War in the North
WIZO opens its heart

Co-existence in Haifa
Jews and Arabs empowered

First Lady of Panama
An unprecedented WIZO visit

Making it in New York
WIZO Academy exhibition in the Big Apple
Their Future is in Your Hands
Israel's Future is in Their Hands

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Cover: A child from the North found refuge at WIZO Hadassim during the war

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President’s Desk

This year (5766) was dominated by three major events: Former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s serious illness and departure from the political arena; the general elections and the hope for a change in the national agenda and budget prioritization in favor of social issues, and the Lebanon II War. Through my updates, I reported to you, sometimes on a daily basis, about what was really going on in Israel, and shared with you the various WIZO activities carried out to help the population in the north of the country.

During the war, WIZO proved, once again, that it is the biggest voluntary organization in Israel and a role model for voluntary spirit and assistance to the community. With your help WIZO catered to the needs of approximately 1300 evacuees and operated summer camps for 1000 children that were supposed to take place in the north and needed alternative venues. WIZO will continue to assist Israel’s northern population through its network of projects and services, while keeping its eye on the national pulse in order to go the extra mile if necessary.

The coming year will not be an easy one and our country faces many problems and challenges. Israel is still on alert and security remains a top priority.

Yet the National Insurance Institute’s 2005 Report on Poverty that was published this week, again indicates that one quarter of Israel’s population lives below the poverty line, proving that the social gaps and differences between the various sectors in our society cannot be ignored, or their solutions postponed. As I write these lines the Government is trying to juggle the National Budget for 2007, so it will address the results and implications of the war, while not neglecting the Kassam missiles in the south, and the other urgent social issues. This will not be an easy task and the social organizations’ assistance will continue to be essential.

WIZO’s 50 Federations and 800 projects and services are ready to face any and all future challenges. WIZO will continue to provide for the welfare, education and advancement of children, youth, women and the elderly in Israel, and strengthen the bond between Israel and the Diaspora, while developing new projects and tools to enhance and to expand its services, increase its national and international membership, pursue its combat against anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism that is again on the rise, and help in the post-war Hasbara (advocacy) effort. WIZO has the ability, through its Federations to serve as an ambassador of good will and present a totally different, more accurate and compassionate depiction of the Jewish People and State.

My dear chaverot, your love, dedication, devotion and commitment to the State of Israel and its society is unlimited and leads you to new and creative projects and greater achievements all the time.

I wish each and every one of you and your families a Shana Tova.

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
Miri Perlis, Treasurer
Yochy Feller, Chairperson, WIZO Israel
Ora Baharaff, Chairperson, Human Resources Division
Celia Michonik, Chairperson, Fundraising Department
Sylvie Pelossof, Chairperson, Organization & Education Dept.
Ruth Rubinstein, Chairperson Formal & Informal Education Dept.
Dina Bar, Chairperson, Early Age Care and Education Division
Zipi Amir, Chairperson Publicity & Information Dept.
WIZO Review
Elizabeth Einhorn, Chairperson, Beit Heuss
Atara Ilani, Chairperson, Parents Home
Brenda Katten, Chairperson, Public Affairs and NGO Dept.
Lily Peyser, Chairperson, Tourism Department
Ruth Tamir, Chairperson, Building, Maintenance & Purchasing Division
Elizabeth Einhorn, Chairperson, Beit Heuss
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Visit our website: www.wizo.org
Life in Israel, just three months ago, was looking very positive. Having read my message from the last WIZO Review, where I spoke of the dates that bound us to the State of Israel such as Independence Day, Herzel Day, etc., I realized that little did I, nor anyone else, know that before the next WIZO Review would be published, our world in Israel would be turned upside down. Now we have another date that will go down in history on the calendar of Israel - July, 12, 2006, the day when eight soldiers were killed and two, Eldad Regev and Udi Goldwasser and their two families joined the desperate family of Gilad Shalit, who had been kidnapped to Gaza just days earlier. Soon the skies were darkened as Katyusha missiles rained into Israel; day care centers and youth clubs were closed and residents were ordered into shelters. On July 13th I set up an emergency team, under the leadership of World WIZO Director General Haim Zamorsky, to cope with the new situation. As the trickle of people wanting to leave the north became a torrent, WIZO threw open the doors of its youth villages to provide shelter for those who had nowhere else to go - new immigrants, people whose extended family lives in the North, Arab and Jew alike.

The logistics were staggering. Staff members gave up their summer vacations, WIZO branches in the areas of the youth villages volunteered to help wherever needed. The purchasing department went into full swing providing not only basics such as food, diapers, blankets and toiletries, but also installing air-conditioners, mobile showers, tables, chairs and refrigerators, to provide the evacuees from the North with appropriate accommodation.

I have many pictures in my mind from this period, a period in which WIZO tried to bring back serenity and joy into the hearts of the evacuees, but let me share just a few with you.

- Two hundred children in WIZO Hadassim writing messages of hope on two hundred blue balloons and releasing them high into the sky;
- 40 autistic children from Kiryat Ata, who were evacuated, together with their counselors to WIZO Hadassim, clapping their hands in joy;
- Six youngsters, whose bar-mitzvah celebrations had to be cancelled due to the situation celebrating their bar-mitzvah with their families at the WIZO Nir Haemek Youth Village thanks to WIZO’s initiative;
- A cherished memory of WIZO volunteers, none of them young, from the Rishon LeZion WIZO branch, sponsored by WIZO Holland, bringing toys, towels and baby goods, standing on their feet for hours each day, serving food with a smile on their faces;
- A heart wrenching picture of one of WIZO’s youth facilitators on the day he was told that his brother, an officer, had been killed. Groups traveled each day to the shiva and he was enveloped with love.
- Two new citizens of the State of Israel joining our youth villages; yes, two babies were born to evacuees who found shelter with us, signifying continuation.

These pictures are your pictures to save, as they happened thanks to you and our dedicated chaverot from our Federations worldwide, who enabled us to open up our doors and provide all the necessities, knowing that you will come forward to support any, and every campaign that is necessary for Israel.

As we approach Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, my prayers are for a year in which the bonds that link the Jewish people throughout the world become even stronger. I wish you all a year of peace, serenity, health and prosperity.

Yafa Ben-Dor

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**Chairperson’s Column**

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

| Argentina  | Clara Gersberg |
| Australia | Jo Gostin |
| Austria | Hava Bugajer |
| Belgium & Luxembourg | Ingrid Bolmut |
| Bolivia | Liliana Szwerdszarf |
| Brazil | Sara Schaffel |
| Bulgaria | Marina Nanjova |
| Canada | Sandy Martín |
| Chile | Susy Baron |
| Colombia | Sara Mekler |
| Costa Rica | Anita Ligato |
| Curacao | Yael Ackerman |
| Czech Republic | Zuzana Vesela |
| Denmark | Dorte Røtter |
| Dom. Republic | Helen Kopel |
| Ecuador | Ruthie Horvath |
| Estonia | Revekka Blumberg |
| Finland | Eva Bensky |
| France | Nathalie Cohen-Beizermann |
| Germany | Rachel Singer |
| Gibraltar | Julie Massias |
| Great Britain | Loraine Warren |
| Greece | May Barki |
| Guatemala | Soly Berkowitz |
| Holland | Joyce Y.Numann-Duracher |
| Honduras | Yael Zylberman |
| Hong Kong | Vered Nagar |
| Hungary | Livnat Ashkenazi |
| Israel | Edzi Simon |
| Jamaica | Jennifer (McAdam) Lin |
| Japan | Sarah Hynans |
| Latvia | Hana Finkelshtain |
| Lithuania | Rachel Kostanian |
| Mexico | Edith Motola |
| New Zealand | Lorna Orbell |
| Norway | Janne Jaffe |
| Panama | Camille Dayan |
| Paraguay | Tosca Ismajovich |
| Peru | Michelle Lumbrera |
| Portugal | Liliana Lemor |
| Singapore | Dr. Elizabeth Kahn |
| South Africa | S.J. Khafi |
| Spain | Lee Joffe |
| Sweden | Clara Salama |
| Switzerland | Gila Bornstein |
| Uruguay | Anne Argi |
| USA | Jeannine Brunstein |
| Venezuela | Evelyn Sommer, |
| Zimbabwe | Mercedes lvcher |
|  | Ena Rotkopf |
|  | Vera Tatz |

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On July 13th, the day after the missiles began hitting the north, World WIZO Executive Chairperson Tova Ben-Dov initiated an emergency campaign. WIZO performed “miracles” helping the people of the north, undoubtedly one of the finest chapters in the 85 year history of the movement.
“My long experience with wars,” says World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben-Dov, taught me that during every war, the Jewish People relives its ‘finest hour. Be it the citizens of Israel or the Jewish people abroad, it is during the wars that the saying ‘the whole House of Israel is responsible for one another’ comes to the fore.

“When the second Lebanon War broke out this summer, like a well-trained soldier I went into a war mode, calling up our unofficial unit of loyal soldiers, the WIZO staff, to open our own emergency operation room. We set up an emergency team, headed by World WIZO Director General Chaim Zamorsky, to provide shelter for families from the North who were fleeing from the missiles, who were all looking for shelter from the storm.

WIZO Opened its Doors

“In WIZO we literally threw open the doors of all WIZO institutions that could take in evacuees, and at the same time, WIZO staff in our schools and youth villages, who were on their summer vacations, returned to help with everything necessary. And our WIZO volunteers throughout the country were also there to help save the day.

“We, at WIZO, were the first organization to open its doors, as we received phone calls from mayors and heads of local councils in the north. We opened our schools and youth villages to evacuees from Kiryat Shemona, Carmiel, Safed, Dishon, Haifa, Acre, Shlomi, Rechaniya, Tiberias, Kibbutz Cabri, to the entire northern part of the country. Once again, we discovered that while the government was busy with the war, politics and foreign policy, we in WIZO were left to provide for the people.

Our Federations Came Through with Flying Colors

“The next step was to mobilize the second unit in our WIZO army. I asked you, in our WIZO Federations around the world, to open your hearts for the people of Israel. I knew that you would all appear for duty, with the highest motivation, ready for action, and that you would fulfill the mission. WIZO has already spent over 7 million shekels to meet the emergency needs of the displaced northerners. To cope with the emergency we provided urgently needed solutions, based on the belief that the funds would come. And they did. Our Federations came through with flying colors! “Kol HaKavod!” (All Honor to You). And let’s not forget that for most of the Federations, this was the summer vacation. There are no words to describe our appreciation for this. Again, we witnessed the fact that, with WIZO, anything and everything is possible,” concludes Ben-Dov.

