The Challenge
WIZO Faces the New Anti-Semitism

The Journey
From Israel to Poland

The Rescue
Osnat Finds a Home in Holon

The New Brand
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I recently returned from a very powerful experience in Paris — the world premiere of a new musical, “Gladiateur,” performed under the auspices of WIZO France. Written by Elie Chouraqui and composed by Maxime Le Forestier, it’s a strong, musical interpretation of the story of Spartacus, the ancient struggle against slavery and for freedom. A huge audience of over 3,000 people attended at the Palace de Sport.

What made this so special was the fact that WIZO France, under the leadership of President Nathalie Cohen-Beizerman, dared to reach for the heights. They took responsibility for organizing the premiere performance, with the help of the Jewish community. This demonstrates that when we aim high, plan well, mobilize and inspire others — we can succeed. The event was a great fundraising and PR success, with the participation of the Israeli Ambassador, former Minister Simone Veil, the head of the CRIF (French Jewish community) Roger Cukierman, the Israeli Ambassador to UNESCO Jacques Revah and many youth. Rehovot Mayor Shuki Forer was also present, because the proceeds of the evening went to support the WIZO Municipal Technological High School in the Name of Maya Rosenberg in Rehovot.

Israeli Ambassador to France Nissim Zvili told the audience that his educational experience at the WIZO Nachlat Yehuda School and Youth Village was a central formative experience in his life. What a moment of satisfaction this was for me! Despite all the pain and sorrow we have recently been experiencing in Israel, I would like to end my column on an optimistic note. We are all very proud that two Israeli scientists, Prof. Aaron Ciechanover and Prof. Avram Hershko received the 2001 Nobel Prize for Chemistry. As Prof. Ciechanover said, “we are a country that lacks natural resources. Everything that we’ve had and will have is a direct product of quality education.” That’s what WIZO is committed to provide.

One of our primary goals for the coming year will be to make the need to attract new members one of our highest priorities. A constantly growing membership is a key to fulfilling our goals for Israeli society. I am convinced that every Jewish woman around the world can identify with some aspect of WIZO’s goals, for the sake of Israeli society, for the education and needs of Israeli women, youth, children, senior citizens and new immigrants. As I visit our WIZO Federations around the world, I discover anew that our mission statement resonates with women everywhere, and our ability to respond to the needs of the hour and to adapt to new challenges is extremely inspiring.

If we want to realize our goals to the fullest extent possible, we have to become more professional in our activities. We are living in a very competitive world. It is true that voluntarism is the foundation of our movement - the desire to help, the feelings, the love and the ideology. But we cannot achieve any of our goals and advance our movement forward without professional knowledge, planning and the training of volunteers. We have made much progress in this direction, but the pace of things is constantly accelerating, and we must keep up with the times. Younger women come from the professional world, and for our movement to be able to attract them it must broadcast a sense of professionalism. We have to constantly upgrade ourselves. It definitely is possible to mobilize more funds and members. Where there’s a will, we can and will find the way.

Despite all the pain and sorrow we have recently been experiencing in Israel, I would like to end my column on an optimistic note. We are all very proud that two Israeli scientists, Prof. Aaron Ciechanover and Prof. Avram Hershko received the 2001 Nobel Prize for Chemistry. As Prof. Ciechanover said, “we are a country that lacks natural resources. Everything that we’ve had and will have is a direct product of quality education.” That’s what WIZO is committed to provide.

President’s Desk

Helena Glaser, President, World WIZO
Raya Jaglom, Honorary Life President World WIZO
Michal Modai, Honorary Life President World WIZO
Ora Baharaff, Chairperson, WIZO France

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Colia Michonik, Chairperson, Fundraising Department
Sylvie Pelossof, Chairperson, Organization & Education Dept.
Ruth Rubinstein, Chairperson Formal & Informal Education Dept.
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Ruth Tamir, Chairperson, Building, Maintenance & Purchasing Division

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Saya Malkin, Deputy Chairperson, Fundraising Department
Esther Mor, Deputy Chairperson, Fundraising Department
Nurt Pollack, Deputy Chairperson, Building Maintenance & Purchasing Division
We began the New Year 5765 with the same dreams and hopes of every Israeli, and in fact of every Jew around the world, that this will be a better year for all of us. Although during the months before Rosh Hashana we had some ‘relative’ peace from terrorist attacks, this situation drastically changed when terror reared its ugly head once again, the most recent one in the Carmel Market in Tel Aviv, with three killed and over 30 wounded. Further terrorist attacks took place in the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem and we are facing constant shelling of Kassam rockets to Sderot. It is with a heavy heart filled with sadness that Israelis continue to bury their sons and daughters.

The world has learned that it is very difficult to combat such fanatical terrorist attacks and now understands the situation that Israel has been facing with the Palestinians for so many years. With Arafat’s passing, we may be entering a new period, which hopefully will create new opportunities. The Israeli government’s disengagement plan will provide more security for Israeli citizens, and new possibilities to return to a peace process. Anti-Semitism is another factor that Jews around the world have to combat, and this “new anti-Semitism” displays not only hatred for the Jews but hatred for Israel and all it represents.

This year, we are celebrating 85 years since the establishment of WIZO and this coincides with the 100th anniversary of the death of Theodor Herzl. Herzl had a vision of a State for all Jews where they would live in happiness and peace. Our founder, Rebecca Sieff also had a dream how, in what was then called Palestine, to improve life for children, women and society as a whole.

WIZO is constantly dedicating its efforts to strengthen the status of women, to support women and children in need, to improve the quality of life of the elderly and the new immigrants, and to spread its activities among the minorities. As our slogan goes - “WIZO for an improved Israel Society”.

Today WIZO operates 173 day care centers and 9 schools & youth villages. Thousands of babies, toddlers, children and students have just started the new school year. It was so moving to see excited children coming to the day care centers for their first day away from home. WIZO’s aim is to enrich the children with education, culture, general values, tolerance and patience, equality and the need to understand each other.

Among the increasing number of families living under the poverty line are families of children attending WIZO’s day care centers, schools and youth villages. WIZO distributed over 2500 food parcels before Rosh Hashana ensuring that these people could sit at their table and enjoy a nutritious meal on eve of Rosh Hashana.

I take this opportunity to remind you all that our next Meeting of Representatives will take place between January 17-20, 2005 and will be held at the Hilton Hotel, Tel Aviv.

It is imperative that all Presidents & Chairpersons attend the AGM in order to participate in the important constructive deliberations. I look forward to seeing you in January.

