majority – it's a microcosm of the State. WIZO reflects the reality of the entire population of Israel only provide services to specific sectors, but to everyone. childcare, absorbing everyone who needs day care. We don't provide services to specific sectors, but to everyone. Villages, because we have a universal approach to early age. However, this is less evident than it is in the schools and youth villages, because we have a universal approach to early age childcare, absorbing everyone who needs day care. We don't only provide services to specific sectors, but to everyone. WIZO reflects the reality of the entire population of Israel – it's a microcosm of the State.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, immigrants were the majority of the population, and the WIZO day care centers reflected that. Today, the reality and the proportions are different. Before the establishment of the State, the very existence of day centers was an initiative of the women's organizations like WIZO. There were no other factors in the picture. After the State was established, the government became the regulator of the day care centers. Thus WIZO, which founded the day care centers, found itself in a situation where it was required to relate to different government ministries – the ministries of education, health, commerce and industry, as well as with the local authorities. Our methods of operation in the pre-state period were very different from our methods of operation after the state was established. And this is natural. There is a greater element of regulation and the state and municipalities also contribute to the maintenance of the day care centers. The high school teachers have been on strike since the beginning of the school year. Has this affected the day care centers as well?

Today the State is withdrawing some of its responsibility to help maintain the day care centers. And this is accompanied by a process of privatization; private companies with no experience in early age child care have entered the field. As a public, social and principled organization, we believe that we have a role not only in maintaining the quality of early age child care, but also in promoting constructive legislation. WIZO is considered a national and international authority in the field of early age childcare. Given the fact that the WIZO day care centers are functioning within a competitive environment, we have to continue to ensure that they are run according to the highest and most advanced educational standards and principles.

Today we provide early age childcare for parents at the Weizmann Institute of Science, and plan to open day care facilities at other universities for both faculty and students. At the same time, we emphasize the provision of day care facilities in the outlying and deprived areas. Perhaps the government should assume responsibility for early age childcare, but given the general state of the educational system today – see the long teachers’ strike which greeted the opening of the school year, I don't see that happening in the foreseeable future. The state always seems to have other urgent needs which compete with our educational needs. There is no alternative but for us to continue doing what we have been doing, while developing a more holistic, integrative approach, based on different forms of cooperation.

Dr. Naomi Moreno is the director of World WIZO's Early Childhood Education Division. She has a doctorate in behavioral sciences and studied communications and public administration. Dr. Moreno was a community worker, and later director of the Community Welfare and Communications Department in the Beersheva Municipality and a teacher in early age courses in WIZO Beersheva. She began working in World WIZO as the director of projects and entrepreneurship in the Early Childhood Education Division.
What was the status of women in 1948? The situation was a continuation of the situation in the pre-State yishuv. There were no legal guarantees, but the atmosphere was very tolerant. Although the rabbis were in charge of all personal issues, they had much less influence than they have today. This is because the rules were based upon the Ottoman laws, later transferred to the British Mandate, which were more flexible than the Orthodox laws of today.

Israeli society was still functioning in the pioneering spirit based on equality between men and women, though the myth of equality was stronger than the reality.

In the early days of the yishuv there was a struggle over the right of women to vote for the Vaad Leumi (National Council). The ultra-Orthodox rabbis and the legendary Rabbi Cook opposed giving women the right to vote. In 1920, the men sat together in Jaffa to discuss this question, and Ada Maimon stood there and said “I won’t leave this room until you give women the right to vote!” She was helped by Zionist women from the United States, who even brought non-Jewish suffragettes to help in the struggle. They decided that the ultra-Orthodox Haredim would only have men voting, the Mizrachi movement had separate voting and the labor pioneers had joint voting stations for men and women.

In 1948, two women were among the 37 people who signed the Declaration of Independence, WIZO leader Rachel Cohen-Kagan and Golda Meir. When it comes to women’s rights, Rachel Kagan is the important one of the two.

She was elected to the first Knesset as head of the WIZO Party, the only time a women’s party has been elected to the Knesset. Kagan initiated the Equal Rights for Women law. The Knesset kept delaying its ratification, and when it was finally brought to a vote they added a provision that the law would not affect personal matters, which were to remain in the province of the rabbinical courts. She was furious and didn’t vote in favor of her own law. Still, the Equal Rights for Women law was a great achievement. For the first time women had a legal right to property. It was Rachel Kagan and WIZO that convinced the women’s organizations to deal with the status of women, and not only mothers and children.

Women didn’t have the right to a separate bank account. In
my radio program I threatened we would boycott banks that would continue this practice.

Women's earnings were registered under their husband's earnings. If more than 50% of the earnings went to the tax authorities and the family had to keep a private nurse for young children, it wasn't worthwhile for women to work. We went to the Knesset's Finance Committee to fight against this. One of the male Knesset members, a lawyer, said: "What are you complaining about? Wouldn't you be happy to work for free, just for the satisfaction of being productive?" And we said, "We don't see you working for free, just for the satisfaction."

**What about the percentage of women in public service?**

It was very low. The Ministry of Agriculture once sent a man and woman to a training course abroad. He received a full salary while she only received half a salary because she was a mother, and her husband had an income too. Women only appeared on their husband's passport. The man had the right to travel alone on the passport, but the woman had to get a special permit!

In 1946 during the "Black Sabbath" Moshe Sharret, head of the Jewish Agency's Political Committee, was one of over 2,700 Zionist activists arrested by the British. Ben-Gurion wanted to appoint Golda to replace Sharret, and Mizrachi published an article that it was inconceivable that a woman, even a wise woman, could be the head of an important committee for the Jewish people, because "the honor of the woman is in the home. This is a law of nature...the eternal Hebrew law,..."

In 1953 Golda ran as head of the Mapai list (forerunner of the Labor Party) to be mayor of Tel Aviv. She won, but there was a need for a coalition agreement with the religious parties, and they refused to serve under a woman, because "the Jews could only be ruled by a king, not a queen". So Chaim Levanon became mayor.

When Prime Minister Levi Eshkol died in 1969 it was decided that Golda Meir would replace him. She had a majority without the National Religious Party, but they wanted to serve in the coalition to get funds. So they went to Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim who said that a prime minister is not like a king but first among equals, so it's okay. But he was Sephardi Chief Rabbi, and they also needed an Ashkenazi authority. So they asked Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek to talk with the Chief Haredi rabbi of Jerusalem, and he said, "she's like Deborah the Prophet in the Bible." Golda was very flattered.

**Was there the same degree of violence against women then?**

Such subjects weren't talked about. Beatings in the family always existed, but it was a unique period, with rationing of food, mass immigration, great ideologies, and we said we were building a new, model society. So in general, there was less violence than today. There was an uplifting atmosphere. We were saving the Jewish people, becoming sovereign over our own destiny, different from the Diaspora.

In the early years, only about 20-25% of the women worked. However, with the expansion of the day care center network, more women went out to work.

**If we jump to 2008, do we see a significant improvement in the status of women?**

Yes, in all of the areas. With the rise of the feminist movement in the 1960s, around the world, and in Israel too, women became more assertive. It had a tremendous impact on women's sense of self-confidence. Israeli women went in increasing numbers to get a university education. Today women are very prominent in the economic and financial sector, including the head of the National Bank. We also see this phenomenon in hi-tech, the media and the legal profession. The president of the Israeli Supreme Court is a woman, we had a female prime minister, and the speaker of the Knesset is a woman.

In the 1950s, Yitzhak Ben-Tzvi was president. Kaddish Luz was Knesset speaker and Beba Idelson was deputy speaker. When Ben-Tzvi went abroad, the religious forbade Luz from a scheduled trip because Idelson would have become the temporary speaker and president. Today, no one would think of doing that to Knesset speaker Dalia Itzik.

Another area where there is an increased awareness is sexual harassment. When women used to complain about rape, the police laughed at them and said why did you go out alone, dress provocatively, etc? Now there are laws against rape. We made a revolution.

**What are the challenges facing the women's organizations today?**

The first thing that is needed is a civil marriage law, to take personal family matters out of the hands of the rabbis. As long as this doesn't change there will not be genuine equality between men and women. The Declaration of Independence says that the state “will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex.” And in the guidelines of the first government in 1949 it says “There will be total and full equality for women, equality in rights and obligations in the life of the state, the economy and before the law.” We must live up to those ideals.

The other important challenge is to achieve a long school day, to ensure that both parents can work, and to provide a better education for our children.

We also have to overcome the gap between the achievements of women in the private and the public sector, where they still suffer from discrimination.

But we see that much progress has been made.

Shulamit Aloni is an Israel Prize winner, former Minister of Education and Culture, founder of the Ratz and Meretz parties and one of the pioneers of the struggle for women's rights in Israel. WIZO leader Rachel Cohen-Kagan was one of the people who convinced her to enter politics. In the early 1960s she founded Bamat Ha'isha, (Woman's Platform) WIZO Israel's magazine. Another WIZO leader, Irma Pollack, was one of the first people who focused on consumers' rights, and she encouraged Aloni to found the National Consumers' Council in 1966.
About a year ago I was approached by Yael Jhirad, a member of the Jewish Community in Mumbai, who was very interested in WIZO and its activities. Since the IAW congress was scheduled to take place this year in New Delhi, I decided to take advantage of the opportunity to meet with Yael and other female members of the Jewish Community in Mumbai and New Delhi, to assess the possibility of establishing the WIZO Federation in India. Upon arriving in Mumbai, I was met by Yael who drove me to a meeting at the Keneset Eliyahoo Synagogue, which also serves as a Jewish community center. The meeting took place in a big hall adjacent to the synagogue, and I was amazed to see that the ladies had prepared a poster with the WIZO logo – a sure sign of how serious and excited they were about joining our organization. The ladies themselves represent all walks of life: housewives, educated liberal professionals and entrepreneurs. Yael, a work therapist by profession, manages a travel agency. Her husband Ralphy is very supportive of her work and intentions regarding WIZO. At the meeting I met Mr. Solomon Sofer, the chairman and managing trustee of the Sir Jacob Sassoon Trust that maintains the Jewish buildings, institutions (hospitals, museum etc…) and schools built by his ancestors including the Keneset Eliyahoo Synagogue. The Trust also supports various charities. Mr. Sofer agreed to allow the women to use this spacious hall, and offered his support for WIZO meetings and activities. This is very significant as it is important to have a regular place to conduct our meetings and events.

The wives of the Israel consul and the Chabad rabbi in Mumbai also participated in the meeting.

Why WIZO?

I asked the ladies the most obvious question: why would women in the Jewish community in India want to join WIZO? Their answer was simple and sincere: (1) they identify with WIZO's core goals; (2) they feel isolated from any Diaspora related activities and have the need to feel part of the Zionist cause (3) many of them have children and grandchildren in Israel and they want to expand their ties outside the family arena, gain better understanding of what goes on here and share in the building and shaping of our country. They believe that being part of an international Jewish and Zionist women's organization will allow them to strengthen their bond with the State of Israel and with other Jewish women world wide. They saw the WIZO introductory video and asked many questions. Yael Jhirad agreed to assume responsibility and serve as the first president of WIZO India. Yael had obviously done her homework thoroughly as she knew exactly what they needed to do and therefore asked for a copy of the WIZO constitution and an official letter to enable the registration of WIZO India as the law in India dictates.

Indian Dreams

The founding of a new WIZO Federation in India is the most fitting gift that we could present to WIZO's 24th World Conference as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel.

Helena Glaser
President World WIZO

Helena Glaser and the members of the new WIZO India Federation at the founding meeting on October 25, 2007
Today most Indian Jews live in and around Mumbai, particularly in Thane, a suburb 35 kilometers from the city. The community is composed of three distinct groups: the dominant Bene Israel, who believe themselves to be the descendants of the original settlers who came to India as early as 2,000 years ago; the Jews of Malabar centered in Cochin, whose forefathers arrived in India from Europe and the Middle East as early as 1,000 years ago; and the Iraqi Jews, called “Baghdadis”, who began settling in India at the end of the 18th century. The Indian Jewish community has shrunk considerably in recent years, primarily due to emigration to Israel and other countries, and now numbers between 5,000 and 6,000. Consequently, the remnants of Indian Jewry have come together to forge a united community. There is very little assimilation or intermarriage, since there is little social interaction with Hindus or Moslems. The Hindu caste system has also served to isolate the Jewish communities and prevent assimilation. The different Jewish communities have lived in an environment of tolerance and pluralism, with almost no anti-Semitism or discrimination of any kind.