“I’m Proud of WIZO’s Response to the War”

“I remember in 1956 when I was nine years during the Sinai Campaign, we sat in a shelter in Ness Tzion, and I remember the Six Day War in 1967 when I was in the army, and the Yom Kippur War in 1973. In all of those instances, the home front was never under attack. This time the entire northern part of the country was exposed to danger, and even Tel Aviv was threatened. During the entire Gulf War, a total of 39 Skud missiles were fired, without causing any damage, while this time sometimes 200 Katyusha rockets were fired at civilian targets every day.

“I feel a tremendous sense of pride and satisfaction about how WIZO responded to the crisis.”

World WIZO Director General Chaim Zamorsky

WIZO Federations organized emergency fundraising campaigns. This ad was part of WIZO.uk’s campaign
Facing the Emergency

Kobi Hillel: A Quiet WIZO Hero

“The war began on July 12th, I heard the news, a mess,” says Kobi Hillel, Deputy Director of the World WIZO Formal and Informal Education Department, “and I thought, another day of bombing and it will be over. But on the 13th I got up, turned on the radio and heard that the entire northern part of the country was being shelled. I understood that this time it was going to be different. “At 7 a.m. I started calling our colleagues in Kiryat Shemoneh, Metulla, Ma’alot, Dishon and other places on the border. They told me that they were constantly being shelled, and I expressed WIZO’s readiness to help. ‘The first to respond was Amnon, the director of the WIZO youth club in Metulla. He said ‘Kobi, you beat me to it. We have a group of 40 kids traveling in the framework of a summer camp who spent the night in Tel Aviv. I simply can’t bring them home. We’ve got to find a solution for them.’ I promised to find a solution. “At 7:30 I called Chaim Zamorsky, World WIZO’s Director General and asked for permission to help them. Without hesitating, Chaim said ‘of course.’ Then I started calling all of the directors and principals of our WIZO schools and youth villages - everyone. I wasn’t surprised at their response, but still it was amazing. No one asked any questions, they all opened their hearts and their doors.

Kobi Coordinates the Emergency Committee

“I arrived at WIZO House in Tel Aviv and Chaim convened an emergency forum and asked me to coordinate an emergency committee to deal with the situation. I accepted the position with a sense of pride and honor. I understood what was involved, but had no idea how long it would take, where the rockets would fall. All I knew is that we were going to help the people that needed help. This was important work, with a tremendous sense of shlichut, of mission.

“I received phone calls from Moshav Dishon where we have a WIZO youth club. They are right next to the border and wanted to evacuate. When we said come, they said ‘we’re bringing all of the people that needed help. This was important work, with a tremendous sense of shlichut, of mission.

“I received phone calls from Moshav Dishon where we have a WIZO youth club. They are right next to the border and wanted to evacuate. When we said come, they said ‘we’re bringing all of the kids on the trip from Metullah arrived at WIZO Hadassim with nothing, just the clothes on their backs and their sleeping bags. These were little kids from the 5th and 6th grade, who had thought that they were just spending one night in Tel Aviv. That’s what I reported at our first emergency meeting, and asked who can help? Soon we received a phone call from Zehava Shilon, head of WIZO Tel Aviv, informing us that she had already found clothes. I have no idea how she did it! Zehava showed up at Hadassim in the evening. Each kid got a package, kisses and hugs.

“By nightfall, people began to arrive from Moshav Dishon. They had people waiting for a bus, but the army didn’t give them permission to travel. Katyushot were raining down on them and they had no idea what to do. After a lot of pressure, the army finally agreed to let the people get on the busses with their belongings to travel to Hadassim. At the same time people came to WIZO Nir Haemek from Kiryat Shemoneh, from Kibbutz Sasa, from Nahariya and Bezek.

34 Autistic Youth find Shelter at WIZO Hadassim

“I was very moved when Tami Ben-Yosef, Deputy Director of the World WIZO Early Child Care Department, said that the deputy manager of Alut had made a special request to receive 34 autistic youth and their counselors from a hostel in Kiryat Ata. I told Tami, give me till tomorrow morning to see what we can do. The first thing I thought was to absorb them in WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim, since the staff is very skilled in dealing with special needs youth. However Yossi Sarogosti, the executive director of Ahuzat Yeladim, said ‘we’re bringing all of the children to the shelters, because missiles are falling in Haifa.’ I called Ze’ev Twito, Executive Director at WIZO Hadassim, and on Friday morning, another phone-call went to Alut saying, you’ve got a place for the 34 youth at Hadassim. “And so it went. The pace was incredible, the telephone continued to ring, the requests continued to come. My telephone number was placed on the Internet and we received literally hundreds of calls. Normally we care for about 1,000 youth during the summer in the dormitories, and to this we added over 1,300 displaced northerners, and another 1,000 campers. We didn’t believe we could do this, but we did.

“After three weeks, all the places were filled. When you have a place in your heart – you can also find a physical place. Anyone who visited while they were there saw the thank you in their eyes. They feel as if we saved their lives.”
Zehava to the Rescue

“On the morning after the war broke out, I was informed that a group we had to take care of WIZO kids from a WIZO day care center in Nahariya who were being evacuated”, says WIZO Tel Aviv Chairperson Zehava Shilon. “We had to find clothes, bathing suits, toiletries and towels. I soon discovered it wasn’t from a WIZO day care center but a trip of youth who couldn’t go back to Metulla. Once I understood the exact nature of their needs, I went to the Betzalel Open Air Market in Tel Aviv, and said I was a WIZO volunteer collecting things for displaced youth from the north.

The first storekeeper I approached gave me a batch of bathing suits as a gift! I quickly found everything we needed and headed up the coastal road to WIZO Hadassim. “When we saw the kids, anxious and excited, we decided on the spot to take responsibility for hosting the northerners at WIZO Hadassim. Seeing the youth, and hearing the news about what was happening convinced us that, as Tel Avivians who weren’t in the line of fire, this was what we had to do. It was the “situation”, as it was unfolding, which dictated how we should act as WIZO volunteers.

Keeping Daily Contact with the Northerners

“On Friday morning, I got a phone call from Ze’ev Twito at WIZO Hadassim, who said that they had already absorbed tens of families. Then I realized that we should organize a Kabbalat Shabbat for the families. I arranged for a performer to come and a number of WIZO chaverot, and from then on we maintained daily contact with the northerners. We also arranged for a puppet theater to come to entertain the kids, run by an immigrant family from Russia, a family we helped to absorb, and they were very happy to be able to give this contribution in return.

Since I have a “celebrity” at home, my husband (TV personality) Yigal, I arranged for him to come to help support the displaced northerners. We also arranged for one of his Fisfusim (Bloopers) programs to be photographed with the northerners as the audience, with signs in the background - “The northern residents say thank you to WIZO.”

“We brought our hearts and our souls, and created a genuine sense of support and solidarity for the northerners. By doing this we were fulfilling the essence of WIZO’s mission in times of distress, the social caring for those in need. Every artist and performer I called, saying that WIZO had opened its heart and institutions to absorb people from the north, responded “Kol Hakavod” (All honor) to WIZO.” I know that I, and all of my friends and colleagues, feel a tremendous sense of pride that we belong to such an organization.”
Coping with the War

Facing the Emergency

Yochy Feller: Between Haifa and Tel Aviv

“When it all began, my first response was astonishment,” says WIZO Israel Chairperson Yochy Feller. “Suddenly Katyushot were being fired at us. We had no idea where the shells would fall. One of the shells even fell right next to Beit Hagefen, the community center for Jewish-Arab coexistence, for Jews, Moslems, Christians and Druze. It also fell near our WIZO Center and the WIZO Academy of Design and Education. Since I live in Haifa, I spent the first week of the war in shelters. My husband has a chemical plant and he had to remove all of the chemicals. I was there, with my two daughters, and felt it was irresponsible to leave them alone.

“From the second week of the war I began commuting on a regular basis to Tel Aviv, going back and forth between our “command headquarters” at WIZO House and the air-raid sirens of Haifa. The trains had stopped running so I commuted by car. “The contrast is incredible. In Haifa, everything stopped –no postal services, no health clinics in my neighborhood on Mt. Carmel, no cars on the streets, problems with the banks, etc.- only the supermarkets where open, while in Tel Aviv life went on. “I became part of WIZO’s Emergency Team, and we called all of our branch heads in the north to see how things were and if anyone needed help. Most of the chairpersons had moved to the center of the country, but they took with them lists of all the chaverot so that contact could be maintained.

“Our WIZO center in Kiryat Motzkin is located in a municipal shelter. When the war broke out we removed all of the used clothes and other equipment and created a full-fledged shelter to receive people. All of our volunteers spent days and nights there to help the local population.

80 WIZO Volunteers from Rishon did Everything!

WIZO Rishon L’tzion led by Shalva Cohen, a real leader, created contact with Hezi Yosef, the Executive Director of nearby WIZO Nachlat Yehuda. Hezi told her that they were hosting over 1,000 people and that the kitchen staff was having difficulty coping with the expanded population. Shalva immediately called all of the chaverot in Rishon to help out and they began peeling potatoes, cooking, everything. When he said that they were missing some nurses, she found them, providing 24 hour service. The same for social workers. At one point there were 80 WIZO volunteers working at WIZO Nachlat Yehuda! Hezi was amazed.

“Many of our branches in the center, Petach Tikva, Even Yehuda, Ra’anana, Bat-Yam and many others, hosted and helped their northern brothers and sisters. WIZO Israel also managed to raise as few hundred thousand dollars from entrepreneurs and companies to help in the effort. “Our Druze chaverot, Noah Ismail from Rameh, and Samira Azar from Ussifiya were concerned, because they have no shelters in their villages. Samira asked for permission to place a family from the Marar village in the WIZO center, and of course we agreed.

Wishing for a Better Future

“One of our most important actions was the conversion of all of the WIZO hotlines into hotlines for adults and youth who felt a sense of anxiety or need connected to the war. We received thousands of calls, each one answered individually by a trained WIZO volunteer, helping people in need, including concrete solutions for shelter. “We even managed to carry out the regular summer camp for children who are victims of war at WIZO Hadassim. 210 children with special needs from all over the country. They lived in the classrooms, sleeping on mattresses. Everyone understood that this was an emergency situation. The camp was fantastic, and the northern kids blended in with the regular campers. At the end, they all flew balloons up in the air filled with personal wishes for a better future.