Let us hope and pray that this year will bring to the people of Israel more peace of mind so that we can concentrate on developing our country, on the spiritual needs of the nation, aid our wonderful scientists and doctors who have enriched mankind around the world with their innovative inventions and developments. For us in WIZO we wish for a year of increased membership, innovative and interesting activities and successful fundraising.

Let us pray for more happy occasions and less memorial days.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE - WITH WIZO IT IS POSSIBLE

Visit our website: www.wizo.org
Fighting the New Anti-Semitism

On the Agenda

One of the main issues on the Israeli and World Jewish agenda in 2004 is the disturbing growth of anti-Semitic incidents around the world. WIZO has decided to make the struggle against the New Anti-Semitism a focal point of its activity.

Adi Ronel
Who would have thought that 59 years after the end of World War II and the end of the Holocaust, and 15 years after the Iron Curtain was brought down by the citizens of this city, Berlin, that we would have to meet in order to coordinate the fight in the free and democratic world against anti-Semitism,” said Israeli Minister of Diaspora Affairs Natan Sharansky. As head of the Israeli delegation, Sharansky was addressing the meeting of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), held in Berlin. And he added, “perhaps the difference between now and then is the readiness of the civilized world to take up the struggle against this odious phenomenon.”

World WIZO was represented at the OSCE meeting, and at the International Meeting of the World Jewish Congress on the same subject that preceded it, by WIZO President Helena Glaser and WIZO USA President Evelyn Sommer, who is Chairperson of the American section of the World Jewish Congress. They were joined by the Immediate Past President of WIZO Germany, Lala Susskind, WIZO Berlin President Michal Gelman and other members of the WIZO Germany Executive and by WIZO Honorary Life President Raya Jaglom.

“The caliber of the participants,” said Mrs. Glaser, among them U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, President of Germany Johann Rau, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, former New York Mayor Edward Koch, Simone Veil, Minister Sharansky, WJC Chairman Edgar Bronfman, Nobel Prize Laureate Elie Weisel, and many others, “showed the deep concern that is being felt following the renewed scourge of anti-Semitism around the world. The problem of anti-Semitism has become a prime topic in Europe. The meeting of the OSCE was considered to be a historical one, and it was an experience to hear 55 European countries trying to work out ways to stop the spread of anti-Semitism in the world.”

The Berlin Declaration

Having initially raised the issue of the new anti-Semitism at the last World WIZO Enlarged General Meeting in January, 2004, Mrs. Glaser gave a detailed and moving report about the conference to the World WIZO Executive. She noted that the Chairman of the OSCE proposed that the OSCE:

1. Condemn without reservation, all manifestations of anti-Semitism, and all other acts of intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, wherever they occur;
2. Condemn all attacks motivated by anti-Semitism or by any other forms of religious or racial hatred or intolerance, including attacks against synagogues and other religious places, sites and shrines;
3. Declare unambiguously that international developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify anti-Semitism.

Victory for Zionism

Mrs. Glaser says that, “as with every other Conference, there was much discussion before a joint document of summation was presented. One of the main differences of opinion involved including the word Israel in the final document. I was very pleased when clause 3 (above) which includes the specific mention of Israel, was eventually accepted. This was seen as a victory for the Zionists who were present.”

“One of the more important decisions that were adopted was that there should be one central body, a monitor, whose job would be to collect and maintain information and statistics about anti-Semitic crimes and make this information available to the public and to work out the best practices for preventing and responding to anti-Semitism. It was also decided that anti-Semitism has to be treated as a criminal offence.”

Mrs. Glaser proposed “that children around the world be asked to write or draw themes on the Holocaust and Xenophobia. It would be held on the local level at first, then on a country level, and finally might be recognized at the United Nations, under the auspices of a public figure. We have the contacts, and we also believe that it is important to hold dialogues between religions. Our WIZO members abroad are experiencing many problems with these issues today. I also propose that we create an Internet site for WIZO federations around the world, in which we ask for public support in the form of signatures for the Berlin Declaration, against anti-Semitism.”

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(l to r) German Foreign Minister Joschka Fisher, WIZO USA President Evelyn Sommer and World WIZO President Helena Glaser at the OSCE meeting on Anti-Semitism

(l to r) Helena Glaser, World Jewish Congress President Edgar M. Bronfman, Jan Aronson and Evelyn Sommer at the OSCE meeting in Berlin

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(l to r) German Foreign Minister Joschka Fisher, WIZO USA President Evelyn Sommer and World WIZO President Helena Glaser at the OSCE meeting on Anti-Semitism
The New Anti-Semitism
Brenda Katten
Chair WIZO Public Affairs and NGO Department

The anti-Semitism of the past was state initiated with governments introducing anti-Semitic legislation that discriminated against Jews in employment, housing and many areas of public life. Today the opposite is happening, with a number of states having passed laws against all forms of racism. Whilst not specifically against the discrimination of Jews, these states argue that anti-racism laws embrace anti-Semitism. This is the view of Professor Robert Wistrich, Chair of Modern European History at the Hebrew University and head of the Vidal Sassoon Center for the study of anti-Semitism. He gave the keynote address on anti-Semitism during the Annual meeting of the Zionist General Council.

A View from France

Following the wave of anti-Semitic incidents in France earlier this year, Prime Minister Sharon’s call to French Jews to come to Israel as soon as possible drew a strong condemnation from President Chirac.

“Making Aliyah is a personal decision” says WIZO France President Nathalie Cohen-Beizermann. “WIZO should promote Aliyah to Israel, and here in France we embrace this activity as part of our program. Therefore, encouraging Jews from France to immigrate to Israel does not offend me. Neither does mentioning the number of Muslims residing in France — this is, after all, a reality. A point I stressed, when recently interviewed on radio and television, is that, as communal leaders, we must respect the choice of Jews living in the Diaspora to decide if and when they wish to make Aliyah — irrespective of the situation. I believe that the government of Israel should do the same.

Currently we are experiencing anti-Semitism from both the extreme right and the extreme left. While the situation has encouraged a part of the community to consider Aliyah, it should be stressed that this would be primarily for ideological reasons rather than the phenomena of anti-Semitism. Many of our members have children living in Israel and it is their intention to make Aliyah at some point in the future. Others, especially our Aiviv members, believe that their children will experience a more meaningful Jewish existence in Israel. A high proportion spend vacations there and an ever growing number are investing in properties. It is my own family’s intention to buy a home in Israel before the end of this year.

“A number of our Aiviv members do not see a professional future for their children in France. While many will choose to come to Israel (there is no doubt that the increase in anti-Semitism has accelerated their decision) others will move to another country in the Diaspora, probably the USA and Canada.”