Historic Day in October
And so it came to be that WIZO India was founded in Mumbai on Thursday, October 25, 2007. The founding meeting supported Mrs. Yael Jhirad in her new position. Sinnora Kolatkar and Sylvia Solomon will serve as her vice presidents and Yael Ashtamkar as the Federation treasurer. At the end of the meeting I gave every member of the new group a WIZO pin. The group’s enthusiasm and motivation is overwhelming and contagious. They are ready to start work immediately. Yael’s mother is an author, and she promised to write a paper on the Jewish women in India to be included in a future edition of WIZO Review, and they are looking forward to receiving WIZO material from the World WIZO Organization and Education Department. Yael will be attending the EGM in January, and is looking forward to meeting WIZO chaverot from Israel and around the world. On the last day of my stay in New Delhi I met with Mark Sofer our ambassador. He was very impressed that WIZO has established a federation in India; he expressed his good will and offered his assistance should it be needed. We had a very interesting conversation about the attitude of the Indian government and people towards the State and people of Israel. From personal experience and meetings, I can testify to the fact that the Indian public considers us to be a warm people with deep traditional roots.
One of the central themes of the World WIZO EGM in January 2008 is “Investing in People”. The following are three fascinating profiles of Israelis who can honestly say “WIZO changed my life”

Yousra Ashour: Stronger than the Wind

She was widowed, tragically lost two sons in road accidents, and as a religious Moslem woman she always felt an outsider. Instead of having a breakdown, she decided to pull herself together and, with WIZO’s support, set out on a new path.

A few months ago, Yousra Ashour, a Moslem Arab woman from Jaffa, attended a day camp for single mothers in Eilat organized by WIZO Tel Aviv and sponsored by WIZO France. When she reached the dolphin reef, she was determined to swim with the dolphins, and so she did! This is ‘the new Yousra’, who has confidence in her abilities, defines her own goals and achieves them without fear.

Yousra, 47, a widow and mother of four, attends the WIZO Center in Jaffa where activities are organized for Jewish and Arab single parent families. Yousra participates in the activities at the center, and earns a living by teaching art at a hostel for Arab youth at risk in Jaffa.

She was widowed 17 years ago, and as she approached 40, underwent a transformation. “Until then I was busy with the house and raising the children, but once they had grown up, I felt that it was time to do something for myself and to realize ambitions that were, until then, only dreams. The children had left home; I felt that my time had come to develop, and that I needed to choose what I wanted to do. I...
Yousra (r) at an activity of the single parents’ group in Jaffa

love art, so I decided to do something in that area; I trained in counseling at a college in Ramat Gan, specializing in working with youth through art.” Over the past few years I have taken many courses and workshops through WIZO,” she explains. “They include the WIZO School for Political Leadership for Women in Tel Aviv, conducted by the WIZO Israel Division for the Advancement of Women. Each course expanded my knowledge and reinforced my self-awareness. Last year I also took a course in empowerment at Beit Heuss organized by the WIZO Tel Aviv Department of Family Welfare, and sponsored by WIZO France. The course exposed me to many new topics, and I felt prepared for the next phase of my life.”

Yousra will never forget a three-day trip to Kibbutz Tuval in the Galilee, organized by the WIZO School for Political Leadership for Women, which forced her to face outdoor challenge activities for the first time. “I came out of that strengthened in every way. I learned what my weak points are and how to cope with them. I will give you a simple yet concrete example. I am a Moslem Arab woman and as such I wear traditional clothing. The course legitimized the way I live. In general, the other participants made me feel that I am no different from any other woman.”

Friends’ Center

As a single mother, Yousra attends the Family Center at the WIZO France Clubhouse in Jaffa, where joint activities are held for single parent families from all sectors living in Jaffa. Once a week fathers and mothers raising children alone meet for a chat over a cup of coffee.

Yousra has been attending the center for 13 years, and stands out because of her lively participation and involvement. Over the past few years she has become the WIZO representative of the Arab sector single parent families. “It happened spontaneously. No one arranged it. Though I am just one of the members at the get-togethers I am very active. After receiving so much support from WIZO, I feel motivated and obliged to contribute to the center in my own way; it gives me a sense of belonging. The center has actually transformed the group into one big family. We are all in the same boat: all single parents facing the same problems. There is a great deal to talk about concerning raising children and managing a household.”

Today, Yousra’s nuclear and extended family is sympathetic to her far-reaching commitment but this wasn’t always the case. “Of course they were surprised when, as a traditional Arab woman, I left the house and went out to study or attend activities at the WIZO Center. It took time for them to understand.”

Personal Empowerment

“WIZO has a very strong place in my personal life. If it weren’t for WIZO, I would never have reached this level of personal empowerment. WIZO held out a hand to me from the beginning, and has been there for me all the way. When I was widowed, I was powerless; no one offered help to Jewish and Arab widows in Jaffa, and then WIZO appeared with all the help and support we needed. There was no one to talk to, no one to bring out the good in me until WIZO came along. And suddenly I was not alone. Single parents could hold their heads up high. It’s a fact, the results speak for themselves.”
The English Speaking group of WIZO Tel Aviv under the auspices of Eva Cederbaum and Annette Milliner has adopted, accompanied and supported the members of the single parent group since its establishment 13 years ago. The members of the center celebrate and commemorate the holidays of both sectors together, and during Ramadan, Yousra invites all the group members for an evening meal at her home.

Yousra made a documentary film on the status of women in the Arab sector, which she screens for groups, and also holds discussions on the status of Arab women who are single parents. She also took an unprecedented step by waiving her daughter’s dowry in order to prepare for her higher education. With her mother financing her studies, Yousra’s daughter later became a teacher at a Jaffa high school.

The memorial ceremony at the WIZO Jaffa Clubhouse a year after her son’s death gave her the opportunity to create another precedent with an event that is not customary in the Arab sector. Arab women usually do not participate in the funerals of their loved ones. But, both Moslem men and women were present at this ceremony, together with members of the single parents’ group of Jaffa, and bereaved families of organ donors.

In the presence of Helena Glaser, president of World WIZO, Tova Ben-Dov, chairperson of the World WIZO executive, and Moslem clerics, the event was conducted in both Arabic and Hebrew. During the ceremony, people spoke about Yousra’s son and stressed the importance of organ donation.

Today, Yousra represents WIZO in various forums where she speaks of the organization’s contribution to her empowerment, and demonstrates that it is possible for Jews and Arabs to co-exist in peace and harmony.

> “WIZO has a very strong place in my personal life. If it weren’t for WIZO, I would never have reached this level of personal empowerment”.

Yousra Ashur

In the Name of the Son

About a year and a half ago one of Yousra’s son was killed in a traffic accident. “I can’t accept his death. It is very hard for me to face the fact that he is no longer alive.” After her son’s death, Yousra donated his organs to four people, who are alive today thanks to him. She is in close contact with all of them. A year after his death the bereaved mother held an evening in his memory for about 250 people at the WIZO hall. “WIZO was there with me the whole time, and the fact that leaders of WIZO Israel joined me that evening was a great honor for me.”

Second Tragedy

As we were going to press Yousra’s family was struck by another terrible tragedy. Her second son Hatem, aged 21 was also killed in a traffic accident.

During the three days of mourning, the WIZO Executive, friends from the WIZO single parents’ group and people who received organs from her first son once again came to express condolences and gave Yousra their support.
Maor Maman: Giving Back to WIZO

He attended WIZO Nir Ha’Emek Youth Village as a young student, returned as a counselor and today, as a mature and successful adult, finds it hard to sever his link with the place that gave him so much. Lawyer Maor Maman explains the secret of WIZO’s magic

I Yossi Shalom
Photo: Hagai Aharon

On the TV screen a video clip about WIZO is being shown, calling on students from all over the country to enroll at WIZO’s educational institutions. A young, confident lawyer introduces himself. A dancer skips lightly in the background.

Meet lawyer Maor Maman, age 34, from Hod Hasharon. Since he was 12 his life has been intertwined with WIZO. Maman, a student and graduate of the WIZO Nir Ha’Emek Youth Village, returned to work as a counselor in his old school, and today as a lawyer he represents students from WIZO schools and their parents on a volunteer basis. Married with a little daughter, Maman also finds time for strumming a guitar and belonging to an amateur band. He acquired his love of touring as a teenager, during his days at the school, discovering the country on horseback.

WIZO’s Nir Ha’Emek Youth Village was the first link in a love story woven over many years. His six years there from age 12 until his induction into the army, under the devoted care of the youth village staff headed by Yossi Goshen, instilled within him the warm affection that he has to this day for WIZO and Nir Ha’Emek. Maman had a number of study options: “I chose Nir Ha’Emek because of the extraordinary help and encouragement the staff give the students with their studies and because of the family atmosphere in the school.”

Learning to Cope

Nir Haemek provided Maor with the tools he needed to confront life. “I learned from the age of 12 to cope with various difficulties. I was a child then, and from that age you learn to get along in life. I chose to study in an agricultural boarding school and I know that my stay there taught me to cope with all kinds of crises and difficulties, even something seemingly insignificant like getting up at four in the morning to work on the farm and milk the cows.”

By seventh grade, Maor, along with the rest of his contemporaries, already knew the meaning of responsibility. He remembers with a smile watching cows give birth, or getting up at four on a cold winter’s morning and leaving his warm bed to perform various agricultural tasks. “Later came the tests and the matriculation exams, and at the end of high school I served as the chairperson of the student council. So I learned quite early in life about responsibility and independence. It all happened in stages, and it wasn’t as if you become independent and stand on your own two feet just in one day,” he explains.

A Supermarket of Opportunities

Maman explains that success in studies in a boarding school like Nir Ha’Emek depends first of all on the student himself who must navigate his way through the vast array of possibilities presented to him by the educational staff. “I define it this way—
it is the ability of a person to choose from everything available to him, those things which will benefit him for the rest of his life. I see WIZO Nir Ha’Emek as a supermarket of opportunities. Everything is there for the student and he has to choose what he wants to do: there are extracurricular activities, work on the farm, a pool, a library, a computer room, laboratories, tutoring and much more, activities sponsored by the student council, and Oneg Shabbat evenings when the students present shows, songs and dances.”

Maman initiated an Israeli version of the “Pop Idol” or “American Idol” competition at the youth village when he was the chairperson of the youth council. “Today teenagers love this, and not only teenagers,” he points out with pride, adding, “In the youth village, social relationships are created, and students can find themselves having a good time right up to 12th grade without opening a book. The student has to know what to choose, in what proportion, and do so very wisely…”

In 10th grade he was chosen to represent WIZO Nir Ha’Emek Youth Village in a delegation that went to Poland. “I missed a month of school and the trick was to know how to make up the time I missed. However, I don’t think I would have succeeded in surviving six years in a boarding school far from my parents without backup and full support from my family in Karkur. My parents were very involved; they helped me the whole time and were in contact with my teachers nearly every day.”

The Return Home

Maman’s connection with WIZO did not end after high school. At the end of three years of military service as a combat soldier in the Nahal (Fighting Pioneer Youth) Brigade, he returned to Nir Ha’Emek, first as a volunteer and later as a salaried counselor. “It was important to go back,” he says, “and it is too simplistic to say that I returned in order to come full circle; it went deeper than that. I felt an obligation and a strong need to be in the place that had provided me with a foundation for life. At the age of 21 I still felt the need to be here, to think about my own next step in life, while at the same time hoping to contribute something to students still at the school. “Today, after I have helped an entire class of students from seventh grade right through to twelfth grade, it gives me great satisfaction and pride to see them running a family, working and studying, using the skills they acquired at the youth village to cope with everyday life, and with their heads held high. I am still in contact with most of them. It is not easy, but we meet on various happy occasions.”

Becoming a Lawyer

Maman received full support from the director of the youth village, Yossi Goshen, and from the principal of the boarding school, Yossi Zanguri, who enthusiastically accepted his ideas and initiatives. He was a counselor for about five years, towards the end of which he was also the principal’s substitute. At the same time he studied and completed a Bachelor’s degree in Business Management. During the third year of his studies, Maman discovered a course called “Legal Aspects” which stimulated him to study law. Maman persuaded a lawyer from Afula to volunteer once a week at the WIZO Nir Ha’Emek Youth Village to give free legal advice to anyone who might need it. In addition, he thinks up all sorts of new ideas for WIZO youth villages all over the country, one of which was setting up an olive press at one of the boarding schools.

And why has Maman been so dedicated to WIZO? “My connection continued,” he says, “so that I could help students and parents who needed advice in various aspects of family law, implementation of court orders, and so on. Once a person has received as much as I did, it is important to give back as much as possible.”
Dvora Mulet Hazma came to Israel from Ethiopia at the age of 17. Like many new immigrants, she encountered difficulties, but when WIZO entered the picture, everything changed.

Dvora Mulet Hazma: “Success gave me the strength to carry on”

I Yossi Shalom
Photo: Hagai Aharon

The story of 40-year-old Dvora Mulet Hazma of Kfar Gvirol could provide the plot for a moving, quality drama series on Ethiopian Jewry. In 1985 Dvora came to Israel from Ethiopia via Operation Moses, as a married 17-year-old. Today she is a mature divorcée and the proud mother of two – a soldier son on active duty and a daughter doing National Service. Yet this confident and delicate
supervisor organized a course in childcare for me. I didn’t think I was capable of doing this course, but the supervisor encouraged me, saying: ‘You have an excellent brain; use it, think about it, and you’ll see that you will enjoy this course.’ And she was right. I learnt so much. The course gave me the practical skills I needed to work with the children. WIZO supported me and believed in me more than I believed in myself.”