While young IDF soldiers fought against Hezbollah in Lebanon, WIZO’s emergency team coordinated efforts on the home front
Emergency at Hadassim

The WIZO Hadassim School and Youth Village was the hub of WIZO’s emergency activity during the war. Hadassim became a warm, thriving community of dislocated people from the north, with the warmest hosts possible. This is their story.

Sima Borkovski
Photos: Israel Sun
Coping with the War

Anat and her husband cannot say enough to express their gratitude to WIZO for their warm hospitality. “My gratitude is so great that I intend to make a donation for them once the war is over and we are back in our home.”

Working around the clock

“We were looking forward to this summer vacation as our work leaves us very little time and energy to spend with our own three children,” says Akiva Yechiel, who together with his wife runs a ‘family home’ for children of various ages who had to be removed from their homes. The couple practically functions as parents for these children and takes care of their daily needs throughout the year. We meet at Akiva’s small office where he is busy scheduling the upcoming week which is packed with activities. “When the war started I knew we would have to put our personal lives aside and devote all our efforts to helping the families who arrived here. Yossi, my superior, and I worked around the clock taking care of the families. First we had to find accommodation for them and supply them with basic necessities. There was a time I hardly saw my three children and my only contact with them was over the phone,” he admits.

Home away from home

The dining room is packed with families who arrive to eat their lunch. Among them are Itzik Algizi and his wife Anat, both in residents’ lives. To be honest, as a former military man, I had no formal experience in handling a wartime situation from the civilian angle. Many of the families left their homes in haste and were in need of basic supplies such as clothes and even soap and shampoo. WIZO Israel and the neighboring communities came to our aid and donated an enormous amount of products for our residents ranging from strollers and playpens to clothes and toiletries. The costs of such an operation are extremely high, nonetheless, WIZO’s management made two courageous decisions: First, the residents would be considered WIZO’s guests and would not be charged a penny for their stay. Second, we operate according to the situation and ask questions and worry about recovering our expenses later on.”
“We were among the first to Arrive”

“We live very close to the army base in Safed and therefore when a Katyusha fell near the base our walls shook,” recalls Ofer Shapira, 30, married and a father of a 6-month baby and five year old girl. “I wasn’t home at the time of the shelling and my wife, who was frantic, escaped to Anat’s house. I came home as fast as I could and we left as quickly as possible. In all the commotion I didn’t even change my clothes and left wearing my work outfit. At first we stayed at my wife’s parents’ house but the place was packed with the rest of her family who came from Hatzor (another small town in the north of Israel). It was then I heard about the option to find shelter in WIZO Hadassim. We were among the first ones to arrive so we were given a six room apartment and therefore I invited my friends, the Elgazi family as I knew they were in distress and had no place to stay,” he declares.

Shapira admits he was willing to sleep on the village lawns but like the rest of the residents is thankful for the way he and his family are being hosted. “My daughter is content here but often talks about the war. I’m so sad she had to experience war at this tender age. Of course she misses her friends from the kindergarten and her room, but is afraid to go back home. My parents, who are sick and old, had to remain in Safed since it is hard for them to travel and my father has to remain close to the hospital. I am extremely worried about them, and even though we live here in the best conditions my heart is in Safed and it is difficult for me to relax”.

Benny, who arrived together with 100 families from Moshav Dishon in the Upper Galilee promises to throw a big party and a Bar-B-Q near the swimming pool at his moshav in honor of their hosts once the war is over.

Northern girls eating lunch at WIZO Nachlat Yehuda

of my hysteria. This was my first experience with these rockets since Safed has never been shelled before. I decided we must leave the house, and we ended up spending the night at my mother’s. The next day we left for a caravan we have near the Sea of Galilee and stayed there until the rockets started to fall in Tiberias. It was then our friend, Ofer Shapira, came to our aid and invited us here as he was already residing in an apartment with his family,” she says.

Anat and her husband cannot say enough to express their gratitude to WIZO for their warm hospitality. “Our children like staying here the most because they enjoy different activities every day. When I ask my son whether he misses his home or wants to go back he refuses to answer. There are various cultural activities for us as well and we really can’t complain. My gratitude is so great that I intend to make a donation for them once the war is over and we are back in our home”.

“I work in a chocolate factory located in Kfar Veradim, a small village not far from Safed and unfortunately a rocket hit the factory’s ceiling,” says Itzik Elgazi, Anat’s husband. “As long as we stay here I’m unemployed and not being able to provide for my family is very difficult for me. At the moment, my professional future is in question since no one knows when the factory will re-open. We are not sure if we will be paid for these lost days of work. Our money is tight and we have to save as long as this war continues,” he explains.
Despite the War

Co-Existence
in Haifa

WIZO is helping to develop the concept of volunteerism among Arab women
How do you improve the chances of a young Arab girl to have opportunities that are equal to a young Jewish girl who was born at the same time, and in the same city, in this case, Haifa? Perhaps we have to wonder why we even have to think about this question?

For Colette Obeid, the coordinator for Arab women in WIZO Haifa, it is clear that the question is superfluous. We have to do everything possible for these girls, even if it appears they have everything open to them. “Today, when everything is easier and more open, there is confusion, there is ignorance, and there are fears – What should she do after she finishes her studies? And if she chooses to do something, how to go about it, how to cope with leaving the warm home atmosphere? This is not simple for a young Arab girl, especially in a large city like Haifa. This is where WIZO comes to her aid,” says Colette.

In WIZO’s empowerment project for women and girls in the Arab sector in Haifa, activities are conducted among high school girls, with the aim of providing them with a place where they can learn about feminist ideas that meet their practical needs.

Obeid teaches them to develop skills such as assertiveness, to help them plan their future and strengthen their identity, “a place where they can broaden the horizons of their professional future”, she explains. “There are girls who are coping with difficulties that result from assimilation and the fear of losing their personal identity, or who may have economic difficulties at home that reduce their opportunities for higher education, or maybe they are not at all sure of whether they want higher education. We try to give them support and advice to help them plan their future”.

Chances of Success

Obeid’s long-term experience as a speaker in the Arab sector of the city have taught her that the sooner action is taken, the greater the chance of success. When she initially conceived the idea for the framework, she had to start from scratch and find the girls. “I simply went from school to school, I went into the offices of the principals, the teachers, the school advisors, and told them what we are trying to do, what we believe in and how I want to help the girls. I don’t think they understood what I was trying to do, but they helped me. I began to put together the first group of 15-16 year old girls, and three years ago we started on our journey.”

It was decided to work with the tenth grade, since in Israel that is the year that all high school students are required to undertake some volunteer activity in the framework of “personal commitment”. “Today” says Obeid with a broad smile on her face, “I do not have to try and persuade anyone. In every school in which Arab girls learn, I am known, together with the project. I have strong support from the school counselors, which makes it much easier.”

Obeid looks for “girls who are weak socially, and I identify their potential leadership skills. We don’t deal with girls with strong negative tendencies, since we cannot give therapeutic advice. We want to empower girls who have the potential to advance and to lead. Every class has several who fit this profile.”

The second stage is to make contact with their parents. Here, too, Obeid says, things have changed and, for the most part, she does not encounter problems, but there is a need to fully explain everything in advance. “I call the parents, explain the project at length, answer their questions and ask permission for their daughters to take part in the project. Since the
Despite the War

program takes place after regular school hours, participation requires the family’s agreement.”

“We start with twenty-six or twenty-seven girls and end, after fourteen weeks of meetings, with ten to thirteen girls, but that is OK. I have patience and I believe that, with time, the message will be absorbed and more girls will join. The girls who complete our course leave with direction,” explains Obeid, adding “the girls learn that there is a place for volunteerism and giving. It is a turning point for them. The girls who completed the first course are beginning to volunteer in all sorts of programs, which is an uncommon phenomenon in the Arab sector.”

Established Volunteerism.
Ora Bahat, the Chairperson of WIZO Haifa, is well aware of the phenomenon. “Volunteerism, as a way of life is unknown in the Arab sector. People will help a neighbor or a family member, but volunteerism within an established framework is not a norm. Colette’s important work is aimed at developing this, and we are already seeing results – we are beginning to see signs that our work with these girls is a very important factor in this direction. It is beginning to bring volunteerism into their lives.”

Bahat says that WIZO’s activities in the northern city where Arabs and Jews live side by side, as do veterans and new immigrants, “is fulfilling a most important function. We have joint activities for Jews and Arabs, and we also have special frameworks that answer the specific needs of the Arab women in the city, who do not come from a society in which volunteerism is an integral part of their lives. Haifa is known for its quality of life and for the integration between the different societies, and in spite of the tension that has come to the surface in recent years due to the casualties in the intifada and the Lebanon War, it is clear that there is something that is holding up despite the difficulties.”

Bahat is aware of the problems, but believes that WIZO’s message has a place even in today’s immensely difficult war-torn reality. “WIZO believes in working for a better society and the empowerment of women, and that is exactly what we are doing here, in all sectors – with new immigrants from the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia, and with Jewish and Arab Israelis. We reach out to everyone with our message: To empower women and improve their circumstances.”

Finding a Solution for the Children

‘Once we called it a club, but now the activities have grown and it is, in fact, an activity center’, adds Colette. “Veteran residents from Wadi Nisnas, who are mostly under the care of the municipal welfare authorities, have made their weekly WIZO activities an integral part of their lives. All the meetings are held in Arabic, in spite of the fact that most of the participants, especially the younger ones, know Hebrew. In the groups of younger women, from the ages of thirty to fortyfive, we especially emphasize empowerment, and volunteer work”, says Obeid. “I knew that if I did not find a solution for the children while the mothers were here, the mothers would not come,” says Obeid, “therefore I organized activities for the children while the mothers were attending their courses.” She explains that, “At the beginning it was very hard to take the women out of their homes during the afternoon hours, it seemed to be practically impossible, but I was not prepared to give up”.