In conversation and correspondence with Brenda Katten

A View from Brazil

“The current Brazilian Government authorities have systematically been in line with the Arabian countries,” writes WIZO Brazil President Sarita Schaffel. “Every U.N. motion against Israel has received support from Brazil. President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva traveled around the Middle East and didn’t include the State of Israel on his itinerary.

“We have a critical security problem at the "Triple Frontier" where there is a confluence of Palestinian immigrants. There are suspicions of capital circulation at Brazil-Paraguay-Argentina frontier that sponsors fundamentalist Muslim organizations such as Hizbollah and Hamas. In 1994, the terrorists who perpetrated the attack on the AMIA Jewish center building in Buenos Aires apparently came from this area.

“The country’s media, universities and the elite have been critical of President Bush’s policy, which is reflected in the attitude towards Middle East issues. There have been many demonstrations throughout the country, both in support of the Palestinian people and in condemnation of Sharon’s policies.

“In 2003, editor Siegfried Elwanger was tried for publishing anti-Semitic literature. Elwanger was convicted of the crime of racism and appealed to the Federal Supreme Court, claiming that the Jews do not constitute a race but a people, a religious group, an attempt to define his crime as being not punishable according to the Brazilian Constitution. The Court’s verdict was that the outrage against the Jews is a racial crime, and that anti-Semitism is a racist manifestation. The Elwanger case is considered a landmark in human rights jurisprudence in Brazil.”
A View from New Zealand
The President emeritus of WIZO New Zealand, Joyce Baker wrote a strong letter to the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, following the recent desecration of a Jewish cemetery in Wellington. Baker felt that the Prime Minister’s criticism of the State of Israel for apparently sending Mossad agents to New Zealand resulted in this anti-Semitic outburst.

“New Zealand’s Prime Minister, Helen Clark is trying to attract foreign students to study in New Zealand,” says Baker. “The Prime Minister’s tirade against Israel could have been to show how she was on top of the situation and could control any Israeli or “Jewish” interference in her plans and at the same time to “prove” how suitable New Zealand would be for students from the Middle East. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect is the Prime Minister’s flirtation with Saudi Arabia (which has built, staffed and financed five mosques in New Zealand within the past four years).

“During these past six years the Moslem population has grown to 38,000 while it has taken some 50 years for the Jewish community to grow from 5,300 to the present figure of 9,400. There are three Arab Web sites filled with hateful anti-Israel propaganda, and there are problems of Holocaust denial at Waikato University. The Jewish community continues to be the victim of ever increasing threats, and we are in need of security guards at all our institutions and events. Despite this, the situation for Jews in New Zealand is an excellent one — we are fully protected by law against all forms of discrimination. At present I see no real danger for the community, but I do see an increase in vocal and personal anti-Jewish activities and am perturbed by the increase in anti-Israel and anti-American feelings.

“How does this effect WIZO? The majority of Jews here are reluctant to be associated with a Zionist organization. Fifteen years ago it was suggested that WIZO remove the word “Zionist” from its name. A large proportion of the community is not Zionist, and dislikes being connected to “political” Israeli actions which are unpopular with the average New Zealander. Prime Minister Sharon has been demonized in the international press, to the discomfort of many Jews who are swift to disassociate themselves from his actions and views. We also have a number of vocal Palestinian sympathizers amongst us. Personally I feel sympathy with the Palestinian people who are victims of their corrupt, destructive leadership that bears responsibility for their distress.

“I believe that the situation in New Zealand is the same as anywhere in the world. We embrace diverse opinions, have the same Jew haters — both in and out of the community — those who try to make people understand the real situation, people who don’t want to know and hide their heads in the sand waiting for the unpleasantness to go away and people who hide away and hope they won’t be noticed as being Jewish. It’s the same story that continues from one generation to another. The difference is that NOW WE HAVE OUR OWN STATE — A JEWISH STATE, and we pray it will always be there.”

In conversation and correspondence with Brenda Katten
Sharansky and Wiesel on the New Anti-Semitism

Sharansky: “We Must Formulate a Plan of Action”

“Over the past three years, we have witnessed a resurgence of anti-Semitic activity, particularly on the continent of Europe,” said Israeli Minister Natan Sharansky. “Synagogues have been burned, rabbis have been abused in the streets, children on their way to school have been physically attacked, cemeteries have been desecrated - all because these institutions or people are either Jewish or symbolize Jewish existence. Anti-Semitism today is found in a number of sectors of society. The extreme right pursues an anti-Semitic agenda which is inspired by the Nazis. The radical left abhors the very existence of the State of Israel, the homeland of the Jewish people and goes out of its way to demonize the Jewish State and also the Jewish people...”

“We are sometimes blamed for trying to stop the legitimate criticism of Israel by accusing our opponents of anti-Semitism. I want to make it clear,” he said — “Israel as the only genuine democracy in the Middle East, enjoys a robust and public ongoing political debate. Israel welcomes criticism like every robust democracy both from within and without. But where is the line between legitimate criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism.

The first D is the test of demonization
That was the main instrument of the old anti-Semitism against Jews. Jews were accused of drinking the blood of children, spoiling the wells, controlling the banks and governments... Today, the most sophisticated form of demonization is demonization of the Jewish State.
The second D is the test of double standards.
It is anti-Semitism, when Israel is singled out by the United Nations for human rights abuses while tried and true abusers like China, Iran, Cuba, and Syria are ignored. Likewise, it is anti-Semitism when Israel’s Magen David Adom, alone among the world’s ambulance services, is denied admission to the International Red Cross.
The third D is the test of deligitimation.
In the past, anti-Semites tried to deny the legitimacy of the Jewish religion, the Jewish people or both. Today, they are trying to deny the legitimacy of the Jewish State. While criticism of an Israeli policy may not be anti-Semitic, the denial of Israel’s right to exist is always anti-Semitic. If other peoples have a right to live securely in their homelands, then the Jewish people have a right to live securely in their homeland as well. Anti-Semitism is a challenge to us all, and I am gratified that this challenge has been recognized by many of the states who are represented here.

Action Plan
I hope this conference will formulate a plan of action. It should address the need to establish an organizational framework that can, among other things, do the following:
1) Report anti-Semitic incidents
2) Coordinate law enforcement bodies in the fight against anti-Semitism
3) Exchange ideas regarding legislation in this field
4) Enhance educational programs aimed at ending racial, ethnic or religious strife, specifically anti-Semitism.

Armed with moral clarity, determination, and a common purpose, I know that this is a fight that we can must and will win.”

Elie Wiesel: “Stop the Poison from Spreading!”

Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel warned European and North American countries that anti-Semitism is on the rise and fervently urged them to do more to keep “the poison from spreading... Stop! Stop a disease that has lasted so long. Stop the poison from spreading,” Wiesel said. He found “particularly contemptuous” comparisons of Israel’s treatment of Palestinians to Nazi Germany’s atrocities against the Jews. Wiesel, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, said that “The Jew I am belongs to a traumatized generation. We have antennas. Better yet, we are antennas,” he said. “If we tell you that the signals we receive are disturbing, that we are alarmed ... people had better listen.” Wiesel said it was fitting that the conference was taking place in the German capital, where the Nazis developed their plans to destroy the world’s Jews. The venue was the German Foreign Ministry, a huge building that once served as Nazi Germany’s central bank. “It is precisely because it takes place in Berlin that a powerful message ... should be composed here” Wiesel said, urging the leaders to send a manifesto against anti-Semitism in all languages to all the people in the world.
Dear Chavera,

Following my participation in the discussions of the World Jewish Congress which preceded the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) meeting on anti-Semitism which was held in Berlin at the end of April, I feel that WIZO, as an international women’s movement, should be involved in the fight against anti-Semitism, which is rearing its ugly head around the world. The meeting in Berlin was under the auspices of the President of Germany, and was attended by the US Secretary of State, Mr. Colin Powell and many important persons such as parliament members from European countries, the German Foreign Minister, Israeli Minister Sharansky, Eli Weisel, Ed Koch and many others. During the last Extended General Meeting, many of you described, with concern, the effect that anti-Semitism is having on the activities of your Federation and the morale of the Jewish community. We have to learn from our mistakes in the past, when we thought that by ignoring the problem it would disappear, ultimately leading to the biggest cause for shame in the modern world, the Holocaust. It is our duty to make sure that we leave a better place for our children and grandchildren. Since we in WIZO, number fifty WIZO federations around the world, we feel that we need to take a stand on this issue. We have to make our voices heard, and the power that we generate in our numbers, felt. At the close of the meetings a document was formulated which is known as the Berlin Declaration. I ask you to sign the Berlin Declaration and send it to your colleagues and friends. Together we must say:

No to Anti-Semitism!!!

With best wishes,

President,
World WIZO

Sign the WIZO Petition Against Anti-Semitism

1) Fill out the form, cut and mail it to:
WIZO Info. Dept., 38 David Hamelech, Tel Aviv, 63324, Israel

First Name__________________________________________
Last Name__________________________________________
City________________________, Zip____________________
Country____________________________________________
E-mail_____________________________________________
Signature___________________________________________

2) Sign the petition on-line:
Go to the WIZO Web site at www.wizo.org, sign and send
On a recent rainy Sunday afternoon, the wind pounded on the window of a special apartment in the heart of Holon. Inside, in the heated room, ten attractive young women in jeans and tee shirts were eating hot vegetable soup and chatting away about friends, teachers and annoying family members. Youthful solidarity hovered in the air, a kind of eternity of the moment. The smell of the vegetables and fried fish patties were a reminder of home. But this wasn’t a regular home. A house mother, counselors, and activities served as a substitute for the supportive home they never had. Each of the girls knew that the time they spent with each other in the “warm home” in Holon was their daily time of grace.

Osnat’s Salvation

“I don’t want to think about what would have happened to me and where I would be now if I didn’t have this place,” admits Osnat (a fictional name), who will begin her army service in a few weeks. For girls like Osnat from broken homes, army service is not taken for granted. She would have had to fight for this right. “I’m sure they wouldn’t have taken me in the army, that I wouldn’t have done my matriculation exams, that I would have become a girl without self-confidence, always hysterical and doing stupid things. Here they taught me to cope with the difficult situations in my home, to overcome my hot temper, to fulfill myself, to be aware. These are priceless gifts,” she says with tears in her eyes.

The girls have known Osnat for a few years now and talk about the amazing process she has undergone since she arrived here. Each of the girls has a similar story. Each has internalized the contribution the place has made to her, partly by relating to and observing her friends. The have learned each one’s tiny nuances and have become a wonderful support group for each other. “After five years here I still have endless crises at home. A few days ago I had a terrible fight with my brother. We almost came to blows. I ran away to avoid any violence. By 12:30 I was already here. The girls noticed right away that something was wrong. They wanted to know what happened and I told them everything step by step, and in this way I relieved myself of the heavy burden I felt. Afterwards the counselors called me in for a talk and I calmed down.”
Warm Shelter from the Storm

Three times a week teenage girls from broken homes come to the enchanting atmosphere of the Bayit Cham (Warm Home), which WIZO established in cooperation with the Holon municipality and the Ministry of Labor. There they do homework, receive a hot meal, support one another and learn about the positive side of life.

“I don’t want to think about what would have happened to me and where I would be now if I didn’t have this place.” Osnat from the Storm
Changing the Course of Young Lives

A girl like Osnat could have ended up on the street. Fortunately for her there was an address that changed the course of her life. The chairperson of WIZO Israel’s Family Welfare Department, Avital Blumental, will never forget the period before the “warm home”: “Only three years ago there was no framework for helping these girls. When I was the chairperson of WIZO Ramat Hasharon, a government social worker approached me and asked me to find a volunteer for a teenage girl who had been on the street for a few days. After a few failed attempts to find an immediate volunteer, I brought the girl to my home. For more than a week she had her own room, her own private corner, peace of mind. It was a sad story. A fragile girl arrived with a schoolbag over her shoulder, a small carton of clothes, and a sad look. In her case there was no legal reason to remove her from her home. With a little support she no longer needed to run away from home in the middle of the night to seek solutions. The “warm home” gave her both a home with a mother figure, a WIZO volunteer who did the cooking, and enrichment activities.”

It is not surprising that WIZO pioneered a whole new model for dealing with teenage girls. The “warm home” in Holon, which was the first to be established by WIZO, in cooperation with the Holon welfare department and the Labor Ministry, became a special treatment model which was soon copied all over the country. The home is open three times a week from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Thirteen girls known to the Holon welfare services are accepted every year, out of dozens of candidates. In the home, a spacious structure built like an ordinary apartment in the Jesse Cohen neighborhood of Holon, the girls eat a hot meal, do their homework, and receive enrichment in varied areas, such as a video workshop, charm classes, and lectures on subjects such as parent-child relationships, sexuality, female empowerment, and violence in romantic relationships. In the “warm home” they celebrate birthdays for the first time and receive presents provided by WIZO volunteers from the Holon branch.