Later, Dvora took and passed an additional course which gave her a professional qualification. “Here I also had a difficult time deciding. Everything was in Hebrew, which made it very difficult for me. A volunteer at the day care center told me that she would help me, that I should just go ahead and that I would succeed. Thanks to her I passed the tests. Today I speak, read and write fluently. And I no longer need to listen to preschool teachers or other caregivers reading stories to the children. I, Dvora, sit with the children and read them stories myself. Success has made me happy and given me even more strength to carry on.”

She is especially grateful to two WIZO supervisors – Linda and Liora – who encouraged her, supported her, and helped her to empower herself.

“Dvora worked under difficult conditions at her previous job, while taking care of her two children and raising them to be fine people during a very difficult marriage that ended in divorce,” adds Jeanette Hadad, the director of the multipurpose day care center where Dvora works. “She simply decided to end the relationship, which is not so easy to do in the Ethiopian community.”

When Dvora is asked if she regrets that when she came to live in Israel aged 17 she was already married and a housewife, she answers soberly: “Clearly, looking back, I am sorry about it. I also had two children very quickly, and after that came the divorce. I didn’t know any other kind of life, and today, when I look at how my life has changed since I started to study, I am sorry that I didn’t start earlier.”

Breathing freely
Her ‘romance’ with WIZO started in 1999, when she began to work as a caregiver in the WIZO multipurpose day care center in Rehovot. At the time, she was working part-time for elderly people, which allowed her to be home as much as possible with her two children. “In the welfare office they recognized and appreciated my work with the elderly, and recommended me to WIZO. When they approached me, I replied that I had never worked with children. In addition my Hebrew was very limited because I had come on aliyah at the age of 17 with my husband, and had never had time to learn the language because I had to take care of the family. At that time I also did not know how to read or write. I didn’t think I was capable of working at the day care center, but I took leave from my previous job and began a trial period at the Rehovot day care center. I’ve been there ever since.”

A WIZO supervisor observed Dvora’s work for two weeks and asked her to stay. “That surprised me,” Dvora recalls, “and I told her that I had been working for six years with the elderly, and that I didn’t want to create a situation where they would not want me at the day care center and I would be left without a job, since I had to support my children. The supervisor encouraged me, and told me not to worry, because I had a very good and positive attitude towards the children.”

Dvora’s illiteracy disturbed her, because it meant she was unable to read stories to the children. “I would sit next to the preschool teacher and listen to the stories she read,” she recalls. “I wanted to be able to do that too, because I think that one of the ways to really get through to a child is by reading stories to him.”

You have an excellent brain, use it
A few months after she began working at the day care center, Dvora’s desire to improve her Hebrew was overwhelming and she signed up for evening classes at the Hebrew language ulpan in Rehovot. “Later, the WIZO supervisor organized a course in childcare for me. I didn’t think I was capable of doing this course, but the supervisor encouraged me, saying: ‘You have an excellent brain; use it, think about it, and you’ll see that you will enjoy this course.’ And she was right. I learnt so much. The course gave me the practical skills I needed to work with the children. WIZO supported me and believed in me more than I believed in myself.”

“Fortunately,” she says with a shy smile, “in my work with WIZO I have never encountered any discrimination. No one raises an eyebrow when they see that their child in the day care center has an Ethiopian caregiver. There is only good will.” Dvora Mulet Hazma
A sympathetic environment

Dvora has not suffered from the usual stigma attached to Ethiopian women who break free of their traditional role of homemaker and mother. “My parents supported me and continue to do so. It wasn’t easy at all. After the divorce I moved to a rented apartment. I had to cope with many problems, and in our community it is twice as hard. But I am an optimist by nature. I am lucky to have WIZO’s support and encouragement behind me. Don’t forget that I work a long day from seven in the morning until seven in the evening. Now my children are no longer at home. My son serves in a southern air force base, my 18-year-old daughter is doing national service in the Jerusalem area, and I am alone at home. They come home for weekends, and during the week I am with my other children, my WIZO children, who light up my life. At the day care center I am mother to the WIZO children, and at home I am mother to my own children. That is what the mothers at the day care center say to me too. It seems that they were right eight years ago when they recommended me. I do have a positive approach to children.”

Last year Dvora won a prize as an outstanding WIZO worker. “This prize further reinforced my feeling that WIZO is the right place for me and that I am on the right track; I feel appreciated and respected. The prize gives me even more strength to carry on.”

“The most important thing for me is that the children feel at home at the day care center, that they can grow and flourish in a warm, loving environment.” Looking to the future with confidence, Dvora states: “Now that I am no longer afraid of studying, I see continuing my studies as an advantage. Anything connected with studying will bring me satisfaction and advancement.”

According to Jeanette, Dvora has been blessed with an inborn ability to work with children. “She is a shining example for many women, and especially for women of the Ethiopian community.”

JANUARY 2008 | WIZO REVIEW | 21
Sharon Friedeberg-Manassen
– Holland: Silverwork and WIZO

Making Judaica, silver candlesticks and caring for two little children doesn’t prevent Sharon from also being active in WIZO, a tradition in her family for three generations.

Sharon Friedeberg-Manassen

I was born in 1975 in Maastricht, the Netherlands, am married to Erik Friedeberg and we have two sons: Jacco (three) and Timo (six months). My husband and I each have our own companies, so actually it is as if we have four children. Erik runs a consultancy firm that advises entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized businesses. I have my own studio where I design and make large silver objects such as Judaica, candlesticks, cutlery, serving plates and vases. I also repair and restore silver and give courses on silver-making. I basically work three days a week, but I have my studio at home so I can do administrative work while the children are sleeping.

In addition to our family, our companies and our hobbies (reading novels, going to the theater, cooking and dining, visiting museums and exhibits and traveling), we think it’s important to do volunteer work. Erik is the treasurer of the Conservative Jewish Congregation of Amsterdam and I’m now a WIZO board member.

Three Generations of WIZO Activity

I was brought up with what WIZO stands for since my family has been active in WIZO for as long as I can remember. My grandmother (Betty Offenbach-Stad) was a board member and co-organizer of the Eindhoven bazaars for more than 25 years and my mother always helped with the bazaar. When my husband and I moved to Bussum in 2002 and I was asked to help with the bazaar, I agreed immediately, and I joined the board a couple of years later."

Israel Won my Heart

I lived and worked in Israel for six months during my studies. During that time I experienced life in Israel first-hand. Now that I’m a mother myself and have to juggle children and work, I can empathize with Israeli women who often work full-time and have large families. Still, Israel won my heart and I would like to live in Jerusalem. For me, being active in WIZO is an added incentive to improve living conditions for women and children.

Looking Forward

The key to continuing our tradition lies in the hands, hearts and minds of WIZO’s younger generation. Many of today’s Aviv women are professionals, who combine their work lives with family and WIZO activity. We are proud to present four profiles of Aviv women in Holland, Brazil, South Africa and Israel.

Sharon and Timo
Patricia Menda – Brazil: New Generation Woman

In the past, the idea of voluntary work was associated with women who did not work outside their home, either because they were always involved with raising their children or were retired. Today we find young women concerned with their careers and personal activities who still find time to devote to volunteer work.

Sarita Lea Schaffel

Today, when young Jewish women encounter WIZO, the questions that arise are: What choices should I make? How should I deal with them? What are the real priorities? Why should I be a WIZO activist?

To represent the young Zionist woman of today we chose Patricia Buksztejn Menda, who is 30 years old, has an MSc in Business Administration, is one of the founders of the Prachim Group and a member of the Communications Department of WIZO Rio Grande do Sul.

Patricia was born in Porto Alegre, studied at the Jewish School and attended PUCRS university. After her graduation, she applied to obtain her Master’s Degree at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. She also studied in the USA in 1993 as an exchange student and, in 2000, worked at the Walt Disney Company there. Currently she is a project coordinator and works in market analysis for a big marketing research institute, working full time and traveling frequently to other states in Brazil.

Besides her professional activity, as with all young women today, she has an intense social life. However, she believes it is important and essential to be a part of an organization such as WIZO, where people care about each other and are in favor of common goals: Israel and Judaism.

All Young 28-30 Year Old Professionals

Patricia, along with nine chaverot, founded the Prachim.

Aviv’s Voice

As the final preparations for the Enlarged General Meeting (EGM) in Tel Aviv in January 2008, are being made, we in New York have just begun to prepare for our Yom Ha’atzmaut celebration in May 2008. The highlight of the evening will be the distribution of a hardcover journal chronicling 60 years of Israel’s independence and 25 years of WIZO New York.

I have been researching Israel’s life, from its birth in 1948 to the present, and am awed by the greatness of Israel’s people, their spirit, their character and their commitment to Zionism. The more I read and learn, the more I am filled with pride to be a member of the world Jewish community. What I find even more inspiring is that the dedicated women of WIZO have been there to build, nurture and further the dream of a Jewish state, every step of the way.

In envisioning Aviv’s vision for the future, it is easy to gain motivation from looking at the past. Our past leaders have done so much to cultivate the feeling of belonging to the international WIZO community. In reviewing the amazing reports from Aviv members all over the world, I am struck by their awesome commitment and dedication to Jewish identity, heritage and culture. Each report details the effort and energy, innovation and inspiration of the individual federation. We have so much to learn from one another! While we are all strong individually, we are unstoppable collectively!

The future of Aviv lies with the young passionate graduates of the WIZO Aviv International Seminars, and we celebrate the opportunity to salute them at the EGM. Our future is in the hands and hearts of volunteers from 50 Federations throughout the world who embody the spirit of leadership and work to inspire others towards the common goal of improving Israeli society and advancing the status of women in Israel and the world.

I look forward with great anticipation to meeting each and every one of you at the EGM. The future is ours to determine. Let’s do it together.

Aviv Representative to the World WIZO Executive
Rene Spungin - South Africa: The Modern WIZO Woman

When Rene Spungin moved to Pretoria from Johannesburg, her first child was just nine months old. Rene was looking for an opportunity to meet other young Jewish mothers with similar interests and to do some meaningful charity work. Enter Dalene Bloom. Dalene, who is the chairperson of WIZO Pretoria, invited Rene to join a meeting of an Aviv group. Rene found in this group exactly what she was looking for - a way to express her love for Israel through something meaningful. And the rest, as they say, is history!

Thirteen Lucky Years
Rene, who is experiencing her bat-mitzvah year of WIZO involvement, finds her work with WIZO extremely rewarding. As a chairperson she gets to see the tangible benefits from fundraising. Rene and her Aviv Yonatan branch have adopted the Neve WIZO (sponsored by WIZO South Africa) project for dysfunctional families as their primary beneficiary. This resulted from a conversation Rene had with a friend who visited the project and spoke so passionately of the work done there. As a mother, Rene identifies with the need to provide children with a loving family home. Apart from the personal satisfaction Rene finds in organizing events, and the ability to make fundraising social, Rene is grateful for the support of her dedicated committee. This group of empowered women is exactly what WIZO is all about!

A Wonderful Lifetime Commitment
When I asked Rene where she saw her future with WIZO, Rene said that since attending the National Aviv Seminar that was recently held in Cape Town, she feels inspired to link up more often with Aviv groups all over the country.

WIZO is a wonderful lifetime commitment and one to pass down to future generations. As busy as Rene’s life is juggling motherhood, work and WIZO, good time management and efficient delegation ensures that WIZO is always a priority.

A Passion for Theater and Finance
Rene Spungin has a BA in Dramatic Arts. She free lanced in the industry as a publicist and taught drama in schools as well as in a private capacity. Since the birth of Kira, her youngest child, she currently works in her husband’s business which deals with Financial Services. Rene assists with the administration and does some public relations work on a part time basis.
Rachel Mongoli – Israel: Making the Deprived Neighborhood Bloom

Though she grew up in difficult conditions, and was thrown out of school in the 10th grade, Rachel Mongoli has now completed two university degrees and is the mainstay of WIZO activity in Pardes Katz, a neighborhood near Tel Aviv.

Rachel Mongoli

I grew up in Pardes Katz, know the neighborhood well, and my family is of Persian (Iranian) origin – “gol” means “flower” in Farsi, thus my name is mon (my in French) gol (flower).

My parents arrived in the country in the 1950s, when Pardes Katz was a ma’abara (transient immigrant camp).

To inspire others, I always tell them my personal story. I was thrown out of school in the 10th grade. I simply didn’t have the tools to study. So I studied by myself, and did my matriculation exams. If I could do that, and then do a B.A. and an M.A. at Tel Aviv University, you can too. I convert the impossible into the possible, also in WIZO.

Facing the Challenge

I completed an MA in Public Policy at Tel Aviv University and didn’t have any direct experience in not-for-profit Third Sector activity. So I decided to do some volunteer work to gain first hand experience. I saw an ad in the paper - WIZO Tel Aviv Chairperson Zehava Shilon was looking for volunteers to give lectures to foreign workers in Ramat Aviv. They asked me where I was from, and when I said Pardes Katz, near Bnai Brak. Tirza Rodensky said - we don’t have a branch chairperson there – would you be ready to do it?