Business Initiatives.
The Center for the Empowerment of Jewish and Arab Women in Haifa is involved in another project in the WIZO Haifa branch. “We set up business initiative courses for women in the Arab sector, and to date three groups have graduated. Each course lasts for six months and includes one hundred hours, of which thirty hours is devoted to types of empowerment, and preparing for the course. On completing the course we hold a graduation ceremony and give out certificates. Then comes the final
an unbelievable change in her life”, adds Colette. “We have one graduate, actually older than the others, fifty years old, who has opened a translation agency. Someone else opened her own civil engineering office in the city. We even have a woman who has become a “clown” and appears in different parties and celebrations. She began to receive bookings almost immediately, and seems to have found her path in life!

WIZO is the leader in this project, but it has partners: the Municipal Welfare Services, Project Development and the advisor for the Status of Women in Haifa, as well as the Jewish-Arab Center for Economic Empowerment – all have bonded in order to help and to ensure its success.

“I believe that a woman who is sitting at home is not using her potential, and it is for this reason that I am fighting for this project”, says Colette.” After having been in the branch for thirteen years, and after studying social work, I am convinced of the importance of the empowerment of women. Strong women, sure of themselves, and what they are doing for themselves, will also do for others. Only these women can give of themselves. From a position of weakness there is no giving.”

The course for business initiatives is for both Jews and Arabs, and here too the beginning was a difficult one. “They sat apart – the Jews on one side, the Arabs on the other and the new immigrants in a separate group. After a relatively short period the integration began and the women befriended one another”. Fifteen women completed the last course; several of them have already taken the initiative and opened their own businesses. “Two of them have opened a playgroup, one is in the field of fashion design, and others have opened hairdressing salons.” Colette cannot hide her excitement telling the story of R, a graduate of the course, who, in spite of coming from difficult circumstances, she is blind – has managed to make the most out of the course, “She joined her husband’s business, organizes the office for him, and manages the accounts. It is stage, the assistance stage, which is in cooperation with the Center for Small Businesses of the Ministry of Labor. During this stage the participants are closely assisted on individual or group levels, and those who decide to set up a business are assisted during the first year, to make sure that they’re proceeding according to what they have learned”, explains Colette proudly.

WIZO is the leader in this project, but it has partners: the Municipal Welfare Services, Project Development and the advisor for the Status of Women in Haifa, as well as the Jewish-Arab Center for Economic Empowerment – all have bonded in order to help and to ensure its success.

“Breath-taking view of Haifa from the top of the Bahai Gardens overlooking the German Colony where WIZO’s coexistence activities and the WIZO Academy for Design and Education are located (Courtesy of Haifa tourist Board)”
Visit of the Panamanian First Lady
A WIZO First

At the end of June WIZO hosted the Panamanian First Lady, Mrs. Vivian Fernandez de Torrijos and the Panamanian Minister of Social Development, Mrs. Maria Roquebert Leon. "This is an example of how WIZO can contribute to finding solutions for new challenges by sharing with others its professional know-how, expertise and experience, while also learning from them," says World WIZO President Helena Glaser

Adi Ronel
Photos: Israel Sun

Mrs. Glaser and the First Lady see students carrying out scientific experiments at the WIZO Gardening and Landscape Technology Youth Village, Petach Tikva
“During my mission to Panama last year and my meeting with the President of Panama,” says World WIZO President Helena Glaser, “I extended an invitation to the Panamanian Minister of Welfare to come to Israel to learn about WIZO’s activities and projects. The President kindly expressed his consent, and this led to the precedent-setting visit by the First Lady and the Minister.”

“Vivian Ferdinandez de Torrijos the First Lady of Panama is an exceptional, beautiful, charming and educated woman,” says Mrs. Glaser. “She describes herself as a wife, mother and professional woman, but more to the point - Mrs. Torrijos, is very socially aware and initiates, creates, directs and actively participates in social welfare and educational projects focused on the improvement of life conditions for the disadvantaged social groups in Panamanian society such as the handicapped and the rural women and children with limited resources. She is also a member of a number of international organizations.”

Mrs. Torrijos headed the official Panamanian delegation that included: the Minister of Social Development and the Director of her office, Dr. Escobar, the Chief Scientist, the Director of International Relations and Legal Affairs, the Director of Social Image In The Community from the First Lady’s Office, WIZO Panama President Yvonne Attie, members of the WIZO Panama Executive, Mr. Isaac Btesh Head of the Jewish Community in Panama and some members of the Jewish Community. The Panamanian Ambassador to Israel Mr.Victor Barletta Milan also accompanied the visit.

WIZO hosted Mrs. Torrijos and the delegation for three and a half days, and the Foreign Ministry hosted them for one day. The senior members of the delegation met with Israel’s First Lady, Mrs. Gila Katzav, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni as well as attending professional meetings with their Israeli counterparts. The whole delegation was extremely impressed with Yad Vashem, Christian holy places and other tourist sites they visited. They also visited WIZO institutions, among them a WIZO multi-purpose day care center with autistic children, the Rebecca Sieff WIZO Centre for the Family in Jerusalem and the WIZO Gardening & Landscape Technology Youth Village, Petach Tikva.

**WIZO’s Goals Regarding the Visit**

“This visit had wonderful PR potential for both WIZO and the State of Israel,” says Helena Glaser. “We often criticize Israel’s Hasbara (advocacy efforts) but offer no alternative – this visit gave WIZO the opportunity to do so. I have often said that WIZO and its Federations can serve as agents of change as well as a cultural bridge between Israel and the rest of the world, thus revealing a more honest depiction of Israel and the Jewish people. As a member of the global village I truly believe that WIZO can contribute to finding solutions for new challenges that arise by sharing with others its professional know-how, expertise and experience, while also learning from them. The fact that the delegation included professionals in the social and educational fields emphasized how true this assumption is."

This visit, and others like it in the future, upgrade WIZO’s standing in the community. At the various WIZO projects, the local mayors were also invited to meet with Mrs. Torrijos. This visit allowed government level decision-makers to witness at first hand WIZO’s abilities both in the national and international arenas,” says Mrs. Glaser.

The visit also introduced WIZO to the Jewish Community in Panama and the government in Panama in a direct and comprehensive way, thus proving that the personal approach has great impact. It also strengthened WIZO’s standing in both the Jewish and non-Jewish community in Panama.

Based on the areas that interest the First Lady and her official delegation, the itinerary focused on a wide range of WIZO projects: each one showing a different facet of WIZO’s work - children with special needs and their integration into society, women who live in development towns and rural villages, minorities and underprivileged children.

**Reception in honor of Mrs. Torrijos**

Helena Glaser hosted a reception for the First Lady. There were over 70 attendees that included the Panamanian delegation, the Panamanian Ambassador to Israel and his wife, members of World WIZO and WIZO Israel Executives, and women in top positions in Israel. Helena introduced the First Lady to everyone present and she spoke about the origin of the title the “First Lady” and the role and duties of the First Lady in Panama. A short enlightening and informative video on the First Lady’s activities was also shown.

Mrs. Torrijos paid tribute to the ladies of WIZO Panama. She was impressed by their activities for the community prior to her husband’s election, and has grown to appreciate their dedication and devotion even more since he took office. Mrs. Torrijos thanked WIZO on behalf of the delegation for the opportunity to visit Israel and WIZO projects.
The Outcome of the Visit
Since her return, the First Lady has shared her positive impressions about Israel, its people and WIZO’s work. WIZO Panama President Yvonne Attie wrote that “everywhere I go, people from my community tell me they heard that Mrs. Torrijos was very, very pleased with the trip and WIZO’s exceptional work.” Helena Glaser received a fax from Mrs. Maria Roquebert Leon, the Minister of Social Development, expressing her gratitude to WIZO for the special attention provided during her stay, and saying how much she enjoyed the exchange of cultural and academic opinions and that she had learned more about WIZO and the “extraordinary job WIZO does for those in need in Israel”. She expressed her impressions of the organization and her interest in working with WIZO, and especially praised the Multi-Purpose Day Care Centers. She wrote that “the Ministry of Social Development in the Republic of Panama, herein expresses our interest in forming a strategic alliance with WIZO, to implement the first WIZO Panama Multi-Purpose Day Care Center, and to develop programs for the improvement and strengthening of the participation of women in Politics”.

Gratitude
"Words cannot begin to describe the dedication, commitment, hard work and efforts of the WIZO staff that were involved in the preparation and successful execution of the visit," says Mrs. Glaser. “Every one contributed, first and foremost, Yvonne Attie, who coordinated the visit from the Panamanian side with the First Lady’s Office, the Minister’s Office, The Israeli Ambassador’s Office and the Office of the Head of the Jewish Community. It was not an easy task, but Yvonne did a wonderful job to guarantee the success of the visit.

"I would also like to thank Past President Sandra Israel, Incoming President Camille Dayan and Vice President Estelle Faskha, all of WIZO Panama for their hard work, support and efforts. I would like to express special gratitude to Hana Katz of my Office and Orna Ref of the Tourism Department, who took care of the organization and logistics of the trip, coordinating with the Ministry Offices, the WIZO projects and WIZO Panama. They left no stone unturned."
Charlotte Knobloch: 
First Female Leader of German Jewry

WIZO is proud of the fact that a veteran WIZO activist, Charlotte Knobloch, a Holocaust survivor, was elected the leader of the German Jewish community

Hillel Schenker

It is not an every day occurrence that a woman is elected the head of an important Jewish community. Given the problematic relationship between Germany and the Jewish people, and the importance of the relationship between Germany and the State of Israel today, it is a special source of pride that Charlotte Knobloch was one of the co-founders of the post-war WIZO Federation. 

As the head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, what are your feelings about the current crisis that Israel is facing? How would you describe the attitude of German Jews to the news coming from Israel today?

Jews in Germany follow the news from Israel with greatest concern, not only because we all have loved ones there, but because it is also a kind of spiritual home for us. Therefore we hope that the people in Israel will have the strength to overcome these difficult days. The Jewish Communities in Germany will do whatever they can to help.

What is the significance of being the first female leader of the German Jewish community?

In 1985 I was the first woman to be elected President of a Jewish Community in Germany – in Munich and Upper Bavaria- and have had that position ever since. I was the first woman on the committee of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, its first Vice-President and now its first President. In all these years I never had the feeling that it was a matter of being a man or a woman, but to do the job that was necessary.

You were one of the founders of the WIZO Germany Federation in the early 60s. Why was it important to re-establish WIZO in Germany?