Professional Treatment

Iris Tsur, director of the unit for treating teenage girls, and Liad Cherkovich, a social worker who supervises the “warm home” project, provide the professional side. Tsur: “The ‘warm home’ gives girls, whose own homes don’t sufficiently provide for their needs, a framework that replaces hanging out in the streets.” Cherkovich: “The girls get into very difficult situations because of their parents’ inability to function, emotional problems, economic hardship, or all of the above. It’s not always a case of intentional neglect; often the parents neglect the girl because they are preoccupied with day-to-day survival and aren’t attentive to her needs. One of the problems is that when a girl starts going downhill she hurts herself, not the society: arbitrary sex, vagrancy. The girls become victims and sometimes it’s difficult to stop the deterioration.”

The Holon municipality and the Labor Ministry are responsible for the treatment side of the program, and WIZO is responsible for the improvement in the quality of life. “We are there for the holidays, bring gifts, organize trips and enrichment activities like aerobics classes or lectures in different areas,” says a WIZO volunteer.

Is it possible to sketch a profile of the girls?

Cherkovich: Virtually all of them come from problem homes with difficult socio-economic backgrounds. They are the second and third generation of poverty.

Tsur: Most of the girls are in a process of deterioration that affects all aspects of their lives. We stop this chain reaction, and in successful cases help them become integrated into normal society. One of the measures of this is enlistment in the army, which is considered a success. Those who come to the “warm home” have a totally different starting point for their lives.”

Are there any successes?

We have a lot of girls who finished their studies, took the matriculation exams and entered army service. This is part of our outlook. We break the patterns of distress that existed in the family, break the deadly cycle that trapped the girls.

Breaking this cycle involves hard work both by the staff and by the girls. The staff has to deal with all the complexity of the situation and the girls have to give up, step by step, behavior patterns acquired over years. Liad Cherkovich: “I came here two and a half years ago. The first year I thought the tears would finish me. I cried so much, had so many crises, didn’t want to continue. The work with the girls is very very hard, challenging and
rewarding. There's never a dull moment. If you plan something and it's not appropriate for them, you've got to change it, you've got to learn to be flexible.”

What's the hardest part of your job?

The many different hats I wear. In a period of four hours I function as a mother, a friend, a social worker, a teacher and a behavior consultant who doesn't let them throw food at each other when they're uptight. I pick them up from school, they eat lunch, I embrace them physically and emotionally. They are volatile girls and there is always something or someone that makes them angry. If one of them flips out, within seconds they start throwing pillows and oranges at each other, and then it's necessary both to teach them that that's not the way to express anger - and to hug them and calm them down.

Does the work affect you emotionally?

Tsur: Does it ever! For years I have felt that we have saved girls and families. It thrills me to see girls that society gave up on taking shape and becoming capable of going far, or at least second year I didn't want to accept her into the program because I felt I didn't have the emotional resources to deal with her. She didn't agree to go and after a lot of intervention by many parties, promises, and a commitment to abide by certain conditions, she returned to the home. When she started 12th grade an incredible love story began between us. She was a different girl. She allowed herself to exhibit all her positive qualities, whereas before she had only exhibited aggressiveness, so that - God forbid - we wouldn't discover her good qualities. Amid all the chaos we were able to see her hidden potential, and she has turned into a positive leader. The army didn't want to accept her because of her background. She formed a letter-writing lobby and everyone who knew her was enlisted to help her. She persisted and she won. She finished high school, is a soldier, and now her dream of becoming a social worker is about to be realized - she has been accepted to social work school.

Osnat - Books and Business

Osnat, on the other hand, wants to be an independent businesswoman. She hasn’t decided in what area yet, but she already knows that she will make money and not be a burden to society or her parents. She has come a long way — to the point where she can express her own opinion and even dares to speak with people she doesn't know. “I was a very closed child, but since I've been at the house my self-confidence has increased, I'm open to people, don't feel pressured. I know how to overcome problems. When I came here I didn't have any relationship with my father. He was unemployed and made life hell for us. We fought all the time. I'm not really crazy about my home, and if it weren't for my mother I would have left a long time ago. I have two brothers from my father, and he has two grown-up children from a former marriage. When they come, they don't even say hello to us. There's a lot of tension. I have a very short fuse. I have a tendency to throw things and to curse, like my mother. Now, instead of taking my anger out on someone, I leave the house. I have a special place in the neighborhood where I hide and no one sees me. I stay there till I calm down. Today, thanks to the “warm home,” I can control myself. I listen to rap and rock music and calm down. I discovered that I like to read books, especially novels. I set up a small library of 50 books in my clothes closet — a small world that I built for myself. No, not a small world, a big world.”
A New Brand for the WIZO.UK

For 80 years, WIZO’s founding federation was known as the Federation of Women Zionists and as British WIZO. To update WIZO’s image for our dynamic times, and after serious market research, the federation is now called WIZO.UK.

Marcus Fielding
Executive Director, WIZO.UK
New times call for new marketing strategies. Our re-branding project was driven by recognizing that to capture the hearts and minds of potential members and supporters in our community, we must first carry out qualitative research to try to discover peoples’ perceptions of WIZO - the images it conjures up in their minds, what they consider to be WIZO’s purpose, why women join or do not join as members.

As expected, in many ways the information gleaned from the research has confirmed much of what we had already believed:

- Most members joined WIZO for social reasons.
- WIZO is perceived as a charity for mainly ‘older’ women.
- WIZO seems to do so much that its messages can be confusing.

However, there were some findings which were surprising. For example, whilst many respondents confirmed that they joined WIZO for social reasons, few recorded that it was support for Israel that brought them on board. However, when asked about what most motivates WIZO members, commitment to Israel scored the highest. Another surprising, if not alarming fact, was how few people realise the vast scale of WIZO’s operation in Israel. This included members who have been involved for many years!

The above findings, together with many more, have given us guidance on how we need to proceed to position ourselves as a leading charity in the UK’s Jewish voluntary sector.

New Logo / New Direction

As part of our strategy to reach out more to younger people, we have re-branded and are now called WIZO.UK. It is crucial that we attract younger audiences to WIZO. We know that the organisation is perceived by many younger people to be rather dated and not relevant to them. Clearly, changing our name from British WIZO to WIZO.UK and changing our logo will not suddenly result in a flood of new members and donors. This is just one element of a strategy that will take some time to build and which also, very importantly, will provide us with a much closer alignment with World WIZO. Our new logo, letter headings and other literature will use the same or very similar colours and fonts to those used by World WIZO.

Plans are also progressing to transfer the hosting of our Web site to World WIZO — this will be a huge advantage in communicating the benefits of WIZO to existing members and also to potential members. It will also be more cost effective.