I considered that to be a real challenge, particularly since Pardes Katz is a deprived neighborhood suffering from a very low socio-economic situation, with a lot of crime, drugs, and a very poor municipality.

Since I don’t have children yet, I am able to devote most of my time to WIZO. With the help of WIZO.uk we have a small area for our activities, and much of it is done outdoors, in the yard. We also receive help from WIZO Hod Hasharon and WIZO Ramat Gan.

Activity Around the Clock

When I arrived, all that existed was a senior citizens group which met four times a month. Since then we have established a weekly program for 100 Haredi women, including a workshop on parenting. I also founded an educational support program for Ethiopian youth, and found financial help, to provide free dental care for them - even mobilizing professors from Tel Aviv University. And we have a project devoted to “Lowering the Digital Gap for Women,” teaching women how to use computers. We now have activities every day of the week, throughout the day.

We are doing what the state should be doing - the work of the Ministries of Education, Absorption, Social Welfare and the municipality as well.

I participated in an International Aviv Seminar, an extraordinary experience. It was thrilling to establish contact with young, like-minded WIZO women from around the world. I received a lot of ideas from the seminar, and I always speak about the support we receive from the 50 WIZO federations around the world. I have succeeded in involving some of my friends in the branch, and I’m sure that there are many other young women out there like me – even if they say that I’m indispensable to Pardes Katz.
WIZO Graphics through the Ages

WIZO has always told its story through words and images. The Zionist Archives in Jerusalem are a treasure-trove of the Zionist past, an invaluable resource for researchers and anyone interested in knowing about the history of the movement for Jewish national liberation. The posters on these pages are from the pre-State yishuv period and the early years following independence. They reflect the themes that WIZO emphasized, and also the type of images and colors that graphic artists used during those periods. Learn and enjoy!

1934

Advertisement for Hebrew Woman's Day organized by WIZO Israel at the Annual Levant Fair in Tel Aviv. Among the speakers: Hadassah Samuel, Chair of WIZO Israel and Esther Zmoira, Chair of WIZO Jerusalem

1955

Poster for the Annual WIZO Fundraising Campaign, featuring three generations of women
1946
Poster in honor of The Working Woman in the Land of Israel

1942
Poster for the 22nd Annual Bazaar to help the Children’s Fund organized by the Hebrew Women’s Organization (WIZO)

1950
WIZO encourages the planting of trees in The Mother’s Forest of the Jewish National Fund

1966
Poster for the 15th World WIZO Conference held in Tel Aviv in 1966
Behind the Scenes at WIZO

In The Public Eye

Brenda Katten looks back on her experiences on the front line of putting Israel’s case to the UN and other public forums

Brenda Katten started her WIZO career as a young secretary in the London office, but her leadership qualities were soon identified and she rose to be chairman of British WIZO from 1981-1987. For many years Brenda and her architect husband John had a holiday flat in Israel, which became their permanent home when, in 1998, on John’s retirement, the couple came on aliyah to ‘enjoy the sunshine and Mediterranean’. However, members of the World WIZO Executive had other ideas, and at the EGM in 2000, Brenda was elected as chairperson of the World WIZO Public Affairs and NGO Department.

Brenda was literally ‘thrown in at the deep end’, when barely two months after taking office, she was scheduled to attend the UN Annual Commission on the Status of Women held in New York. Being completely new on the scene she did not know what to expect, but was reassured that there would be another, more experienced, delegate with her. However, on arrival in New York, Brenda found the other delegate was not coming and she was on her own!

Rony Adam, Director of the Department for UN Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told Brenda that ‘tomorrow we, that is the Israel delegation, have to give our statement, i.e. you have to prepare it.’ This gave Brenda a wonderful opportunity to present WIZO and Israel in the context of the status of women, particularly encouraging young women to be active in future leadership roles.

The early part of 2000 was a very hopeful period in terms of peace prospects, all to be shattered later that summer. However, despite all the positive vibes, and the fact that the forum was supposed to be apolitical, the Palestinians lost no opportunity in ‘Israel bashing.’

Apart from the main session, there were various side conferences, including Violence against Women, and Women and Peace, at which forum Brenda brought up the subject of text books used by the Palestinian Authority which were full of hatred against Israel and the Jews, as indeed they still are today. What was supposed to have been an apolitical forum turned out, as far as the Palestinians were concerned, to be very political, while Israel stuck to the rules.

The following year, the Status of Women Conference devoted its session to prepare for the Durban Conference against Racism to be held in September 2001. It was at this CSW meeting that Brenda placed on record Israel’s dismay that the last regional preparatory meeting was held in Teheran thereby negating the opportunity for either Israelis or Jews to participate. This resulted in the Iranian representative asking for a ‘right of reply’ where she spoke about ‘the Zionist entity that was killing the Palestinian women and children.’ She could not bring herself to say the word ‘Israel.’

Looking back over this period, Brenda ruminates: “I always expected it to be hostile, but it is hard to accept it does not improve.” However, she believes it is absolutely essential that Israel has a strong representation at all these forums – people who know their facts well, and can put our case across strongly – ‘otherwise it is not worth being there.’

“I feel that within the UN and its subsidiary bodies, there is a definite and concerted effort to delegitimise the State of Israel, and this is increasing. You can always talk to individuals and they might agree with you, but you can’t sway their vote – which, of course is determined by their governments. Another major problem is that the European countries vote ‘en bloc.’ We become sacrifice to their consensus.”

Hasbara

One of Brenda’s first aims on becoming chairperson was to create a newsletter for WIZO members, portraying the truth about events in Israel, and correcting distortions, which occur all the time in the international media. She feels it is of

Brenda Katten speaking at an ECWF forum in Vienna
Brenda Katten was British WIZO’s chairperson from 1981 to 1987, and trained as a marriage guidance counselor. For the past two years in addition to her WIZO activities, Brenda has also been the chairperson of IBCA – the Israel British Commonwealth Association, an organization that has been in existence since 1951, and strives to promote social, cultural and economic relations between Israel, Britain and the Commonwealth.

Her husband John, an accomplished architect and talented painter, continues to enjoy both these activities in Israel. The Kattens have three children, two of whom live in England and one in Israel, and eight grandchildren.

Visits abroad
A renowned public speaker, soon after taking office, Brenda received numerous requests to speak to WIZO federations and Jewish communities abroad. Indeed she has been on over 20 hasbara missions covering 14 countries, where, on many occasions, she also stated Israel’s case to non-Jewish audiences.

In addition, she is a very sought-after speaker at English-language forums in Israel, and is often interviewed in the press and on television on women’s issues.

Reflecting on her missions abroad, Brenda remarks: “Every country has its own problems, but there are some shared problems – such as assimilation and, recently, which is very worrying, there is a ‘turning away from Israel’. I put this down to the effectiveness of the anti-Israel media and a lack of knowledge, especially amongst the younger generation. This inevitably leads to a loss of Jewish identity.

Facing Problems
“Although it is vital that we continue to support our projects, we have to ask ourselves if we are investing sufficiently to ensure our future. The most important thing is for us to invest in younger women, and to attract the young women of today who work outside the home. Many federations are already initiating and adapting programs for these women and this is vital.

Wish List
We ended our discussion by my asking Brenda if she has a “WIZO Wish List.” My wish is that WIZO could have a program similar to the ‘birthright’project, wherein there is a special fund to enable young Jewish women to have a free trip to Israel to see WIZO projects and learn all about the ‘real Israel’. However, this is probably a pipe dream; it would need a very special donor to finance such a scheme!
Behind the Scenes

Fundraising is a Profession - You Can Do It!

Funds are the fuel which enable WIZO do all of its vital work to improve Israeli society. After eight years as Chairperson of the World WIZO Fundraising Department, Celia Michonik shares the lessons she learned.

What are the changes in fundraising techniques that have occurred during your eight years in office?
Since I entered the department in 2000 our income has more than doubled. The successful changes that we initiated were based on the fact that we tailored special proposals for each Federation. When I began only three-four proposals went out every month, and now an average of 200 go out every year. We prepare specific proposals according to the requests of the Federations and the preferences of the donors, presenting potential donors with two or three project proposals, and let the donor decide.

We have also been providing the Federations with new brochures, focusing every year on a different subject. There are some people who think that WIZO only deals with day care centers, who aren’t aware of the work that we do for women, women’s leadership, violence in the family, battered women’s shelters, children at high risk and the elderly. The goal of these brochures is to create a WIZO dictionary which enables people to look up a subject and find out what we do in each area. This year we are preparing on children at risk, we did one devoted to the Sponsor-a-Child program, one on activities for children and women, and one on education and day care centers. Whenever a new brochure is produced, a video is also created to expand on the information in the brochure.

We also created many videos for individual Federations about their projects, which despite their distance from Israel helps them to see how their projects look.

Are proposals directed to foundations, or only to individual donors?
Many proposals have been directed to foundations, and I am very happy that some Federations have also independently approached foundations in their own countries with proposals for WIZO, of course in coordination with us. We send them material, and they apply for the grants.

What are the points that you emphasize in fundraising today?
The time when donors used to give money without asking how it was going to be used is over. Today donors want to know how their money is spent and the organization that asks for the donation always has to be accountable. Whenever I go on missions abroad I meet with the Federation executives and give them fundraising seminars. I make a special effort to meet young women, because the future lies with the younger generation. The turnover of leadership today is more frequent than it was in the past, and younger women have to be prepared to take on serious responsibilities. It's important that they be well aware of what WIZO is doing in Israel.

Do you see differences in fundraising between Europe, North America and Latin America?
Yes, each area works in a different way. North America has a huge potential, because we know the largest Jewish community in the world is in the United States. In South America the Jewish communities are growing smaller, while in Europe many of the Federations have a limited amount of members because the communities are not growing.

What are the greatest challenges that face fundraisers today?
Fundraising has become a profession. It is very competitive,
and women that want to dedicate their efforts to fundraising have to become very sophisticated. They have to know the work of their organization from top to bottom, and have to know the projects. When they are meeting with donors, they have to be able to answer any questions that arise. Some women don’t like to ask for money, but if you know and are convinced of the importance of the wonderful work that WIZO does, you can do it very easily.

Do you have any tips for fundraising?

My tip is that we should enlarge our circle of donors. The main thing is to go beyond the traditional circle of WIZO donors. There are many other potential donors who are out there, waiting to be approached. They are not always people who are ready to be active on a permanent basis, but they are people who are willing to give to an organization that they think is doing a wonderful job.

What is the future direction of fundraising for WIZO?

This is a very hard question to answer. Living in Israel, the reality of our country is such that new needs constantly arise. Issues emerge such as security, poverty and safety measures for day care centers, which weren’t a priority when we planned the year’s goals. I’m sure that other such unexpected needs will appear in the future, and WIZO will have to focus on them, because we have no choice. We always have to fill the gap that the government leaves, because it directs its efforts to the defense of the State.

You are concluding eight years as chairperson of the department. What advice do you have for your successor?

My advice is that my successor should maintain the close relationship that we have succeeded in having with the Federations. We are partners, one team.

I’d like to conclude by thanking my friends in the Diaspora from the bottom of my heart for the wonderful friendship and support they have given to WIZO, for the wonderful work they have done in the past, are doing now and will keep on doing.

Celia Michonik: From Bogota to Tel Aviv

Celia was born in Bogota, Colombia, to parents who immigrated to South America in their youth from Lithuania and Bessarabia. On one of Anita Jamitovsky’s missions to Latin America, Celia founded the first Aviv group in her city of Cali. Her mother-in-law Paulina Michonik was one of the founders of WIZO Colombia. Celia’s husband had a sugar factory and land in Colombia, but because of their Zionist beliefs, they came on aliya in 1979 with two small children, aged 9 and 11. She began to work with WIZO Israel and founded the first Latin American Aviv group in Israel, again with the help of Anita Jamitovsky. She also volunteered in WIZO schools and immigrant absorption centers.

Celia joined the WIZO Tel Aviv fundraising department, was later Vice Chair of the department, and eventually the chairperson. World WIZO President Raya Jaglom suggested that she be in charge of the Latin American Desk in the World WIZO Fundraising Department, and was eventually appointed Vice Chair of the Department. At the WIZO EGM in 2000 she was elected Chairperson.

Celia has two children, a son, Gideon, 37, a businessman, married to Dana, the daughter of singer Oshik Levy, who have two children, and a daughter, Ghila, an art curator and political scientist, married to Zvi, the son of WIZO leader Rachel Limon. They also have two children.
88 Years Young

The Story of WIZO

Leading Israeli poet Haim Hefer wrote the following tribute in honor of WIZO’s 75th anniversary. As we celebrate WIZO’s 88th anniversary year, it still rings true, a warm testimony to WIZO’s ongoing impact on Israeli society. It was adapted into English by Tirzah Agassi, philosopher Martin Buber’s granddaughter

| Haim Hefer |

**Our story begins in Britain.** the home of so many Zionist beginnings: chapters begun by Lord Balfour, by Lord Melchett and by Chaim Weizmann. Ours is a story of faith in, and devoted loyalty to, a cause – a cause that has long outlived the British Mandate, which ruled over us back then, ninety years ago.