I founded WIZO Munich together with five friends in 1960 and actively worked with them for many years. Today I still try to take part in as many WIZO events as possible. With lots of work, time and financial support, WIZO developed a nation-wide network of assistance which has kept growing ever since, thanks to numerous local groups of selfless and socially committed women of all ages. Together they created a stable foundation that not only promises to help, but really does help.

This was particularly important after the Second World War when the Jewish infrastructure had been completely destroyed by the Nazis. The re-founding of WIZO Munich had been my first goal, knowing that the Jewish Communities – maybe more than others – are strongly based on voluntary work and help. I have always enjoyed the work I have done for WIZO.

What roles did you fulfill in WIZO over the years, and how did they help prepare you for your current leadership role in German Jewry?

During my many years of work for WIZO Munich, I made friends for life. Friends that I have been able to rely on in difficult times for more than forty years. During my active WIZO work I also learned how important and helpful effective networking is.

What are the challenges that face the German Jewish community today?

We have to concentrate on the integration of our new community members, those that have come from the former USSR. A second important aim is to mobilize all parts of German society to fight at all times and in every place against anti-Semitism and xenophobia. In addition I want to end the seclusion of the Jewish Communities in Germany. Unlike the situation in the past decades, the Jewish Community shall become a stronger and more important part in the development of our society.
That was the name of an innovative and precedent-setting art exhibition in New York, which brought the works of the next generation of Israeli designers to the Big Apple, courtesy of the Neri Bloomfield WIZO Academy of Design & Education, Haifa.

The very first exhibition of works of design by students and faculty members of the Neri Bloomfield WIZO Academy of Design & Education in Haifa, sponsored by Hadassah-WIZO Canada, opened on May 24, 2006, at the prestigious Hebrew Union College in New York under the auspices of HE the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations Dan Gillerman. The works included paintings, photographs and jewelry. The invitation to the opening was based on one of the works, as were banners advertising the Exhibition. The exhibition was organized to promote the Academy, expose it to new audiences, to enable an expansion of the International Board of Governors for fundraising and to improve its services for the students.

WIZO New York used their good contacts among art professionals and similar local schools and academies in the local Jewish and non-Jewish communities to facilitate and organize the exhibition and did an excellent job. The opening attracted a capacity crowd and has turned into quite an attraction.

Neri Bloomfield, a Wonderful Lady
At the opening, tribute was paid to a wonderful lady - Neri Bloomfield - Past President of Hadassah-WIZO Canada, whose name the Academy bears. Her children Harry and Evelyn...
“The exhibition was wonderful PR both for WIZO and for Israel” Helena Glaser

attended the opening and were very touched and impressed. At a private dinner held by Peace Sullivan (a Member of the International Board of Governors) that took place at her residence the evening after the opening, Harry praised the Academy, its President Dr. David Alexander and its Chairperson, World WIZO President Helena Glaser, and spoke of the great appreciation he and his family have for this project. He then announced that the Bloomfield Family has decided to donate the sum of $500,000 towards the construction of the new building.

“We are very grateful for their outstanding benevolence,” says Helena Glaser. “I also want to take this opportunity to thank WIZO USA President Evelyn Sommer and WIZO New York for their cooperation and for doing everything possible to make the opening the success it was. I say this especially in view of the fact that it took place only a week after a big fundraising event they organized for their own purposes, meaning that they were working on two big events at the same time.”

Not an Everyday Occurrence

“The exhibition was wonderful PR both for WIZO and for Israel,” says Mrs. Glaser. “It’s not an everyday occurrence that there is an exhibition of Israeli art in the heart of Manhattan, one of the world’s cultural capitals. It was also an opportunity to demonstrate the pluralism and freedom of expression of young Israeli art.” Mrs. Glaser adds that working relations were also established between the Academy and such major New York-based higher educational institutions as NYU, Pratt and Hunter College. The exhibition will be open through October 15, 2006.

Visual Thinkers for Today’s Rapidly Changing World

“We recognize that designers play a significant role in society. In addition to developing creativity and providing academic degrees, we also strive to impart the core life skills that our graduates will need as they evolve into talented professionals in today’s rapidly changing world. Our goal is to prepare our students to become discerning visual thinkers, ethical practitioners and gifted design teachers of the next generation.”

Dr. David Alexander, President, Neri Bloomfield WIZO Academy of Design & Education, Haifa

A Highly Creative Dialogue

“The Academy’s location at the heart of a mixed Arab-Jewish neighborhood in Haifa’s downtown is a symbolic example of the creative dialogue it holds. Haifa, the third largest city in Israel, is different: a city in which the urban and natural come together, whose Mount Carmel touches the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, both near and far from metropolitan Tel Aviv. For many years Haifa has been a blend of industry and labor, with the vibrancy of political and social action.

“The teachers – prominent Israeli artists in their own right – and the students of the Academy, move between confronting general symbols and myths of identity, religion and nationality and personal themes relating to their childhood and family. Along with more general social themes such as political and military events and the existing security tensions in everyday life, Israeli society’s attitude toward the different and the other, the existing or concealed dialogue with physical, urban surroundings – the artists also address the central themes in the contemporary international art scene. Among these are works dealing with gender issues, relationships between the “self” and the body, confronting life and death and ongoing ties with the family.

“This exhibition presents some of the academic, cultural, local spirit of Haifa, a young and dynamic spirit that inspires the young generation of artists.”

Doron Polak, Curator of the Exhibition
We met Blandine Grosjean at the Metropolitan Hotel in Tel Aviv, at the end of five very intense days in Israel. This was her first visit to Israel. “I always wanted to come,” she says, “but as a journalist, not as a tourist.

“In France I’m an expert on family and social customs, and especially issues pertaining to family questions, battered women’s issues, domestic violence and the problem of equality between the sexes. I wrote an article which was on the cover of Liberation. My article criticized the lack of action by the French government, and its amateurism in dealing with this subject.”

“Then WIZO France called me, and said that we in Israel are very active in the field of women’s rights. WIZO in Israel is ahead of France in dealing with these questions.

I met Nathalie Cohen-Beizermann, President of WIZO France at the WIZO offices in Paris. She was very frank and told me: “We are very interested that journalists outside the Jewish community press should come and see what is going on in Israel, and describe our work.” That is how I agreed to come to Israel. I thought that this would give me an opportunity to visit the country while I am working, and learn about it in a more intimate way. At the same time I would be able to learn more about the politics, since family issues are related to politics.”

Israel is Truly Advanced in the Status of Women

Did the visit match her expectations?

“When I met people from WIZO, I saw they do a lot both for battered women and for the status of women. This is unknown in France. I discovered that Israel is truly advancing the status of women for many reasons: the culture, the history of the country, and the role of the mother and the woman in society.

“I met very professional people, as one can find in the States or the Nordic countries, but here there is an individual investment that is different. It comes from the fact that people feel concerned about what is going on in their country. All of this makes a very strong and interesting mix. People invest far beyond what I know or have seen in other countries. As well as being professional they are also fighting for the cause.”

There is a Balance that Feels Right

Blandine also visited one of WIZO’s battered women’s shelters.

“We arrived at a place with a story, where you feel that there is a history - a combination of Zionism, social work and solidarity, and I felt it at once. The rooms and the pictures on the walls, were typically Israeli, I never saw such a place where there is a kindergarten, a school, and a center all under one roof – it’s probably inspired by the kibbutz. It is something which works, a place where people feel comfortable. In France there are closed institutions where I immediately feel very bad. Here I didn’t feel bad at all. The atmosphere was very natural. The battered women are protected, and they give their free consent to the arrangements and don’t feel institutionalized. There is a balance that feels very good.”
WIZO’s Work Deserves to be Known in the General Community

Blandine had not heard of WIZO before Nathalie called her. She says that WIZO in France relates primarily to the Jewish community, but believes that its work with family and social issues deserves to be known by the general community as well. When she told Russian Jewish friends living in Paris that she was going to visit Israel, they said that when they immigrated to France in 1990, a WIZO woman welcomed them.

Blandine was very impressed by everyone who made her visit possible. She says that the people at the Metropolitan Hotel treated her with genuine kindness. And she very much enjoyed Shabbat dinner at the home of Monique Asher (from the World WIZO Fundraising Department) in Kfar Saba, who is originally from France.

Was she afraid to come here?

“I wasn’t afraid at all. I’ve been to Iraq, Iran, Syria, all sorts of dictatorial regimes. But the countries I’m really afraid to go to are certain countries in Africa where there are many criminals, and Columbia is also very dangerous. A Westerner is not safe walking in the streets in many Latin American and African countries. “Here it’s like a paradise. I can go out by myself at night, I can run on the beach without fear of being attacked, and women travel on their own. In Paris it’s very dangerous and we have to be careful all the time. You can only walk around by yourself in the neighborhoods where there are plenty of people in the streets.”

“This Visit is a Model of What Should Be” - Helena Glaser

Blandine Grosjean met World WIZO President Helena Glaser at the World WIZO headquarters in Tel Aviv, and the Helena Glaser WIZO Center for Treatment of Domestic Violence in Ramat Gan was one of the facilities that she visited.

“I think that other WIZO Federations should follow the example of WIZO France,” says Helena Glaser. “If you see someone who might be interested in one of the many facets of work that WIZO does for Israeli society, take the initiative. Tell them who we are, what we do, and invite them to visit us. It will be an eye-opener, and mutually beneficial.”

The visit was initiated by WIZO France President Nathalie Cohen-Beizermann, and Blandine Grosjean was accompanied throughout her trip by veteran WIZO member Nadia Hanine from WIZO France’s Departement Actualite (Public Affairs Department). After Hanine read Grosjean’s article in Liberation, she wrote her a letter describing WIZO’s pioneering efforts in the field, and that was the beginning of the contact.
900 WIZO Israel chaverot, the Executives of World WIZO and WIZO Israel, representatives of organizations and movements who work with WIZO, public representatives and guests crowded into the Noga Theater in Jaffa on June 29, 2006, to pay a nostalgic and exciting tribute to WIZO’s work during its first 85 years.

Hannah Oren
The gala evening was organized, produced and moderated by Dr. Dan Almagor, with the assistance of the WIZO Israel Executive and a committee headed by Eti Ashtar, Chairperson of the Department of Training, Development and Culture. On display at the entrance was an exhibition of photos, “The Old and The New”. WIZO’s work before the creation of the State and at the time of its creation were represented in black and white photos, while WIZO’s current work was displayed in color.