One thing is for sure, we cannot afford to remain static, neither can we allow our membership levels and fundraising results to diminish. It is undeniable that the needs in Israel are not diminishing. Indeed, they are increasing, as more and more Israelis depend upon WIZO’s services on a daily basis. Where do you think we would be in 10 or 15 years time if we do not attempt to change? We are working within a very competitive marketplace, and we must find compelling arguments to both persuade people to join WIZO as members and canvass supporters to donate much needed funds for WIZO projects in Israel.

To summarise, the changes we have brought about and will continue to develop have been driven by need — this is not a whim of change for changes’ sake. One of the main objectives is to spend more time, energy and resources on reaching out to our community, particularly to younger audiences.

Getting the Message Across

It is vital that we get the message out with regard to the scale of WIZO’s operation.

- How many people out there know that WIZO’s annual turnover is approximately $100,000,000?
- How many are aware that 1 in 8 Israelis benefits directly from WIZO’s services?
- How many realise that WIZO is one of the largest providers of welfare and educational services, in partnership with the government of the day — that WIZO runs 800 projects nationwide?
- How many people know that WIZO is one of Israel’s largest employers?

Communicating these messages, explaining just how desperately the services which we support are needed by thousands of Israeli families, is our greatest challenge. How appropriate then is the new slogan appearing under our new logo — WIZO.UK  Caring for the people of Israel.

WIZO.UK Vision & Mission Statement

**OUR VISION**

Our vision is that secure, fulfilled and useful citizens should emerge from nurturing, self-sufficient and supportive families.

**OUR MISSION**

Our mission is to help support and strengthen families in Israel.

As the largest Jewish women’s network in Great Britain and Ireland, we pursue these goals by involving our members and supporters, through education and fundraising, in support of vital social welfare projects in Israel.

Our projects are targeted at the most vulnerable sections of society and respond directly to their specific needs, thereby giving our members the opportunity to identify with, and make a real difference to, the quality of life of Israeli women and their families.
Aviv’s History — How it all Began

In 1957, during a mission to Latin America, Mrs. Faye Grove-Pollak, then Head of the World WIZO Department of Organization and Education, realized that the “generation gap” often prevented young women from joining their mothers and grandmothers as WIZO members. She decided to take immediate action, and brought together a group of young women who were to be a continuing generation and a source of future leadership. She called this group “Aviv” - Spring. Mrs. Grove-Pollak continued forming groups as she travelled from one country to another. When she witnessed the positive response to her initiative, she suggested to the other federations that they, too, establish Aviv groups.

The founding of Aviv and its success in establishing a younger generation in the movement greatly improved WIZO’s image. WIZO had succeeded where others had failed.

In 1965, the first regional European Aviv meeting took place in Paris, with sixty-one Aviv delegates arriving from nine European countries.

Before the beginning of the 15th World WIZO Conference which took place in Israel in 1966, the First International Aviv Rally was held, preceded by a ten-day seminar-tour involving 46 Aviv delegates from ten different countries. The Rally, a day before the Conference, included the overseas members and 100 Aviv delegates from Israel.

From 1972, Rachel Limon continued the tradition of Aviv begun by Faye Grove-Pollak. Rachel presented a program to World WIZO which included the following important principles:

- That the International WIZO Aviv Seminars should become an annual tradition
- That they be held around Jerusalem Day
- That the participation of delegates be sponsored by the Federations
- That participation in the Seminar serve as a reward for promising talent.

In 1979 the first INTERNATIONAL WIZO AVIV SEMINAR took place in Israel, establishing a tradition which continues every year to this day (except those years in which there is a World WIZO Conference). The Seminar program includes workshops on the subjects of Jewish identity, Zionism, organization, leadership, and fundraising. Tours are included to acquaint the Aviv chaverot with WIZO institutions throughout Israel. Emphasis is placed on creating strong emotional bonds among all the Seminar participants, and an important highlight of the Seminar is its nature as a unifying experience.

This year’s International WIZO Aviv Seminar will take place from November 14-18, at the Dan Panorama Hotel in Tel Aviv. We look forward to seeing you there!

Aviv’s Voice

This has been a busy and very successful Aviv summer. The number of new Aviv groups encourages me and makes me very proud to be part of WIZO. Event ideas are being shared worldwide, and our Federations are putting on an extremely high calibre of fundraising events. Thanks yet again to World WIZO in Israel for excellent support and publicity materials, which we can incorporate in our literature.

Let us hope that Aviv continues to blossom and grow and that we will forge even more wonderful new friendships and contacts around the world, sharing our ideas and joining together to build a better and stronger movement. We are the future of WIZO and we are needed now more than ever. Having had such a great opportunity to meet many fantastic Aviv women from around the world at the January 2004 World WIZO EGM, I am now looking forward to greeting and welcoming many dear friends and colleagues at the International Aviv Seminar in Israel from November 14th to 18th, 2004.

This will provide a superb forum for us to network and share ideas, as well as to learn how to improve membership recruitment, fundraising and to raise our Aviv profile within our communities. I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to take time out from your busy schedules to join us.

At the start of the New Year 5765, our thoughts continue to be with all of those who have not been able to celebrate with a full heart. Families in Israel continue to suffer hardship as a result of terrorism and the economic situation, and we pray for peace, good health for all, prosperity and a blessed New Year free from further sorrow.

Over 600,000 children in Israel are now living below the poverty line and more and more families will be turning to WIZO for help in order to alleviate their hardship, stem the cycle of poverty and enhance their quality of life.

Together may we continue to grow and support one another, inspired by our passion, our care and our commitment to the future of WIZO.

Warmest regards,

Ronit Collis
Aviv Representative to the World WIZO Executive
Since Rachel Singer is a frequent visitor to Israel, we decided to meet at the Hilton Hotel, overlooking her beloved Mediterranean Sea. For Rachel, a combination of urban action and the calm endlessness of the blue Mediterranean is ideal. And she loves wandering around the streets of Tel Aviv.

Tell us a little about your background. Were you born in Germany?
I was born in Germany, in 1947 in Munich after the war. Both of my parents are Holocaust survivors - they were in a concentration camp in Poland and a slave labor camp near Munich. They were liberated, met and got married in Munich. I grew up there, and when I was nine years old we moved to Stuttgart where I finished school.

Did you go to a general German school?
Yes, at that time, there were no Jewish schools, neither in Munich nor in Stuttgart. The only thing we had in most of the communities was Jewish kindergartens, which I attended, and later we had courses in Jewish studies, Hebrew and Jewish history, that were given by the Jewish community.

I imagine there was a very small Jewish community at the time.
There was a bigger community in Munich, but Stuttgart was quite small - about 700 Jews altogether, counting the suburbs. It was a little, intimate community, where everyone knew everybody else. There was a group of about 10-15 youngsters my age, 30 counting those a little older or younger, and it was nice.