**Our organisation has played a vital part** in the history of the Jewish people in the modern age. And we too have made history or herstory if you wish. For we have always struggled for the rights of women. We struggled before the establishment of the Jewish State and we have continued to struggle ever since.

**We have had our years of plenty and satisfaction.** We have also had our lean years, our hard times in which it felt as if the manna had stopped falling from Heaven. But we never lost our sense of purpose, our deep seated commitment to full equality and full recognition of the rights of women.

**We always knew that it was up to us** to bring our vision down to earth in this Promised Land. For if we do not do it, who will? Ours is an uncompromising vision, one that we always knew we would never surrender: the vision of the Women’s International Zionist Organization.

**We always sought out the toughest jobs.** It was, and still is, our role to be there for women in their hours of greatest need. It is we who are there to shelter and comfort battered women and children who, without us, would remain victims and hostages of brutal husbands and fathers. It is we who reach out and salve their deepest wounds, their fears, their pain and their shame.

**It was, and still is, our self-chosen job** to seek out and heal young women who have strayed into the half-life of delinquency and addiction. It is we who offer them a ray of hope, who let them know that somebody still cares enough to guide them back to a life worth living. It is our task to hold out love when they are on the brink of total despair.

**The list of women in need is endless.** We reach out to single mothers, to the elderly and to overworked mothers of large families. There is always so much to do, so many ways, both large and small, to ease their burdens, to provide the moments of rest and freedom from worry that do so much to renew the spirit.

**We have been there for all** these and many more in our long and often difficult journey. Our nurturing hands have been gentle but they also had to be STRONG. And yet, ever since the days of our first leader, the late Rebecca Sieff, and up until the time of our present leader, Helena Glaser, it is clearly something far deeper than these dry facts that offers a true answer.
For without the steadfast faith in the principles we stand for, without the sheer devotion and idealistic zeal that fuel our organization, there would be nothing! Without the selflessness of our 250,000 WIZO volunteers we would quite simply fail to exist.

Our volunteers are to be found at our childcare centres from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and Kiryat Gat. They extend a supportive hand at schools from Kiryat Shmona in the North down to Eilat at our southern tip. They are to be found at community centres and summer camps and in every location where problems of family and community are addressed and solved.

For this is the true Zionism, the spirit that keeps the vision alive. We have had our state long enough for the memory of its birth pangs to fade. And yet the growing pains continue. And WIZO with its volunteers, is always there, offering the assistance, which is still so needed. We are there for the uprooted immigrants, helping them in their difficult first days in the Jewish Homeland. We are at the caravan sites and the absorption centres, ready to soothe fears and offer practical assistance. You can find us in Metula, in Yesod Hamaalah and in the Jordan Valley, ready to respond to every cry for help.

We have been at the task for eighty-eight years now, through the crises, through the wars and through the good years of making the “impossible” Zionist dream come true. We are proud of our accomplishments, yet sorely aware that, no matter how much of ourselves we give, there is always the need for so much more. As an organization we need to expand our capabilities.

For in order to counter the erosion of assimilation and apathy, the acute danger of anti-Semitism, we need to stand up and act. We need to look ahead at the tasks that still need to be tackled. We began as women and as Zionists back when the last century was young. Now, in the 21st century, we can be proud and satisfied, as we look back at what we have accomplished in aiding the daughters of Israel to inherit their rightful portion in the Promised Land.

And we can also be sure that the vision that motivated us in the beginning will continue to serve us well. For as we maintain and renew the faith and determination, the loyalty to the true spirit of Zionism which got this far, we can be sure that we will achieve even more in our next eighty-eight years.
As we mark WIZO's 88th anniversary, it is only fitting that a new spotlight should be focused on the life and work of Rosa Ginossar, World WIZO's second president, and a woman that all WIZO chaverot around the world should be proud of and should know about. We can thank Dr. Ruth Halperin-Kadari and Eyal Katvan for helping to revive interest in her unique achievements.

**Russian Zionist Roots**

Rosa (Hacohen-Ginsberg) Ginossar was born in 1890 in Gomel, Russia. She grew up in an affluent home with a Zionist atmosphere that was shaped by the spirit of the modern Haskala (Enlightenment). Her father, Mordechai Ben-Hillel Hacohen, was a well-known Zionist activist and Hebrew writer in Russia. He settled in Palestine in 1907, made a fortune in business and was one of the founders of the Hebrew Writers' Association. Rosa attended the local high school in Gomel, unlike many of the Jewish girls of the time. After graduating, she decided not to join her parents in Palestine.

Rosa moved to Odessa, where a friend of her father's, Asher Ginsberg, the noted Zionist thinker who wrote under the name Ahad Ha'am took her under his wing. When she met his son, Shlomo, the two began a lifelong relationship. However, it took ten years for Ahad Ha'am to succeed in convincing them to formalize their bond through marriage. The couple visited Palestine at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. After staying with Rosa's parents for a few months they moved to Paris. Shlomo studied philosophy while Rosa studied law and became a lawyer. Women were able to practice law in France at the time, but Rosa

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WIZO's 2nd President

She served as World WIZO's second president between 1966-1970 and was married to Shlomo Ginsberg, the son of Ahad Ha'am, the great Zionist thinker, yet she has been only a footnote in Zionist and WIZO history. Now, thanks to the work of two young researchers at Bar-Ilan University, her extraordinary path-breaking role in Israeli history is coming to light.

| Adi Ronel |
was apparently not drawn to this. She preferred to work with jurists but in a non-lawyerly capacity. For a few years she worked as a clerk, first in the legal department of the Russian embassy in Paris and afterwards in a law office.

**London, where it all was happening**

After World War I the couple moved to London where Ahad Ha’am was then living. Rosa met most of the leaders of the Zionist movement in the British capital, where the main activity of the Zionist leadership was concentrated, and was one of the founders of WIZO, the Women’s International Zionist Organization.

Before the war, the headquarters of the Zionist movement had been in Berlin, but they were transferred to London following the outcome of the war and the League of Nations decision to establish a British mandate over Palestine. This was the background for the British government’s Balfour Declaration in 1917 which declared British readiness to support “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

Since London had become the center of international Zionist activity, British WIZO was established there in 1918, and World WIZO in the same city in 1920. As a proud Zionist who was living in London at the time, Rosa became WIZO’s first secretary, and after she and her husband returned to Palestine, she became secretary of the Palestine WIZO Executive.

Moving to Tel Aviv

In 1922 Ahad Ha’am moved to Tel Aviv with his son and daughter-in-law. Rosa found a job in WIZO’s center for infants in Jaffa, but quickly reached the conclusion that this was not her calling. In August 1922 she decided that she wanted to practice law, even though she had not done so in the ten years since her acceptance to the French bar. Rosa followed the certification procedure, applying to the legislative advisory committee attached to the High Commissioner’s office. One of its tasks was to certify lawyers to appear in the courts of the Mandatory government and before the courts of the various religious communities.

'R'Person' means 'man'

Halperin-Kadari and Katvan do not know whether Ginsberg was aware at the time that no women had ever been certified to appear in court. "We do not know whether she was aware that a woman by the name of Berna Rashel had applied to the committee two years earlier for certification on the basis of a law degree she had obtained in Russia, and was turned down on the grounds that women’s work outside the home was contrary to Muslim tradition and that her appearance in court was liable to harm Muslim sensitivities in Palestine.” British members of the committee added another argument, which representatives of the British Empire frequently resorted to in other countries as well. The law stipulating who is eligible to be certified as a lawyer uses the word "person" in the sense of "man."

Realizing that the committee did not want to make a decision that would set a far-reaching precedent, Ginzb erg offered a compromise: she asked to take the examinations that every non-British university graduate had to pass in order to work in the Empire. But the committee rejected this offer as well.

Extraordinary Patience and Persistence

She then turned for help to two of the leading attorneys in Tel Aviv: Harry Sacker, a British Jew with connections in the government in London, and his partner, Shlomo Horowitz. They appealed to the highest judicial authority in Palestine, who also rejected their petition. At this stage, Rosa decided to begin a two-year clerking period, for which she did not need government authorization. Early in 1929, after completing her internship in Horowitz’s office, she petitioned the High Court of Justice on her behalf. The petition was rejected, with the court declaring that she had to reapply to the advisory board.

Rosa Ginossar was the person who ensured that WIZO became a member of the World Zionist Organization. Until that time, only political organizations were members of the WZO. Together with then WZO Treasurer Louis Pincus, Rosa used her legal training to formulate a new article to the WZO constitution which stated that “any Zion organization that has not less than 150,000 members, and is active in not less than 20 countries can be a member of the World Zionist Organization.” Thus WIZO received six non-voting seats, which were eventually transformed into voting seats. Rebecca Sieff had been a member of the WZO in her personal capacity as a Zionist leader, but when Rosa Ginossar succeeded her on the Executive it was as a representative of WIZO.
The Extraordinary
Ginsberg/Cohen/
Ginossar Family

Rosa’s father-in-law was Ahad Ha’am (1856-1927), the pen-name for Asher Ginsberg meaning “One of the People.” Alongside Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, Ahad Ha’am was one of the first great Zionist thinkers, the founder of what was known as Cultural Zionism.

His son, Shlomo, Rosa’s husband, served as Inspector for Education for the Mandatory government, and he was Israel’s first ambassador to Italy.

Her brother, David Hacohen, a prominent member of Knesset, served as chairman of the influential Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, and also as Israel’s ambassador to Burma.

Rosa’s daughter Ada married Aharon Yadlin, minister of education in Rabin’s government, and daughter Esther married General Uzi Narkiss, who commanded the IDF central command in the Six Day War.

Rosa’s paternal uncles was the father of activist Rosa Cohen, Yizhak Rabin’s mother.

Women are the Backbone of Civilized Society

I have been connected with WIZO since its inception, and I have visited probably all of its institutions and most of the countries in which WIZO has federations….I find it remarkable that WIZO should have attained such exceptional dimensions, and that women from so many countries, speaking so many different languages, many of whom have never seen Israel, should have joined forces, notwithstanding risks and obstacles, to accomplish such outstanding feats in the spheres of culture, charity and humanitarian work for the establishment and continued welfare of the State of Israel. I have always believed that charity, cultural and humanitarian work are the exclusive domain of women and that women and their skill in establishing institutions - whether kindergartens, agricultural and vocational schools, training workshops, libraries, youth clubs, or day care centers - are the backbone of civilized society. The outstanding activities of the different WIZO federations of the world – are activities of which all Jewish women can be proud.

Rosa Ginossar, World WIZO Honorary Life President, 1977

Support from the Yishuv

Ginsberg did so and was again turned down. She petitioned the High Court once again. It was only then, seven years after her struggle had begun, that the Yishuv, the Jewish community in pre-1948 Palestine, began to show an interest in her. However, it was a very limited interest: the Dāvar and Haaretz dailies published an article or two backing her, and the federation of Jewish lawyers issued a statement of support.

“She did get support,” Katvan says, “but it cannot be said that the Yishuv institutions rallied to her cause.”

Representing Herself

When the High Court finally got around to deliberating her petition, Rosa decided to represent herself. She put forward purely legal arguments, arguing that there was no explicit prohibition against women practicing law, and that the same government that agreed to certify female physicians is duty-bound to do the same for female advocates. The judges, perhaps to her surprise, accepted all her arguments and on February 15, 1930, directed that she be certified as an attorney.

The First Female Law Office

In 1931, Rosa Ginsberg became the first female attorney to open a law office in Palestine. She handled civil cases, representing WIZO and people seeking immigration certificates from the British for their relatives. During the Mandate period she represented WIZO on the Advisory Committee devoted to safeguarding the welfare of women in Palestine. She also served on the Immigrants Welfare Committee. After the establishment of the state in 1948 she represented evacuees from the Old City of Jerusalem who wanted housing assistance. She worked in the office until 1949, when she accompanied her husband to Rome when he was named Israel’s consul-general there. At the time, in accordance with Ben-Gurion’s insistence that all Israeli envos abroad should have Hebrew names, they changed the family name from Ginsberg to Ginossar.

Rising in the Ranks of WIZO

After her return she resumed her involvement in WIZO. For many years she served as treasurer of the World WIZO Executive, and was elected chairman of the executive in 1961. In October 1963, when founding president Rebecca Sieff became too ill to continue in her position, Rosa accepted her proposal to be her replacement. She was officially elected as the second World WIZO president by the World WIZO conference in 1966, and in 1970 she was elected honorary life president. Rosa Ginossar passed away in 1979.