WIZO Israel Chairperson, Yochy Feller, opened the evening. “This event is a splendid presentation of devoted and loving volunteer work, over decades, and for many chaverot, throughout most of their lives...Is there a danger that the cynicism and materialism, that is part and parcel of life today, might place the future of our glorious movement, which is so close to our hearts, in doubt? My answer is a resounding NO! I am optimistic, because I see you every day, and I still recognize the same caring, the sense of mission, awareness and obligation.”

Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai said, “The diverse range of WIZO’s activities has made the word WIZO a household name, one which is known throughout the country.”

Vast Proud Army of Leaders and Volunteers in Israel and Abroad

World WIZO President Helena Glaser focused on the devotion of the WIZO federations around the world. “The activities of our chaverot in Israel and abroad are entwined, and everyone wants to help and provide for the needs of Israeli society. The wonderful, extensive work of WIZO today is the realization of the WIZO vision from its very beginning.”

The greetings were concluded with the words of World WIZO Chairperson Tova Ben-Dov, who greeted WIZO’s “vast proud army of leaders and volunteers, from Israel and abroad, the backbone of our work for a just and better society. Today, too, we continue to emphasize the importance of equal opportunities in education and of creating an equal and tolerant society based on social justice.”

Greetings from Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who was unable to attend in person, were screened to the audience (see box).

“WIZO and I”

Performances throughout the evening were provided by pupils and graduates of the WIZO schools and youth villages. Short interviews with past and present WIZO leaders - Raya Jaglom, Shula Braude, Michal Modai, Thelma Neri, Ruth Tekoah, Yochy Feller, Helena Glaser and Tova Ben-Dov – were also screened.

Tova recalled the time when she told the Federations abroad about our first activities to help battered women. They were against the idea, saying, “There are no drunk Jewish men and there are no Jewish men who beat their wives.” The song and dance troupe from WIZO Nachlat Yehuda (sponsored by WIZO Switzerland) appeared in a song and dance routine entitled “I have no other country” with David Ben-Gurion’s declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel in the background.

Dr. Dan Almagor recited a monologue, “WIZO and I” based on a poem by Bialik. “My Mother, May Her Soul Rest in Peace, was a Perfect Saint.”

“My mother, Zehava Eleblinger, was a dedicated WIZO member – not a Chairperson nor a Deputy Chairperson, just a regular volunteer,” he said. “She was always organizing bazaars for the needy, for the weak, for the hungry, for the old. When she went to the cinema, it was to collect money for a sick person for a child. She went from street to street, from house to house. I do not know if Bialik’s mother was really a saint, but I am proud that my mother was a WIZO volunteer, a devoted volunteer, just a regular volunteer.”

Say it with flowers

“I Arrived on a Stormy Night, a Sad and Lonely Refugee”

A graduate of the WIZO Municipal School of Art and Design in the name of Henrietta Irwell in Haifa (sponsored by WIZO Belgium and Luxembourg, and WIZO Uruguay), Heidi Lipman, sang “We are continuing their path” based on the song “Ha Kuku v’Hasarafan” (The Pony Tail and the Pinafore), to new words by Dan Almagor. “When men and women were sweating here, building roads and in swamps/ Women realized that it is not enough to just attract suitors/ and they set up a movement called WIZO/ Yes, a Zionist movement of women, who would care for women and children/ the sick, lonely and the old...’’

Eight WIZO members from the Bulgarian Folklore Group in Jaffa danced a Bulgarian Hora in traditional costume, which was enthusiastically received by the audience.

To the well-known song by Alterman and Vilensky, “You Have to Ring Twice,” Dan Almagor drew an analogy with WIZO’s activities for the sake of new immigrants. “I arrived on a stormy night, a sad and lonely refugee/ WIZO gave me help, gave me back laughter and hope/ I was simply reborn/ I came alone, sad and lonely/ I stopped by tonight, to say ‘thank you’ to WIZO.”
IDF Soldier Shani Shamir, a graduate of WIZO Hadassim School and Youth Village (sponsored by Hadassah-WIZO Canada) sang “To Give” as a tribute to WIZO’s giving and the song troupe, from WIZO Nir Haekek (sponsored by WIZO Argentina and WIZO USA) sang “Together.”

“I Do Not Have a Minute to Spare”
The song “I Do Not Have a Minute to Spare” by Naomi Shemer was transformed into another WIZO song by Dan Almagor and sung by Heidi Lipman. It described the activities of the WIZO volunteer, from six in the morning until midnight, with the chorus of “I do not have a minute to spare/ The day is too short/ What a mess/ But what fun!” The audience eagerly joined in the chorus. The identification of WIZO volunteer family members was expressed by Miki Blumenthal, husband of the Chairperson of WIZO Israel’s Department of Welfare of the Family Avital Blumenthal, who sang “Shema Yisrael” (Listen O Israel) written by Shmuel Elbaz. Every verse spoke of a different activity, such as, “When I am alone I am bringing up my son/ Sometimes, in the dark/ I wonder what my life is worth?/ I think about it for hours/ And suddenly WIZO comes into my life.” At the conclusion of the evening, all members of the WIZO Israel Executive and Chairpersons of the branches stepped up to the stage to sing WIZO’s anthem. They were enthusiastically joined by the audience, and the evening ended on a wonderfully high note.

“My Heartfelt Appreciation for WIZO’s Blessed Work”:

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s Greeting

Mrs. Helena Glazer, President, World WIZO, WIZO members, WIZO supporters, distinguished guests.

I worked with WIZO over the course of many years when I served as Mayor of Jerusalem. There are few organizations that are as involved and supportive as WIZO in the life of Jerusalem. On countless occasions we inaugurated centers addressing the problems of youth at risk, domestic violence and sexual harassment. Day care centers all over Jerusalem belong to WIZO’s nationwide network of WIZO services throughout the country.

WIZO is unmatched in terms of its dedication to the well-being of women and children, which constitute just part of its involvement on behalf of the entire community.

You are celebrating 85 years of this wonderful organization with branches all over the world.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all WIZO women and WIZO volunteers from around the world for your never-ending support, for your involvement, for caring, for being partners in addressing the most pressing issues facing Israeli society, for the many things you do that our government should be doing.

If it were not for WIZO’s help, we may not have been able to meet the challenge of these tasks.

As you celebrate 85 years of blessed work, on behalf of the Government and State of Israel, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation, and wish you many more years of contribution, of involvement, and of taking responsibility for addressing the social problems of the State of Israel.
School has started and I find myself beginning the new routine for the year. The start of September also means the start of WIZO meetings and activities throughout the world. Of course, because of the High Holidays around the corner, we begin to reflect back on this past year, and in particular this past summer. When the war broke out my husband and I were in Italy vacationing. When we were finally able to find an English newspaper and some English news on the television, we sat and read and watched in disbelief. We prayed for a quick resolution, and wondered what we could do as Diaspora Jews. When we returned home and I was reconnected with my computer, I was relieved and proud that Canadian Hadassah-WIZO had rallied together and started our Emergency Campaign, as did so many other WIZO Federations around the world. It was also reassuring to read all of the correspondence that we were receiving from WIZO in Israel. I felt so proud to be part of an organization that was so pro-active from the get go in helping our people in the land of Israel. I was also pleased to hear from some Aviv chapters that they had organized some small fundraisers during the summer: decorated honey pots for Rosh Hashanah and collecting money at their opening meetings. As we approach Rosh Hashanah, this is an appropriate time to set priorities for the coming year that reflect the values of our tradition and the needs of our people. The issue that preoccupies us now is Israel, in the wake of this summer’s war and the continuing tensions. Clearly, we need to focus on the ways of helping our beloved Israel during these difficult times. Once again our brothers and sisters in Israel feel the sense of isolation. Thus, it is so important that we make a special effort to get to Israel as soon as possible. I hope that Aviv women from all over the world will join me in Israel for the International WIZO Aviv Seminar in November, on what promises to be an inspiring, deeply meaningful, important and, yes, fun trip. Have a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Marla Dan
Aviv Representative to the World WIZO Executive
UNITED KINGDOM

Young WIZO.uk tastes the wine and savours Russian decadence

Over 100 young professional supporters of Young WIZO became wine connoisseurs for the evening at WIZO House in March 2006. After a reception, kosher French wines were on offer. Russian Decadence was the theme of Young WIZO’s first event of the summer, which raised £6,500 towards funding student social workers for WIZO’s 170 day care centers. Around 300 young professionals at central London’s Annex 3 nightclub were greeted with complimentary vodka shots, treated to neck and shoulder massages and entertained by magician Michael Gee. The raffle draw was the highlight of the evening with one lucky guest winning two free flights to Moscow. Young WIZO committee member Gil Petersil said: “It was a really wonderful evening. It’s great that our supporters can have a fantastic time while raising much needed funds for our projects in Israel.”

12th Sponsor A Child Campaign raises £75K in One Day

A former student of WIZO Hadassim Youth Village has told UK members and supporters how she found personal and professional fulfillment in Israel, due largely to a sound high school education at our regional day and boarding school near Netanya. Ethiopian-born Oshrat Fridman, 27, now a qualified lawyer, was guest speaker at this year’s Sponsor A Child campaign in June, regaling audiences with her dramatic story of oppression, escape and hardship in the Sudan before finally leaving for Israel in 1984 as part of the Operation Moses airlift. She explained how she arrived in Israel on a ‘big white bird’ - her first time on a truck or a plane, to ‘the land of the golden city’. Absorption can be hard and Oshrat could easily have fallen by the wayside were it not for a chance meeting with a WIZO volunteer in Netanya whilst she was playing truant from school. That moment changed her life forever by bringing her into the WIZO family. Praising WIZO Hadassim for the encouragement and stability she received during her sound schooling, she said, “My headmaster always believed in me and was always there for me.” Oshrat spoke to 75 guests at this year’s Sponsor a Child Ladies’ Lunch in north London which raised £75k; she also met with a 30-strong group of staunch WIZO women in Glasgow and addressed AVIV women in Glasgow and north London. Now married to a former Hadassim student, Oshrat has one child, Lidor. Oshrat feels that the many challenges and problems she faced have been worthwhile and have given her the incentive to move forward. Sarah Glyn, Chair of Sponsor A Child and the annual Ladies Lunch said: “Everyone was really
moved by what Oshrat had to say. After a difficult childhood and having dropped out of school, WIZO found her and enabled her to fulfill herself. As a professional business woman she is now giving back to WIZO Hadassim, where she was educated, and to her community."