It's interesting that you describe it as “nice.” People are naturally curious to know what it was like growing up in Germany after the Holocaust, after WWII? Did you feel any anti-Semitism?
During my entire childhood and youth, I really wasn’t confronted by any anti-Semitic issues or situations. But everyone knew I was a Jew. Even before anyone asked, I always declared very clearly that I am a Jew. Of course, there weren’t many Jews in my school so I was a bit exotic. I didn’t look like the average German, so when I met people, they always tried to find out where I came from, but were ashamed to ask directly.

The small Jewish community there was like a family. When I was 13, I became a member of a Zionist movement, and two years later a madricha (counselor). We had a very active Jewish life, were always together with the rabbi and teachers, and went to synagogue on Saturdays for special services for children. We had breakfast and lunch there together with the other kids, it was a good childhood.

When you went to the general school, did they teach about the Holocaust and the Nazi period, or did they ignore it?
They actively tried to avoid the issue. When we had history classes, history stopped in 1920, and it started again in 1946. The period in between was spoken about very briefly by the teachers. But since all the teachers and the pupils knew I was Jewish, we did talk a little bit about it, but it wasn’t really profound.

I hear that you speak good Hebrew. Where did that come from?
I finished school in 1967, and went on aliya to Israel. I stayed in Israel for two years, studying at university, one year at Bar-Ilan and one year at Tel Aviv University. Then I got married to an Israeli and we moved to Germany. His family had decided to move there, and he wanted to join them, though I myself didn’t want to go. We decided to live in Frankfurt, a bigger city with a larger Jewish community. I already knew a lot of people...
Interview - Rachel Singer

my age there from the Zionist movement.

At which point did you establish contact with WIZO?
Very early, I believe in 1970. I already knew about WIZO because my mom and aunt had been active in WIZO Stuttgart, so I was sort of raised with it. When I moved back to Frankfurt, I had the feeling that I have to do something for Israel due to my Zionist upbringing. So, together with two friends, we decided to create a WIZO Aviv group in Frankfurt. We were a group of 20-30 young women, and we started with all the WIZO projects — fashion shows, coffee gatherings, lectures, etc. and just a year later (laughs), everyone was pregnant and had children.

The first International Aviv Seminar that I attended in Israel was in 1983. This was after I was already working 13 years for WIZO. I came with a friend, and we thought — “Oh my God!, we’ll be the oldest people here!” But it turned out we were quite average in age. There were even some young grandmothers! It was a wonderful seminar, organized by Rachel Limon, and a very interesting group of people, and I enjoyed it very much. I was pregnant then with my third child.

And now you have become the president of WIZO Germany. How do you see the challenges that are facing you in Germany today?
I think that the challenges we face are similar to those in the other countries. I don’t think it’s a unique situation. Everyone is doing their best to recruit new members, particularly the younger generation, which is not easy. It’s a major challenge to create new WIZO groups in Germany. We have a special situation, with over 100,000 Jews in Germany.

It’s one of the few growing Jewish communities around the world.
Exactly. Most of them are new immigrants from Russia. I believe that only about 18-20,000 Jews remain here from the old-post war Jewish community. The rest are new immigrants, and it is a real challenge to bring these people into WIZO. After leaving Russian and other Eastern European countries, they are in the process of adapting to a new place, to a new economic situation, work etc. They began coming in 1989 and many of them already speak German, but they don’t have the same connection to Israel as Jews who survived the Holocaust. The Russians weren’t allowed to show that they are Jewish and have feelings for Israel. They have to learn about Israel and the Jewish religion.

Today, we are succeeding to a greater degree than ever before to attract new members from this community. We have a new group in Darmstadt for 5-6 years, and most of them are from the former Soviet Union. We also established a new group near Frankfurt, in Offenbach, where about 90% of the community is Russian.

Where is the center of WIZO Germany?
The center is in Frankfurt. The president is there, and most of the executive members live there. The center was in Berlin when Lala Susskind was president. When Helen Israel was president it was in Dusseldorf.

WIZO Germany has a wonderful executive, we all work together - it’s genuine teamwork and not a one-woman show. This is very important, the best way to do things. For example, in WIZO Frankfurt, we never had a president. All of the executive was on the same level and worked together. Since this is what I was used to, I try to do this in the national executive as well. Whenever I go on a mission to another city, someone from the executive always comes with me so that they will get to know the members, the problems, etc.

We see a wave of anti-Semitism in many European countries today. Is there anti-Semitism in Germany?
Of course there is. It’s not only in Europe, it’s all over the world, especially given the political situation between the Palestinians and the Israelis. But I wouldn’t say that it has increased in Germany. It’s not as bad as France or England. In Germany there are no fears of a return to the Nazi period. Many of the politicians are very aware of what happened, and are afraid that people in other countries will accuse them of being anti-Semitic.

“In Germany there are no fears of a return to the Nazi period. Many of the politicians are very aware of what happened, and they are afraid that people in other countries will accuse them of being anti-Semitic”
How did you feel attending the 23rd EGM this past January?

We had 10 delegates at the conference and it’s always exciting to meet with all the WIZO women from around the world. It’s like one big family, we have the same problems, and more or less the same vision. We understand each other. My only criticism is that the program is too intense - we don’t have enough time for discussion after the interesting panels. We wrote a few letters about this — and perhaps one day things will change.

WIZO Germany has a special connection to Beit Heuss. Maybe you can say a few words about that.

Beit Heuss is our biggest institution in Israel, and it’s very special to us. I think that no other institution is doing this type of family therapy work — single parents, families with drug-addicted children, women whose husbands are in prison, women whose husbands died in the army. Everyone who participates in these week long programs feels that she/he is getting very special attention, and they are not alone with their problems. They have lectures, social and psychological workers, a really protected environment. It’s amazing to see how much they benefit from being away only such a short time from their home environment. Beit Heuss is very well known in Germany, in both the Jewish and non-Jewish community.

How do your children and your partner feel about your WIZO work?

I’m afraid you’ll have to ask them (laughs). As a working woman, my time is divided. A day has only 24 hours - my days sometimes have 36 hours. Now I have grown up children and they understand, but I’m sure that when they were younger, it may have bothered them that much of my time was spent on WIZO matters. All my kids speak Hebrew, and my partner is helping me wherever he can. Sometimes he says “you don’t need a secretary at home — you’ve got me (laughs).”