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Rosa Ginossar, World WIZO Honorary Life President, 1977
Jewish Women’s Week diamond anniversary triumph

The 60th Jewish Women's Week (JWW) campaign slogan, "This year, we can do better," proved to be appropriate after £270,000 was raised – almost 6% more than the 2006 campaign. Guest speaker at the launch held at WIZO House in London was Lady Jakobovits, wife of the late Emeritus Chief Rabbi Lord (Immanuel) Jakobovits and Vice President of JWW. The diamond anniversary campaign focused on three main areas of WIZO's work: projects to help improve the future for 14,000 children, 5,000 youths at risk and abused women. JWW chair, Andy Epstein says: "Donors to this unique door-to-door campaign have once again given generously to enable WIZO to care for the children of Israeli families in need. JWW promises the people of Israel a better tomorrow and our annual nationwide campaign will continue to help make this possible. JWW has now topped £1.5 million through its last six campaigns and celebrates its 61st campaign in 2008 alongside WIZO.uk's 90th anniversary celebrations, which will see a wide-ranging program of both national and local events taking place."

Rotem’s first event a resounding success

WIZO.uk Aviv’s dynamic new group, Rotem, is comprised of ex-pat Israeli business women aged 25 – 45 living in the London area. For their first event they chose the Israeli comedy drama, 'Women Talk Women' featuring renowned Israeli comediennes, Dorit Peled-Harpaz and Irit Gidron. Over £10,000 was raised towards urgent renovation work at the WIZO Nahariya multi-purpose day care center damaged by katyusha rockets in the Second Lebanon War. Aviv’s representative to the executive, Ronit Collis-Madari described Rotem’s chaverot (members) as "very committed and passionate about Israel."

Lady Jakobovits (2nd from left) at the launch with L - R: JWW Vice-Chairman Joanna Wulwik, JWW President Mildred Graff, WIZO.uk President Michele Vogel, WIZO.uk Hon. Secretary Michele Pollock, WIZO.uk Chairman Loraine Warren and Andy Epstein.

Champagne flows at Newcastle WIZO inaugural function

A capacity crowd assembled at Pamela and Howard Gold’s beautiful home for a celebration champagne brunch to mark the launch of the newly amalgamated Newcastle WIZO. The event was opened by Maralyn and Bernard Roberts and guests of honor included Ann Cranton, Sylvia Kopelowitz, Pauline Lewis, Carmel Lipman, Beryl Landau, Sylvia Mincoff, and Frankie Rosen, all founder members of the Rosa Wollstein Group. WIZO.uk Chairman Loraine Warren and Alison Rosen, chief executive of WIZO.uk, joined the Newcastle chaverot in a toast to the new group.

Leeds WIZO pays tribute to Sue

Leeds WIZO held a luncheon to honor Sue Baker MBE, outgoing president of the Leeds Jewish Representative Council. Sue, who had worked for many years at the Citizens Advice Bureau, was recently appointed to the position of Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Certificate for Sam

Sam Ostro, who celebrated his 90th birthday in September, was presented with a WIZO certificate by joint chairs of Welwyn WIZO, Susan Lipner and Susan Ravitz, at a tea party hosted by Sam in his own home. The oldest member of Welwyn Garden City Hebrew Congregation, Sam still attends the synagogue where he has been a member since 1939 when Quakers rescued him and brought him to England.

Best guest at Darom WIZO cooks calendar launch

South Manchester Darom WIZO’s cooks’ calendars have adorned kitchen walls for no less than 35 years and their popularity grows. This year’s calendar launch opened by Patti Chetham saw 160 women gather for supper to meet guest speaker Angie Best, former wife of the late football icon George Best and author of the new book, “50 is the new 40.” Angie regaled the audience with tips on how to stay youthful and spoke of her life with George Best and as personal assistant to the singer, Cher. Proceeds from the evening, sponsorship and calendar sales totaled £12,000.

Remembering Rosemary and Teddy (Edward) Isaacs

WIZO.uk has lost two of its most valued honorary vice presidents, unusually a husband and wife team, Rosemary (aged 87) and Teddy (Edward) Isaacs (aged 97). Rosemary’s support for Israel started when she was a child, encouraged by her grandfather. Her grandmother, Gusta Isaacs, knew Rebecca Sieff and was a founder member of Leeds WIZO. In 1941 after marrying Teddy, Rosemary’s work for Israel continued through Sheffield WIZO where she became chair and subsequently president. Rosemary’s drive and ingenuity boosted fundraising, and her public speaking
skills enabled her to reach out to Jewish and non-Jewish audiences on the plight of Israelis. Her husband, Teddy, a respected wholesale jeweler, dedicated communal worker and former president of the orthodox community, supported Rosemary’s activities and joined her at conferences. Every family celebration became an opportunity to support WIZO. It was through Rosemary’s passion for WIZO that Teddy’s cousin, Gaby Bothelo, left a legacy in excess of £1 million to WIZO, resulting in the opening of the Givatayim Community Center in 2000.

Following their example, daughters Jill Shaw is a vice chairman of WIZO.uk and Liz Morris made aliyah with her family in 1983 and is a member of Raanana WIZO.

CANADA

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO - 90 years strong

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) centers around the country hosted “Celebrating Achievement: locally, nationally and internationally,” heralding a year-long celebration of CHW’s anniversary, “90 Years Strong!” The National Program Committee, chaired by Carol Lou Spiegel of Toronto, coordinated the proceedings in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Sydney (NS). CHW members and guests, totaling well over a thousand participants nationwide, attended their local CHW center for a memorable and enlightening event recognizing the achievements of CHW members and the community at large, exemplifying the mission that CHW represents. There was a special video presentation highlighting CHW’s projects in Israel, devoted to children, healthcare and women as well as a feature on deputy prime minister of Israel Shaul Mofaz, himself a graduate of CHW’s Nahalal Community School. The events served to increase awareness of the wonderful work accomplished by CHW coast-to-coast. CHW National President Sandy Martin attended each gathering along with the many accomplished women honored by each center. Calgary: Cheryl Cameron, Cheryl Gurevitch, Shoshanah Stein, Leah Saltman and Dr. Jeanette Nicholls; Edmonton: Dr. Anne Fanning and Francine Nobleman; Montreal: Annie Young and Sharleen Young; Ottawa: Linda Greenberg, Terry Schwarzfeld and Shirley E. Greenberg; Sydney: Evelyn Druker, the late Sylvia Allen, and Suzanne M.Winors; Toronto: Marlene Richardson Julie Toskan-Casale; Vancouver: Ruth Freeman and The Hon. Carole Taylor.

Motivation at the National Young Leadership Task Force Gathering

World WIZO’s Public Affairs and NGO Department Chairperson, Brenda Katten was recently in Canada as guest speaker at the four-day National Young Leadership Task Force Gathering. CHW national officers, the entire national executive and young women from all over the country came to Montreal to attend the gathering. Through a series of talks, Brenda detailed the history of Israel and spoke fervently of the crucial role played by WIZO in responding to the needs of the Israeli family, particularly women and children. Responding to her illuminating speeches, the many young mothers present at the gathering said they could identify with problems of the mother in Israel and the solutions offered by CHW through its day care centers and schools. Brenda enlightened the audience in her address, “WIZO in the International Arena” imparting information on the accomplishments of WIZO and the high regard in which the organization is held.

Empowered and motivated, CHW young leadership were able to return to their chapters well prepared to inspire their chaverot.
WIZO's teens go green

"WIZO Goes Green" was the theme of the successful WIZO New York teens party held at the Midtown Loft in November. The event, concluding a campaign of collecting used electronic items for recycling, was co-chaired by Jasmine Aghravi, Jeremy Banon, Claudia Constantiner, Zachary Cooper, Michela Eshaghian, Sophie Ghadamian, Daniella Sakhai and Stephan Sakhai.

Long Island Gala

The WIZO Long Island chapter held its inaugural gala at the Great Neck Synagogue in October. The event was chaired by Natalie Harounian, Rori Sassoon and Bita Sassouni under the leadership of Chapter Co-Chairs Gezelle Javaheri, Rinat Mardkha and Sheila Shahery, with the invaluable support of Vice Chair Natalie Nejat, Chapter Treasurer Tina Ohebshalom and Secretary Michelle Ahdoot. The elegant gala featured Texas Holdem poker, a terrific silent auction and raffle, dancing and dinner. WIZO USA President Evelyn Sommer was the guest speaker.

Educational Series

In November, WIZO New York held an educational and informative luncheon chaired by Tammy Cohen, long-time member of the New York Executive Board. Guests included Sharon Regev, Consul for Public Affairs at the Israel Consulate and Yael Dayan, former member of the Knesset and currently deputy mayor of Tel Aviv, who spoke about efforts in Israel to promote equality and political advancement for women. Meirav Elian Shahar, counselor at the Israel Mission to the UN reported on Israel's situation at the United Nations.

Los Angeles

Sponsor-A-Child at the Hillcrest Country Club

WIZO Los Angeles, under the leadership of chapter Chair Miriam Wizman and regional Vice Presidents Malka Fogel and Barbara Limon, held their annual Sponsor-A-Child event in November. The stylish affair was chaired and sponsored by Soraya and Younes Nazarian at the exclusive Hillcrest Country Club. Angella Nazarian, daughter-in-law of Soraya and Younes, spoke of the family's longtime connection and commitment to WIZO. Guest speaker Ambassador Dan Gillerman, Israel's permanent representative to the UN, gave an update on Israel's political situation and WIZO USA President Evelyn Sommer reported on WIZO's work in Israel. Other guests of honor were the Israel consul general in Los Angeles, Mr. Jacob Dayan, the president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, Dr. John Fishel and Mrs. Fishel, and Rebbetzin Sherrie Hirsch of Temple Sinai. A highlight of the evening was a special viewing of the celebrated painting 'Sheep,' an original work by Menashe Kadishman. Each sponsor received a WIZO Kadishman Pesach Haggadah. The event was organized...
with the support and commitment of the Los Angeles board members and the Young Los Angeles WIZO board chaired by Joyce Azria-Nassir, Leanne Cobb, Lisa Gild, Bernard Hoffman, Dianna Mannheim, Greg Sherman and Sabrina Wizman-Zamel.

San Francisco

Balloons of love from WIZO Nativ

Chaverot at WIZO Nativ’s (San Francisco) Rosh Hashanah festival released blue and white balloons with their children’s wishes inside. The chapter created a huge New Year greetings card for the children of Nir Haemek. Everybody received apples and honey. The event was organized under the leadership of chapter Chair Galit Rand and the members of her executive board.

EUROPE

AUSTRIA

Sponsor-A-Child in Vienna

Former university teacher and deputy director of the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg, Prof. Dr. Ewald Nowotny, is acknowledged as the rescuer of the BAWAG-PK Bank, breathing new life into the institution after a period of gross mismanagement threatened its downfall. Now its director general, he is not only a highly successful manager but is also a special friend of Israel. Prof. Dr. Ewald Nowotny hosted WIZO Austria’s Sponsor-A-Child evening in one of Vienna’s most beautiful buildings, an original Otto Wagner house, which the famous “art nouveau” builder created over a hundred years ago for the bank. The Sponsor-A-Child evening was the first Jewish charity event held there. Honorary members of the WIZO Austria board present were Blandina Baranes, Shoshana Bendet, Rita Dauber, Erika Deutsch, Eva Deutsch, Linda Gregor, Cecile Grünwald, Yana Hauptman, Eva Kulcsar, Edith Landesmann, Karin Maier-Winter, Galina Naistat, Irma Pani, Juli Roth, Dr. Sylvie Stein, Sharon Nuni-Turkoj and Judith Uri. Blandina Baranes together with her entire family decorated the unique hallway.

Dr. Nowotny welcomed the guests including many dignitaries from the Jewish community. Keynote speaker, Henryk Broder, well-known publicist from Germany, spoke on the policy of appeasement towards the Islamic fundamentalists practiced in many European countries – a problem that is widely discussed in his recently published book. Some 120 people participated in this superb event.

BELGIUM

We’ll diet tomorrow, we are busy now!

From choosing the perfect roses for Rosh Hashanah flower arrangements to the backbreaking task of sifting through tons of second hand clothing for sale at their bazaars, the chaverot of WIZO Belgium take to their tasks with enthusiasm, happy in the knowledge that their efforts benefit WIZO and Israel.

In October, a screening of a film on the life of extraordinarily talented star, Sarah Bernhardt, shown at the lovely home of Katia Stelman, was a complete sell-out. Liliane Einziger was charged with the task of organizing and preparing the buffet for the traditional “sponsors’ lunch” and all thoughts of dieting were put on hold as everyone enjoyed the rich and delicious dishes prepared by the chaverot.
GERMANY

Berlin's One Night for the Children soars beyond expectations

WIZO Berlin's annual Sponsor-A-Child evening, entitled “One Night for Children,” went beyond all expectations when the figures topped a handsome 210,000 euros. Two hundred guests enjoyed good food and wine at a former power station transformed into a super sophisticated location with 30-meter high ceilings, brick walls and minimalist chic. The highlight of the evening was the “American Auction” for two VIP tickets to the pre-party of the BAMBI Awards, Germany’s alternative to the Oscars. Each bid was the equivalent of one sponsorship (500 euros). The auction evolved into an exciting competition battled out between five guests intent on winning the coveted prize.