Rebecca Sieff Day Honours Outstanding Women & Exceptional Students
Four awards marked the UK's Rebecca Sieff Day 2006, including the first Marcus Fielding Youth and Community Award in recognition of WIZO.uk's late executive director. Marcus's father, David Fielding, presented it to the King Solomon High School in Ilford whose pupils chose WIZO as their tzedakah project in 2005. Deputy Head, Spencer Lewis, accepted the award. The students' innovative fundraising events, including 'slaves for a day' and sponsored silences, raised over £5,000 for WIZO educational programmes in Israel. In her keynote address WIZO.uk Chairperson Loraine Warren told the 250 assembled guests: “WIZO continues to attracting dynamic, active women and WIZO.uk is a movement as creative today as it was when it was founded in 1918. All of us share a vision that WIZO should continue to grow, expanding its facilities as a service provider and earning recognition as an innovator and advocate of social change. Society in Israel will become
King Solomon High School head girl Daphna Starr and head boy Reece Lipman pictured with David and Sophie Fielding, parents of the late Marcus Fielding.

stronger and healthier and the age old bond between Israel and the Diaspora will never be broken." The London Rebecca Sieff Award was presented to Anne Lyons, current co-Chair of the Kingston-upon-Thames group. Anne, a loyal WIZO supporter for 40 years, has introduced many new and exciting fundraising schemes and events. She said her award was “very much a group effort to ensure that south of the Thames, WIZO is a force to be reckoned with.” The Regional Rebecca Sieff Award went to Sara Michaelson of Liverpool, a WIZO supporter for the past 44 years, an active member of Liverpool WIZO Council and treasurer of the Liverpool WIZO Women’s Appeal. The Lily Sieff award for outstanding service was presented to Shirley Berwin of Leeds, an active member of WIZO for the past 57 years. She joined Leeds WIZO Executive and became vice chair and chair of the Council. She is now one of the coordinators responsible for running the Council, umbrella for WIZO groups in Leeds. “WIZO has been an important and integral part of my life and I hope the generations following me will be equally inspired,” she said. Guest speaker Daniel Finkelstein, OBE, Associate Editor and Comment Editor of The Times newspaper discussed the role the UK will play in the future State of Israel.

Legoland playroom – ‘a dream come true’

The new Legoland playroom brings new smiles to the children. The tots area, funded by WIZO Dublin in memory of Beth Laura Eppel, the late chair of Dublin Ziona, and the section for the older children funded by the L&R Tanner Foundation, is hailed as a dream come true by staff at the Rebecca Sieff WIZO Center for the Family in Jerusalem.
WhatsApp Image 2023-03-16 at 12.19.45.jpg

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO swings into action

What should have been a leisurely summer break turned into a frenzy of activity for the Canadian chaverot after news of the crisis broke. On July 17, National President Sandy Martin called on the support of all Canadian Hadassah-WIZO volunteers and staff to launch a national emergency campaign. “Our Israeli families are experiencing unprecedented trauma, and we ask you to understand the urgency and give generously,” she expressed in an update to the members. Canadian Hadassah-WIZO’s eight major centers in Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg, plus 27 smaller centers country-wide swung into action with telethons and fundraising events providing much needed funds for Nahalal Community and Comprehensive School, and the Hadassim Children and Youth Village, their two projects that played such a vital role for the evacuees from the North. Lending their support were the industrious AVIV chaverot who had already completed a very hectic schedule of fundraising events. The Lev Zahav chapter hosted their “Spring Fling,” an evening of fun, fashion, and food, featuring models from six Hadassah-WIZO chapters. The Hatikvah Chapter held a trivia night and silent auction, challenging the audience with questions on a range of topics from Canadian geography to 1970’s television. The annual AVIV Breakfast featured Dr. Laurie Betito, a well-known radio personality and sex therapist from Montreal, who spoke frankly on female sexuality, a topic that met with much enthusiasm from the audience. The Tzedakah chapter held their third annual At Our Table event. The theme, “Celebrate the Joy of Entertaining” was a fitting tribute to a delicious dinner enjoyed by 220 guests, followed by entertaining and educational demonstrations.
USA
New York
Aliza Olmert Visit
During the official first visit of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to
Washington, his wife Mrs. Aliza Olmert came to New York and
visited the Bloomingdale Head Start early intervention program
for young children. Helena Glaser, President of World WIZO,
and Evelyn Sommer, President of WIZO USA, had the honor
of accompanying Mrs Olmert on the visit. Mrs Olmert, an
acclaimed artist, also demonstrated her great knowledge and
interest in advanced early education programs of New York City
and WIZO in Israel.

8th Annual Children for our Children
Spring Fashion Show and Luncheon
The New York Chapter of WIZO held its 8th annual Children for
our Children Spring Fashion Show and Luncheon at the Pierre
Hotel with 75 children participating in the presence of Janice
Gillerman, wife of Ambassador Dan Gillerman and Ruth Mekel,
wife of Consul General Arye Mekel. The event, attended by WIZO
USA Vice Presidents, Joan Kahn and Mira Sofer, USA Treasurer
Sophie Sabo, and 350 WIZO supporters, was chaired by Mireille
Manocherian, member of the New York Executive, under the
leadership of New York Chair Gail Perl. Ms. Manocherian, a
co-founder of the original WIZO Dor Hadash Chapter, spoke
about WIZO’s increasing role in the education and welfare of
Israel’s neediest children and families. The guest speaker was
Rabbi Yeshayahu E. Greenfield, Dean of North Shore Hebrew
Academy, who spoke movingly about his arrival in Israel after
the Holocaust when, as motherless children, he and his brother
were taken into a WIZO Home for Orphans and given love and
care until his father was able to reunite the family. A highlight
of the evening was the surprise presentation to the Rabbi of
his sealed files from the Home by WIZO USA President Evelyn
Sommer. Long-time WIZO supporter Natalie Harounian brought
the Rabbi’s story to the attention of WIZO in New York.
Casino Night 2006

WIZO New York’s 3rd annual Casino Night at Capitale benefited WIZO projects in Israel. Haley and Jason Binn, Michelle and Josh Lobel, Marjorie and Josh Harris, Charlie and Lauren Walk, Jackie and Bippy Siegal and Seth Greenberg chaired the elegant black-tie event. The evening’s highlight was a marvelous silent auction featuring over fifty fabulous prizes. This fundraising event was organized under the leadership of New York Chair, Gail Perl, Vice-Chairmen Wilma Aschendorf and Marci Waterman and the full New York Executive Board.

Florida

Ilanit Tikva Community Bat Mitzvah

Jenny Klainbaum and Mariana Wizinizer along with their Working Committee truly outdid themselves this year at the Diplomat Hotel! Under the leadership of Stephanie Eskenazi, Ilanit Tikva organized a most splendid Bat Mitzvah celebration. Over 600 family members and friends of the 20 radiant participants enjoyed the moving ceremony followed by a fun filled party where parents and children danced and toasted the happiness of witnessing their daughters become Bat Mitzvah. Five month of intensive training under the caring supervision of WIZO volunteers, rabbis and teachers culminated with an unforgettable evening.
Mothers Day Sponsor-a-Child Luncheon
Over 200 participants attended this beautiful event honoring the mothers of many of our chaverot. After an already traditional, very elegant bazaar, attendees filled the tables decorated with the pictures of the honored mothers, surrounded by lovely flower arrangements. To honor their mothers, chaverot had to donate a Sponsor-A-Child certificate for 6 months and received one free couvert. Abigail Pogrebin kept the audience spellbound as she discussed her experiences interviewing dozens of prominent American Jews for her recent book, Stars of David.

Judit Groisman, Executive Director WIZO Florida

Los Angeles
A new Chapter is born.
Welcome to the newest WIZO USA group – WIZO AVIV Los Angeles. The new chapter, headed by Executive Board members Sabrina Wizman, Dianna Mannheim, Lisa Gild, Shana Siegel and Joyce Nazir held two events recently, a festive Moroccan Night and a Casino Night. The Casino Night party, held at Kathy Mannheim’s home, attracted 350 guests and resulted in 40 new WIZO members.

EUROPE

DENMARK
A fond farewell to a fabulous lady
It was a reception as magical and unforgettable as Kaja Sårde herself, and quite a fitting tribute to this graceful and formidable lady as she stepped down after thirty-six years of tireless dedication on WIZO’s Board of Directors and fifteen years as President of WIZO Denmark. There were many speeches praising Kaja for the way she had inspired and motivated them. Chaverot
Kaja’s son, Philip, pays tribute to his mother expressed their admiration for all her hard work for the benefit of Israeli women and children. They spoke of their experiences of working with her, and how she was not only an excellent leader but also a true friend to all. A song written by a former President, Dorrit Norden, told the story of Kaja’s long history on WIZO’s Board of Directors with anecdotes of her sparkling personality. One of Kaja’s sons delivered a particularly hilarious speech outlining his mother’s WIZO work and how it had made its mark on the whole of the family. In her response, Kaja was emotional, thanking everyone for their kind words and for the many letters and e-mails received from other federations including World WIZO’s Michal Modai, Helena Glaser and Tova Ben-Dov. Kaja summarized how being involved with WIZO had formed her adult life, and how much the friendships that had been forged over the decades meant to her. In the history of WIZO Denmark the Kaja era has all but passed but with the same unwavering loyalty she will continue to work her magic for WIZO.

60th Anniversary Celebrations
WIZO Denmark celebrated its 60th anniversary in true festive manner. Over 300 guests attended the party, held in a magnificent hotel owned by Harry Rosenberg, the husband of one of our chaverot, who sponsored the evening and donated the entire evening’s entrance fee to WIZO Denmark’s Jewish School. The guests included diplomats, Christian friends, the President of the community and Chief Rabbi Bent Lexner. Guest of honour, Lise Nørgaard, a popular author and feature writer in Denmark, was the main speaker who, some years ago, was appointed WIZO Woman of the Year. Chief Rabbi Bent Lexner also addressed the audience. Guests enjoyed a full program of entertainment and a WIZO show and there was a screening of a splendid video greeting from World WIZO featuring Raya Jaglom, Michal Modai, Helena Glaser and Tova Ben-Dov, which was met with much enthusiastic applause. The honorary awards presented by Kaja were the highlight of the evening. Ruth Belchuke received the Rebecca Sieff Award. Gold Awards were presented to Merete Lexner and all the Chaverot of the North Group: Kirsten Arnby, Esther Asmussen, Lillian Bodnia, Anne-Lise Cholewa, Lillian Dønde, Elisabeth Feder, Yvonne Katz Juul, Yvonne Karlin, Bente Nadelmann, Ursula Nadelmann, Birthe Plon, Jytte Rosenbaum, Inger Samrén, Birgitte Saks, Lis Sårde and Kaja Sårde. Silver Awards were presented to Harriet Guttermann, Lone Nachmann, Allan Falk and Bent Goldschmidt. Blue Awards
were presented to Mitzie Cohen, Annette Rosenberg and Tofa and Ivan Nadelmann, Willy Cohn and René Donde. Men’s pins went to Natalio Belchuke and Gert Unterschlag.