Ramona Abaew, a talented young member of the community captivated the audience with her performance of Hebrew and international songs; afterwards the guests danced to the music of the Alex Shnaider Band.

The problem now facing WIZO Berlin is how to top such a spectacle next year!

Frankfurt nursery memory games aid WIZO day care center

Frankfurt’s Westend kindergarten joined forces with WIZO Germany at its summer fête to raise money for the M. Helene and Nadine De Rothschild WIZO day care center in Jerusalem’s Neve Yaakov neighborhood. Portraits were taken of all the kindergarten children and were incorporated into ‘memory games’ that were sold at the fête. The Westend kindergarten is hoping that through joint fundraising campaigns a partnership can be forged between their nursery and the one in Jerusalem, which they wish to “adopt” as their very own WIZO kindergarten.

Berlin fashion show benefits Israeli teenagers

Twenty one WIZO chaverot presented the fall and winter collections of one of Berlin’s best boutiques, Veronica Pohle and furs by A & M Gerekos Pelz Style to the delight of 180 guests. Hairdressers Maccas Haircouture and stylist Dieter Bonnstaedter transformed WIZO chaverot into supermodels for the evening. Michal Gelberman and Tina Adlerssteijn excelled in their roles as moderators, and DJ Sammy Brauner chose the perfect musical accompaniments before, during and after the show. Creative dance troupe Ambrosia with Patrick King and Johan Silverhult captivated the audience. It was a night of fabulous clothing, beautiful models, scrumptious sushi and a warm, fun-loving group of guests – all the right ingredients for yet another success for WIZO Berlin. Monies raised will benefit WIZO Germany’s new project in Eilat: a center for teenagers and girls at risk.

Great vibes and great success

Held in the ballroom of Frankfurt’s Hilton Hotel, festooned with blue and white balloons for the occasion, WIZO Germany’s gala “One night for children” proved to be every bit as successful as in previous years. In her welcome speech, WIZO Germany President Rachel Singer spoke of the need to secure a bright future for the children of Israel and lauded efforts of WIZO women. She redefined the letters of WIZO...
as Willing, Idealistic, Zealous and Organizationally strong. Evening host, Andrea Kiewel explained, that a sponsorship of 500 euros could guarantee a child from a less fortunate background a whole year in a day-care center. Honored guests included Dr. H. c. Johannes Gerster, president of the German-Israeli Society, and the president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Charlotte Knobloch who said that what impressed her about WIZO was the enormous achievements of the women standing behind the organization and especially the untiring efforts of WIZO's women in Frankfurt. With a smirk she added, that the men of WIZO still had a thing or two to learn from these women. The Marshall & Alexander duo enchanted guests with their repertoire of arias, musical extracts and an impressive version of "Avinu Malkeinu." High quality raffle prizes ensured maximum sales as guests clamored to win Hermes watches, Hilton weekends and cookery courses. At midnight, formidable acts of the Tiger Palace, presented by Johnny Klinke wowed the audience. At the end of the evening, the digital display showed the unbelievable number of 630 sponsorships.

Tiger Palace wows the audience

Evening host, Andrea Kiewel interviews Ms. Charlotte Knobloch

GREECE

The 23rd Panhellenic WIZO Congress Seminar

The 23rd Panhellenic WIZO Congress Seminar held in Athens in November opened with a formal celebratory dinner attended by the rabbis, the Israeli ambassador, the president of the Central Board of Jewish Communities, the president of the Athens Jewish community, and Mrs. Sylvie Pelossof, chairperson of the World WIZO Organization and Jewish Education Department. WIZO members from Athens, Saloniki, Larisa, Volos, Chalkida, and Rhodes were present with husbands and partners. A toast was given to the Yaglom group, celebrating its 30 WIZO years and the anniversary of the first Panhellenic WIZO Congress Seminar, which was held at Mrs. Shulamit Yais's house. On the first day of the proceedings, Sylvie Pelossof delivered an enlightening speech on "European Jewish Communities after WWII, their development, their relationship with Israel, and their global influence." Mrs. Pelossof presented a comprehensive overview of the Jewish communities and WIZO federations in Germany, the U.K., Holland, Italy, Poland and Greece, tracing the growth of the European Council of Jewish Communities, the European Jewish Congress, and ECWF (European Council of WIZO Federations). Other speakers included London University professor, psychiatrist/psychoanalyst Mr. Mathew Iosafat, and spokesperson of the Greek Helsinki Monitor, Harvard University, Panayiote Dimitras. Professor of history at Athens University Mrs. Rena Molho spoke on the "History of the Jewish Communities in Greece." Mrs. Nelly Arouh-Capon, in charge of the Jewish Cultural Center in Saloniki, spoke on the Jewish communities in Greece in the past, present and in the future.

Group leaders held round table discussions focusing on the identity of Greek Jewish women, charity and solidarity with Israel and confronting anti-Semitism. Presentation of the round-table discussion conclusions revealed that chaverot saw themselves as 100% Jews and 100% Greek, and that they must be better informed to confront anti-Semitism with convincing arguments. The logo, "Wherever we are, we are one," has helped Jews in the Diaspora survive and thrive and it is crucial to find ways of inspiring the younger generation to participate in WIZO projects.

The seminar ended with the reports of all the WIZO presidents in Greece. Carmen Cohen, representing Rhodes, reported that although Rhodes has only 35 Jews, every year 20,000 tourists visit its synagogue, which is also a cultural center, and learn about Jews in Greece. At the conference, Flora Mihael of WIZO Salonici was appointed as the new president of WIZO Greece. The presidency of WIZO Greece moves from Athens to Saloniki every three years. In conclusion, the 23rd Panhellenic Congress Seminar was hugely successful.

L. – R: May Barki, past-president WIZO Greece, president of WIZO Athens, Flora Mihael, Mrs. Sylvie Pelossof
HOLLAND

Two days in October – two Dutch dedications

WIZO Holland President Joyce Numann-Durlacher, executive member, Loes van den Bergh-Weijl and Vice-President/Hon.Treasurer Margeret Bouscher-Snapper joined World WIZO Tourist Department Chair Lili Peyser and personnel from Nachlat Yehuda at the dedication ceremony unveiling a plaque in the name of Floor Kokernoot-Espinosa whose kindness has facilitated the renovation of dormitory A in

ITALY

Seventh Adei-WIZO literary award

Adei-WIZO’s seventh literary award ceremony was held in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, one of Italy’s most ancient cities rich in culture watched by a large audience including many local dignitaries. A jury comprised exclusively of women selected the prizewinners. Sami Michael’s book, “Trumpet in the Wadi” took the first prize and the prize for children’s literature was awarded to Jeanette Kaplan for her book, “Ten Green Bottles.”

Israeli schoolteachers hold course at the Campidoglio

Adei-WIZO invited two Israeli schoolteachers, Edna Calo Livne and Shaul Ben Tora, to hold their course “Integration of students with different ethnic roots in the Italian State Schools” in Rome, Leghorn and Trieste, following the success last year of courses in Florence, Verona and Milan. The introduction of the course took place at the Campidoglio in Rome with numerous state authorities lending support.

European Day of Jewish Culture

Adei-WIZO’s European Day of Jewish Culture held in September included a photographic exhibition on Fiorello La Guardia in the Trieste synagogue, a conference on “Jewish music in Italy at the end of the 19th century” in Turin, a visit to the catacombs in Rome and the program “Music and Poetry” in Milan. Young actress, Sabra del Mare, who read the poems in “Music and Poetry” in Milan, emphasized the beauty of each verse and her emotive voice was alternated by the strains of a haunting violin played by Margarita Egorova.

Rome branch visits Baltic States

In visits to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, chaverot of the Rome chapter met with local Jewish communities, visited museums and paid homage to the places where multitudes were massacred. In Lithuania there are now only 6,000 Jews (compared to approximately 150,000 before World War II) and there is only one synagogue remaining from
SWITZERLAND

Swiss mission’s action-packed agenda

In October, Swiss WIZO Federation President Anne Argi led the long awaited Swiss Federation’s mission to Israel. First on the agenda was the inauguration of WIZO’s first Qassam-proof day care center in the beleaguered town of Sderot, donated by Bruce and Ruth Rappaport. Their daughter, Irit Rappaport represented them at the inauguration.

At the Swiss Federation’s Lausanne Chapter’s project in Petach Tikva, the Gan Vanof gardening school principal Moshe Zamir greeted the mission and World WIZO executives and department heads at a corner stone laying ceremony for a new dormitory in memory of the late Emmy Dreyfus. Also in attendance were the Petach Tikva Mayor Mr Yitzhak Ohayon and the Swiss ambassador to Israel. A plaque in honour of Swiss WIZO chavera Ruth Fischer, recognising her long service was also unveiled.

At the WIZO Nachlat Yehuda School, the dedication of a new floor honoring Lucie Gideon in appreciation of her 14 years service as former president of Swiss WIZO took place in front of the new building. Many of Lucie’s friends and family were present as well as World WIZO executives and department heads joined by Aviv Shir’ion, former Israeli ambassador to Switzerland, his wife and the Swiss ambassador to Israel. The George Teitler computer room was inaugurated in honor of George Teitler’s 70th birthday. The state-of-the-art equipped computer room provides the children with the unique opportunity of being able to use it outside school hours. Finally, a new activity center, Beit Hannini was unveiled: a beautiful hall to be used for functions, major classes and lectures borne out of the generosity of the Beitscher family and represented by more than a hundred that existed before the war. Local WIZO President Rachel Kostanian provided information and the opportunity to visit the Vilnius community center, which houses an important genocide museum. In Latvia, (capital: Riga) the Jewish population numbers between 2,000 and 3,000 and there is a synagogue. Riga also has an important museum where many documents paying testimony to the social and political status of the pre-war Jewish community is kept. In Estonia, (capital: Tallinn) the Jewish community is flourishing and active with schools, cultural centers and a very modern synagogue. Local WIZO President, Revekka Blumberg extended a particularly warm welcome to the visiting Italian chaveraot.

SPAIN

The crowds flock to WIZO Spain’s various fundraisers which, this year, have included tea with the Spanish ambassador, music recitals, cookery courses and flamenco shows.

Spanish chaverot, Carolina, Yael, Teresa, Soraya, Sara, Rivka, Ana, Clara and Odette present their delicious home-baked sweet offerings on sale at Madrid’s Beth Yacob Synagogue.

At the Ibn Gvirol Jewish School of Madrid, WIZO Spain chaverot proudly display photos of their sponsored nurseries in Israel.

WiZo Spain President Clara Salama addresses the audience at the Jerusalem Day celebrations.

L - R: Anne Argi, Irit Rappaport, Tova Ben Dov and some of our adorable babies at the Sderot Qassam-proof daycare center

Renata Perez unveils a plaque at WiZo Nachlat Yehuda
Renata Perez. The wonderful Nachlat Yehuda song and dance troupe entertained the group in the evening and they enjoyed dinner in the gardens.

The 24-person strong mission also attended the opening ceremony of the Knesset’s winter session, addressed by President Shimon Peres. They visited the Rebecca Sieff WIZO Center for the Family (Beti Hakerem), the WIZO Haberer Community Center, a WIZO Mexico day care center at the Palmachim air base, and Neve WIZO, a project sponsored by WIZO South Africa. Also on the agenda were visits to a Swiss-sponsored day care center in Nahariya and the St. Gallen’s chapter day care center in Northern Acco, where the group inspected the renovated kitchen donated in memory of Very Neuburger Teitler. World WIZO Tourist Department Chair Lili Peyser, and World WIZO Publicity Department Chair Zipi Amiri opened their homes to their Swiss chaverot with warm hospitality, and World WIZO Public Affairs Department Chair Brenda Katten delivered a hard-hitting lecture on the situation in Israel and the distortion of the media.

\[image\]

LATIN AMERICA
ARGENTINA

Appreciative audience applaud Pinchas

Organised by OSFA-WIZO, well-known Israeli violinist, Pinchas Zukerman and his string quartet played at Argentina’s newest synagogue, “Amijai” and received a ten-minute standing ovation from a most enthusiastic audience.

Sergio talks sociology at the Sofitel

Buenos Aires City’s magnificent Sofitel Hotel was the perfect backdrop for an evening honoring four WIZO friends who received pin awards. Sponsored by Bank Leumi in Argentina, guests enjoyed dinner, after which sociologist Sergio Berenstein enlightened the audience with his thought-provoking talk on “The political situation in the Middle East and the World.”

\[image\]

Generations come together as Young WIZO pledges solidarity

Argentina’s children aged four to ten, whose families belong to different country clubs in the city, Hebraica, Cissab and Campo Chico, picked up their paintbrushes to create winning masterpieces for Young WIZO’s “Solidarity” contest. WIZO House threw open its doors to welcome the talented and delightful children who came to claim their awards and certificates along with their proud parents, even prouder grandparents and some even with great grandparents in tow! It was a rare phenomenon for WIZO House to witness three generations under its roof, which made the event unique and moving. It was also an excellent way to reach out to the younger generation.

\[image\]

L - R: OSFA Honorary President Amalia Polack, OSFA President Clara Gersberg, Israeli Ambassador’s wife Batia Eldad, Teme Jaratz, Sonia Jaratz

OSFA President Clara Gersberg with prizewinner, Lucia

Happy children with their prizes and certificates
Dedication of the George and Paulina Michonik day care center

Members of the World WIZO Executive together with family and friends of World WIZO Fundraising Department Chairperson Celia Michonik and her husband Jacky, traveled to Jerusalem to dedicate the renovated day care center (sponsored by WIZO Argentina) in the suburb of Gilo in the names of Jacky’s parents George and Paulina. World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben Dov praised the Michonik family, especially Paulina, Jacky’s mother, who died in 2006 aged 106. Paulina and George immersed themselves in the nascent Jewish community in Colombia in the 1940s, entertaining emissaries from Palestine seeking help for establishing the Jewish state. Paulina devoted herself to Colombia WIZO, serving a term as president. George died at a relatively young age, and Paulina fulfilled her Zionist dream by moving to Tel Aviv, where she lived out her days. The WIZO day care center in Gilo has been transformed to a most beautiful ‘home from home’ where 103 children from five months to three and a half years, spend their days while their mothers are working, secure in the knowledge that their little ones are being well cared for.

Ida’s 80th birthday treat for WIZO

In celebration of her 80th birthday, WIZO chavera Ida Scheinkman and her husband Moises, hosted friends and relatives at a refined dinner dance at their lovely home. Instead of bringing birthday gifts the Scheinkmans asked guests to make donations to WIZO.

WIZO Minas Gerais at the Street Fair

Inside the WIZO Minas Gerais’s tents at the state capital’s 16th street fair in Belo Horizonte, home-made sweets and snacks baked by the chapter’s events director, Nicia Sternik, were eagerly snapped up and the beautifully made Jewish handicrafts designed by Claudia Chaim and Laura Schreiber drew appreciative crowds. To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, the WIZO tents were bedecked with illustrations of the Kotel also designed by Laura Schreiber.

WIZO Para’s Mother of the Year

Eighty-year-old Mrs. Maria Pinto was named 2007 Mother of the Year at WIZO Para’s annual traditional Mother’s Day celebration held at the Israelite Center. Guests, among them Mrs. Pinto’s large family, were very moved by her heartfelt acceptance speech. Among the unique and entertaining ways in which tributes were paid to the Pinto matriarch, Mrs. Pinto’s granddaughter, WIZO chavera Karen Chevis, who lives in Sao Paulo, related her grandmother’s life story in the Brazilian folklore structured form of poetry much to everyone’s delight.
WIZO Rio Kabalat Shabbat

WIZO Rio’s new Aviv group, Teshuvah, was welcomed at Betty Dabkiewicz and Silvio Pitkowski’s home for a cozy kabalat shabbat dinner. Over 20 married couples have already enjoyed warm hospitality at the Pitowski’s.

Amazing Fraternity Fair in Porto Alegre

“Amazing,” was the word WIZO Brazil Federation President, Sarita Schaffel, used to describe WIZO Rio Grande do Sul’s traditional annual “Fraternity Fair.” Over one thousand participants enjoyed the weekend event held in the grounds of the local Jewish school. The many colorfully decorated tents housed activities including song and dance performances, a fashion show and an art gallery highlighting children’s paintings based on the ecologically friendly green theme of the Fraternity Fair. Tributes were paid to Mrs. Bella Wainstein, ex-president of WIZO RS and currently president of WIZO Rio Grande do Sul advisory council – both on behalf of WIZO Rio Grande do Sul Chapter and WIZO Brazil Federation. WIZO chaverot, Aviv and Lapid alike worked with tireless fervor to ensure the success of this “amazing” weekend under the leadership of WIZO Rio Grande do Sul’s president, Suzana Starosta.

WIZO Chile President participates in Tenth Regional Conference on the Woman

Susy Baron, president of WIZO Chile traveled to the city of Quito in Ecuador to participate in the Tenth Regional Conference on the Woman in Latin America and the Caribbean as part of the Chilean delegation headed by Minister Laura Albornoz of the SERNAM (National Service of the Woman).

Over 700 delegations from 35 countries took part in the conference, which takes place every three years. The conference’s aims are to identify the regional and national needs of the women, to present recommendations to the government and to evaluate the results of past proposals. This year, subjects under review included contribution of women to the economy and the participation and equality of women in the political decision-making process.
Present at the opening ceremony of the conference were the president of Chile, Mrs. Michelle Bachelet, accompanied by the president of Ecuador, Mr. Rafael Correa and the vice-president of Spain, Mrs. Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega.

The Chilean government invited WIZO Chile to participate in the conference due to WIZO being an NGO and the organization’s activities in aid of children and the status of women.

GUATEMALA

New project for women at risk at Hadassim

Throughout his life, the late Samuel Camhi was an active member of the Jewish community in Guatemala with a great passion for Israel. His generosity has supported several WIZO projects including the Samuel Camhi community center in Tel Aviv, the Samuel Camhi youth club and the day care center at the Tel Nof Air Base. A new project at the Hadassim Youth Village in support of young women at risk has been made possible by the Samuel Camhi Foundation.

In Guatemala recently, World WIZO Fundraising Department Chair, Celia Michonik met up with his children, one of whom is WIZO Guatemala President, Soly Berkowitz.

MEXICO

Plenty to do, see and taste at the Gastronomic Fair

Mexico’s Noar group held its third gastronomic fair recently with the participation of representatives from hotels, banqueting halls, caterers, florists, musical bands and disc jockeys. Over 90 companies involved in planning events from the largest corporate function or society wedding to an intimate small birthday celebration showcased their products during the four day fair, which was opened by the Ambassador of the State of Israel in Mexico, Yosef Livne, and attended by over 2,800 visitors. As well as food sampling, wine tasting, and cookery workshops there was entertainment for the children and a ‘famous name’ fashion show. The Javerut (Chaverot) group organized a bowling competition with fun and prizes for all.
A new group is born
Consisting of many daughters and granddaughters of WIZO chaverot, WIZO Mexico’s 33rd and newest group Reut (camaraderie) comprises of young married women, friends from childhood, poised to take the wonderful world of WIZO to a new generation.

PANAMA
Celebrating the success of Sponsor-A-Child
WIZO USA President, Evelyn Sommer, was the guest of honor at WIZO Panama’s luncheon to mark the conclusion of the Sponsor-A-Child project. Held at the home of chavera Jessy Attie, sponsors and friends of WIZO were invited to celebrate the success of the campaign. President of WIZO Sarie Hanono, Miss Licha Behar, addressed the audience and thanked them for their support. Camile Dayan, president of WIZO Panama read out Evelyn Sommer’s impressive resumé and introduced her to the gathering. Each of the attending members received a certificate signed by World WIZO President Helena Glaser together with a thank you note and picture of one of the children at the WIZO day care centers. Donors received pins bearing the Sponsor-A-Child logo. Hostess, Jessy Attie and Evelyn Sommer were presented with beautiful WIZO-inscribed commemorative mirrors.

Out in force for WIZO Aviv Jai’s traditional Rosh Hashanah Bazaar
This year’s Rosh Hashanah Bazaar was sponsored by the Cohen family in memory of their late mother, Grace M de Cohen. In her honor, a special brochure was designed and printed. WIZO Aviv Jai Chapter Chair, Joyce Yohoros welcomed special guest, WIZO USA President Mrs. Evelyn Sommer to a tribute program where Cohen family members spoke movingly about their mother and grandmother. One couple from the family treated visitors to the bazaar with a vibrant display of Panamanian folklore dancing, and a selection of Israeli dances was performed by teenage girls who are undoubtedly future WIZO members. Some 850 people visited the all-day event that included a flower-arranging contest judged by professional florists who were dazzled by the beautiful and tasteful creations on display. WIZO chaverot served a delicious Italian lunch and in the late afternoon a selection of patisseries and gateaux, donated by the community’s best bakers proved irresistible to the capacity crowd. Fifty-one stands selling a variety of merchandise, including a special stand for WIZO products, provided something for everyone. Hard work – yes, but the net result was extremely rewarding for WIZO in Panama.

SOUTH AFRICA
Honoring Sylvia in South Africa
WIZO chaverot who have served for 40 years or more were honored at an impressive Rebecca Sieff Awards function in Johannesburg. South Africa Honorary Life President Sylvia Berzack was recognized for her amazing 70 years of continuous service to WIZO. Sylvia began her long service with WIZO in 1937 when she returned from her honeymoon and her aunt took her to a WIZO meeting. She wasted no time becoming involved and through the years moved up the ranks from branch chairman to president of WIZO South Africa. Sylvia’s dedication and commitment together with her infallible efficiency are the hallmark of her work.
Aviv girls shaking what mama gave them
Bnoth Zion Association WIZO, Cape Town hosted an Aviv Seminar attended by Aviv members from several South African cities. After three days of brainstorming and bonding, the girls let their hair down at a Mediterranean evening with tasty Israeli food and the opportunity to “shake what their mamas gave them” during a belly dancing lesson. The young delegates returned home with renewed enthusiasm and intensified Zionist and WIZO energy.

AUSTRALIA
Jeremy shares Bar mitzvah joy
Jeremy Wittert, son of WIZO South Australia’s secretary Di Wittert twinned his Bar mitzvah through WIZO to enable a Bar mitzvah-aged boy in Israel to celebrate as well. Presenting Jeremy with a WIZO certificate at the celebration, Miriam Millingen, president of WIZO South Australia, spoke about the Bar mitzvah twinning program.

"The Dream Show – A Fashion Event for Israel"
Over 400 people were welcomed to a dazzling night of fashion at Leonda by the Yarra, by 167 patrons and 365 hostesses in WIZO Victoria’s major function for 2007, “The Dream Show – A Fashion Event for Israel.”

WIZO Victoria’s 60th Annual General Meeting
WIZO Victoria celebrated its 60th Annual General Meeting by honoring this year’s 25 presidents and co-presidents of their 16 active groups, in recognition of their hard work and dedication. Each honoree received a specially prepared certificate and long-stemmed red rose. Together they have a remarkable 254 years of combined service to WIZO. One hundred and thirty people attended the meeting where Paulette Cherny was re-elected for her sixth year as president. The Ann Zablud Award for Community Service was awarded to Nina Bassat, a highly regarded communal doyen and the Marlis Cohen Zionist Youth Award was presented to Elinor Shalev, director of public affairs of the State Zionist Council of Australia. The Rebecca Sief Award was presented to Tilly Nadler who has been a member for 55 years. Dora Ould was rewarded for her dedication and devotion by having a room endowed in her name at Ahuzat Yeladim in Haifa.

Black & White Hollywood Ball is big for House of Dreams
The red carpet was rolled out for 100 guests at WIZO Queensland’s star-studded opening event. Paparazzi were waiting to snap the guests as they arrived, many of whom were dressed in fabulous costumes inspired by the evening’s theme. An appeal, the first of its kind for WIZO Queensland, raised funds for the House of Dreams project in Israel. WIZO Australia Federal President Jo Gostin, tugged at the heartstrings, inspiring guests to give generously as she gave insight into the project, resulting in a highly profitable appeal. Among the many highlights of the evening was the auction of a beautiful painting by renowned artist Richard Werner, bought by David Paratz, and a stay for two at the sought-after Palazzo Versace Hotel, won by Miriam Goldman. The heady combination of lively entertainment, first-rate food and a glitterati guest list was nothing short of “Hollywood.”

WIZO Victoria’s 60th Annual General Meeting was edited by Tricia Schwitzer
You can’t see their faces
but you CAN save their lives

You, too, can play a role in providing a brighter future
for Israeli children who have come to WIZO

Donation Opportunities

**$10,000**  Sponsorship of a Parenting Hotline for a year for children aged 6 months to 4 years.

**$7,500**  Sponsorship of a group of 15 adolescent girls to attend the “Otzma Tzeira” (Young Power) Empowerment Program for one year.

**$5,000**  Sponsorship of a child for a year at a WIZO group home for babies and young children.

**$3,500**  Sponsorship of a child at a WIZO home for a year.

**$1,500**  Sponsorship of a child to attend “Project Metzila” a violence prevention program at a WIZO Youth Village for one year.

**$1,000**  Sponsorship of a child to attend a youth leadership program for a year at a WIZO Community Center.

**$600**  Sponsorship of a child to receive enrichment classes in mathematics, English and science at a WIZO youth club for one year.

**$250**  Sponsorship of a youth at a WIZO Youth Village to attend an Ethiopian cultural program for one year.

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