HOLLAND
Brenda goes Dutch with information

With their Emergency Campaign in mind, WIZO Holland were in desperate need of up-to-date information on the crisis situation in Israel and requested a visit by Brenda Katten, Chairperson of World WIZO Public Affairs & NGO Department, to put them in the picture. Within days of receiving the invitation, Brenda Katten flew to the Netherlands for a 3-day visit. She addressed large audience at the Amsterdam Hilton where Mrs. Nili Kney-Tal, wife of the Israeli Ambassador to the Netherlands, also spoke. Moderating the event was journalist and Middle East specialist, Mr Salomon Bouman, with full media coverage by the Dutch Jewish weekly NIW. Brenda delivered a political assessment of the situation and briefed the audience on what WIZO was doing during the crisis to alleviate the suffering of the population. Brenda Katten also addressed WIZO chaverot and members of the Jewish community in the hall of the magnificent synagogue in Enschede – home to a small but extremely active WIZO. She also attended a luncheon meeting with a group of both Jewish and non-Jewish women’s organisations. On her last evening in Holland, she attended a reception hosted by Ambassador Mr. Kney-Tal and his wife at their residence. It was indeed a whistle-stop visit but one that certainly delivered the goods, much to the appreciation of WIZO Holland and its friends.

NORWAY
WIZO Oslo’s 75th Anniversary

WIZO Norway President Janne Jaffe Hesstvedt invited World WIZO Organization and Education Department Chairperson Sylvie Pelossof to be the guest of honor at WIZO Oslo’s 75th Anniversary celebrations in the beginning of August. The occasion was marked with a major celebration at the Jewish community center, with over 100 participants. Among the invitees were the Israel Ambassadsor to Norway, Miryam Shomrat, WIZO members and their husbands, the head of Norway’s Jewish community, Anne Sender, who is a former WIZO Norway President, and the new rabbi and his wife, who is the son of Rabbi Michael Melchior. Citations were given to a number of people for special contributions to WIZO and Israel. This included a Norwegian journalist, two male donors and former WIZO Norway President Irene Philipson. A special flower-award ceremony was held for seven past presidents of WIZO Oslo, all of whom came up on the stage together. Two of them performed a sketch, which humorously described the 75 years of WIZO Oslo. As the guest of honor, Sylvie Pelossof spoke about the war in Israel, and how WIZO was coping with the situation. “People were extremely moved by my description of WIZO’s emergency campaign to help the displaced people from the north,” she said, “and it was important for them to hear a first-hand report.” There was also a music and dance performance. Many funds for WIZO were raised from the lottery that was organized for the event, and the entire evening was very successful. There are about 1,000 Jews
in Oslo, and 200 WIZO members, which is a great achievement. Still the Federation is faced with the challenge of gaining new members amid growing anti-Semitism. WIZO Oslo has two Lapid groups, and many young members who are working mothers, but still manage to find time to be involved in WIZO activities. Mrs. Pelossof decided to carry out meetings with all of the individual members of the executive, and was proud to hear upon her return that the number of executive members had been increased from four to six.

SWITZERLAND
Changing of the Presidents
After fourteen years of selfless giving, Lucie Gideon ended her term as President of the Swiss WIZO Federation. At a “Changing of the Presidents” event Lucie was honored for her leadership and received gifts from the children of Youth Villages sponsored by WIZO Switzerland. Attending the event, World WIZO President Helena Glaser paid warm tribute to Lucie for her outstanding leadership and love of Israel and congratulated incoming President Anne Argi on her new position. Anne, a young and very capable woman from Lucerne, took some persuasion before agreeing to take on the role but with assistance from new Vice President Francine Nordmann, who takes over from Ruth Fischer, it is clear that the Swiss WIZO Federation will continue to flourish in the good hands of a new generation of leadership. The first initiative on the agenda is the creation of a new Hasbarah committee.

LATIN AMERICA
Costa Rica
Helena Glaser, World WIZO President, met with the Vice President of Costa Rica, Mrs. Laura Chinchilla, where they discussed the issues of youth at risk, domestic violence, the advancement of women, NGOs and the importance of information. This meeting was just part of a very eventful itinerary prepared by WIZO Costa Rica co-Presidents, Anita Ligator and Lisa Davidovich. After meetings with WIZO chaverot Helena attended a concert fundraiser for “Sponsor a Child” organised by the Jai Sara Rose group. The highlight of her visit, however, was the formation of a new group of single and young married women, initiated after Helena had given a talk on WIZO at the home of Cindy Rosenstock.

Mexico
WIZO Latin American Congress
Helena Glaser, World WIZO President, Celia Michonik, World WIZO Publicity Department Chairperson and Evelyn Sommer, President of WIZO USA joined WIZO Delegations from Argentina, Costa Rica, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Bolivia at the WIZO Latin American Congress. The Congress gives each Federation the
opportunity to report on its activities and exchange information and serves as a platform to discuss the regional problems specific to Latin America. Under the excellent organisational skills of Co-Presidents of the Organizing Committee, Sylvie Mizrahi and Linda Cheskes, the Congress was well balanced, interesting and informative with a program that included speeches, lectures and panels and entertainment. An Inaugural Ceremony took place at the magnificent Castle of Chapultepec, a highly prized national treasure and prestigious venue. That WIZO Mexico was able to hold an event there speaks volumes of the high regard for WIZO in Mexico. The topic of Helena Glaser’s speech was “Voluntarism and the Professional Woman,” delivered at a panel on “The Challenges for the Continuity of WIZO,” with participation from representatives from Brazil, Costa Rica and Mexico.
Panama, Uruguay and Bolivia presented a lecture on “The Reality of Jewish Latin American Communities”. Celia Michonik and Esther Mizrahi gave lectures on fundraising and Evelyn Sommer, President of WIZO USA and our WIZO representative to the United Nations in New York, raised much interest with her lecture on “WIZO in the International Arena.” The issue of anti-Semitism and intolerance in the Middle East and in South America was also addressed and debated. After two full days of meetings, presentations and lectures, it was time for enjoyment, culture and fun. A visit to the Dolores Olmedo Museum to see the highly acclaimed paintings of Diego Rivera followed by a visit to Xochimilco, a lake often described as the country in the city, gave the hard-working chaverot an opportunity to relax before preparing for a Gala dinner held at the Nikko Hotel.

AUSTRALIA
WIZO Australia’s Annual Plenary
50 leading activists from all over the country came to Melbourne in August to participate in WIZO Australia's two day annual Plenary Session. Australia’s Aviv delegation gave a colorful presentation of their participation in the International Aviv Seminar last year and Lisa Farber reported on the highly successful Aviv Seminar, which was held earlier in the year. In-depth fundraising presentations followed the Treasurer’s report and among the other highlights were presentations by Australia Union of Jewish Student (AUJS) representatives, Anat Bogaty on her recent visit to Ahuzat Yeladim and Romy Braitberg on her experience at AUJS Winter Camp where Taylor Hogge impressed the participants. Working sessions included discussions on education, membership, function planning and fundraising tools. The packed program was designed to enlighten.
Coping with the War and invigorate the delegates and by all accounts it certainly achieved its goal.

What do Men Want?
That was the question pondered at a very entertaining gala brunch held in July at Adelaide’s Hilton Hotel, co-hosted by WIZO and the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce. The subject – “What Men Want” - close to every woman’s heart, evoked amusing responses as guest speakers, including Supreme Court Judge Hon. Justice John Sula, Liberal MP, Hon. Christopher Pyne, as well as many well-known Adelaide personalities added their own particular insight. Amongst the many memorable observations was one by PR whiz, Karyn Foster, who acted as MC at the event. Responding to MP Christopher Pyne’s statement that men want to be adored, she remarked that she didn’t think women really care what men want, adding that she would marry her dog if she could because “he loves me unconditionally and never says ‘your bum looks big in that’.” Funds raised at the event supported WIZO’s Emergency Campaign.

NEW ZEALAND
Visit of Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry
WIZO New Zealand’s President, Lorna Orbell and President Emeritus, Joyce Baker represented WIZO at a reception held in Auckland to welcome Mr. Ron Prosor, the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Prosor is the most senior Israeli official to visit New Zealand since 1984. The delegation, which included Mr. Michael Rone, Director of the Pacific Department of Israel’s Foreign Ministry and Mr. Naftali Tamir, Israeli’s Ambassador to Israel, met with leaders of the Auckland Jewish Community at the cocktail party. Mr. Prosor said that he is very well aware of the wonderful work that WIZO does for Israel.

SOUTH AFRICA
Johannesburg - Rock n’Roll WIZO style
WIZO Johannesburg’s Tzabar Branch of dedicated expatriate Israeli chaverot are known for their zeal and commitment as they go from one major fund-raising event to another. Their Purim Bash (co-organised with the Etgar Branch) was a huge success and immensely enjoyable as a particularly vociferous Elvis Presley impressionist brought the house down with a medley of smash hits from the fifties and sixties, while guests jitterbugged to the beat wearing the colorful fashions of the era.

WIZO Around the World was edited by Tricia Schwitzer
Let’s make this **new year**
a **new beginning** for Lior

Lior is one of 350,000 children at risk in Israel. For many of them, WIZO is their only real home. WIZO believes each child deserves an equal opportunity and the brighter future that a quality education makes possible.

**WIZO. Making it all possible.**

To contribute, please contact your local WIZO federation or log onto: www.wizo.org/education
We’ve been expecting you

We, WIZO women in 50 countries, know that Israeli society is our responsibility. We want to bring about a change in the lives of people, of women. To make a difference. To lead. To set a new agenda. To dream. To help. We can do it.