WIZO Germany’s Special History

In 1907 after the 8th Zionist Congress in The Hague, a group of German Zionist women created the “Jewish Women’s League for Cultural Work in Palestine” to improve the social and economic status of Jewish women in Palestine. The “Cultural League” brought together women from all over the world, united by a common task. In 1920 after World WIZO was founded in London, the “Cultural League” — which became an affiliate of WIZO - continued its own work and sent all kinds of goods to WIZO in Palestine. With more than half a million Jews in Germany, “Der Bund Zionistischer Frauen” (The Women’s Zionist League) was founded in 1923 in Dresden. They did important local welfare work in addition to work for Eretz Israel. It too was affiliated with WIZO. By 1927, the “Bund’s” membership had increased to almost 1000, but fundraising for WIZO was still in the hands of the “Cultural League”. This made things complicated for the WIZO Executive in London. Therefore, in March 1929, the complete merger of both organizations was decided upon, and Mrs. Jenny Blumenfeld became the first president of WIZO Germany.

After Hitler came to power and the exodus of Jews from Germany before WWII began, Recha Freier, former President of WIZO Bulgaria and later a member of the WIZO Executive Committee in Germany, began to carry out her “Youth Aliyah” plan, even though she came up against untold difficulties and opposition. Her program saved the lives of thousands of young girls and boys from being killed by the Nazis.

WIZO in the Postwar DP Camps

Immediately after the war was over, in 1946, the first WIZO groups were founded in the Displaced Persons camps. Within the first year there were 300 members in 30 branches in the DP camps.

WIZO’s work in the DP-camps consisted mainly of organizing kindergartens, infant welfare stations, caring for pregnant women and nursing mothers. Later on many other courses were introduced such as sewing, mending, knitting, toy making and lessons in Hebrew and English.

It is remarkable that the memory of WIZO, after such indescribable years of suffering came back to the Jewish women in the post-war DP-camps. It was this memory of WIZO in the past which became the driving force for the spontaneous creation of new WIZO groups under the difficult conditions in the camps. The first group to be created outside of the camps was in Hamburg in 1947 with the help of the mother federation, British WIZO. In the years to follow other groups were founded in Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich. In 1960 Fay Grove-Pollak of the World WIZO Executive succeeded in re-establishing the WIZO Federation of Germany, and Hellen Israel became the first president.

Today there are 10 active WIZO groups in Germany with 1600 members. We support 12 institutions in Israel, among them the unique Beit Heuss Family Therapy Center in Herzliyah, a donation of the “Müttergenesungswerk” in Germany in the honor of Theodor Heuss, the first President of the German Republic.
A Different kind of Journey

For eight days members of WIZO Israel visited Poland on “a journey in the footsteps of a federation that disappeared” — most of the chaverot were exterminated during WWII. WIZO Israel Chairperson Yochi Feller, who initiated the journey, intends to make it a tradition.

Iris Harpaz
Photos: Int Levy, Tova Kornfeld

The last day in Poland: Remembrance ceremony at the Rappaport Memorial in Warsaw
“Everyone who has stepped into the gates of hell has a qualitatively different feeling,” says WIZO Israel chavera Rivka Galor after her return from Poland.

I looked at the people who sat there in the meeting room of the WIZO branch in Herzlia Pituach, discussing the impact of their journey to the past. Among them I saw the generation of the survivors, the few who are still with us. I met Clara Shatz, a survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau, whose parents, sister and two daughters were killed in the Holocaust, who returned to Poland for the first time in 60 years in order to gather some earth and stones, so that when the day comes they will be scattered around her grave in Israel, and she will be able to reunite with her loved ones in the next world. “The Holocaust doesn’t pass with age,” she says. “When I was younger, I was stronger, but with old-age everything re-emerges. I have no control over it and the feelings flood in and overwhelm me,” she says in tears. “The strongest memory I have of my parents is the chimney of black smoke they disappeared through.”

Also in the room was Shulamit Korovnik, 78, a survivor of Maidanek and other camps. This was her 14th journey to Poland, and this September she will go there again. “It’s not enough for me,” she says, “there’s something inside me that needs to go there again and again and again. My childhood, my memories and my family are there. These journeys are a release for me.”

Sitting next to them is Sapir Shmueli, a 17-year-old girl from the WIZO Nir Ha’emek Youth Village, who knew little about the Holocaust and whose parents were born in Israel. This is how she explains her decision to travel to Poland: “The Holocaust is a part of us, it’s an experience I wanted to feel it as part of this country, as part of the story of being a Jew. The great sadness of the survivors who were with us was difficult for me. Every one of us has an obligation to take this journey. It made me stronger, because we have a strong country and something like that will never happen again. I also had the privilege of getting to know this special group of women, who in my eyes are an example to us all.”

Responsibility and Historic Opportunity

Yochi Feller, Chairperson of WIZO Israel, who initiated the journey to Poland, does not come from a family of survivors. She grew up in a Tel Aviv neighborhood many of whose residents were Holocaust survivors, and the issue of the Holocaust accompanied her throughout her many years as an educator and teacher.

“Two years ago I traveled to Poland,” says Yochi. “The journey changed me as a human being, and I decided then that WIZO too must participate in this journey. Immediately after I was elected Chairperson of WIZO Israel I decided to research WIZO’s activity during the Holocaust and the period that preceded it, and discovered a wealth of material that often gave me the chills.

“I discovered that everything we do today in the 50 WIZO federations, the women of WIZO Poland did then. I was very moved to see the stationery with the WIZO logo, and then I...”
came across a telegram sent by these wonderful women to the British federation with a request for help and rescue. In a certain sense I understood that this was both a responsibility and an historic opportunity, and I made a decision that this would be one of my first missions as Chairperson — journeys to Poland in the wake of the federation that disappeared, bringing these wonderful women and their work back into history.

“When I stood in that Polish square where the WIZO women had demonstrated against the British White Paper (that restricted immigration to Palestine — ed.) or when I understood that after the Holocaust the WIZO women had mobilized to locate 5,000 Jewish children who were living as Christians and sent them to Israel, an amazing demonstration of dedication and female heroism in light of all the suffering that they themselves had gone through — my recognition and understanding of the importance of the journey became even sharper.”

**Ambassadors of an International Movement**

In the course of the journey, the WIZO delegation met with the Israeli ambassador to Poland and with the vice premier of Poland, a meeting that filled Feller with pride. “This was the first time that a representative of the Polish government met with representatives of WIZO, from the international organization, and it was especially moving that these were representatives of WIZO Israel.”

“We had been warned that the vice premier was very busy and would not be able to give us much time, and then a young, beautiful and impressive woman arrived, sat with us for an hour and a half, and conducted a discussion with us about Israel the Holocaust and female Jewish leadership. She asked about WIZO’s leadership courses, which she had heard about at the Golda Meir Institute where she had been a few months before on a visit to Israel. I was impressed that with all the stereotypes about the backwardness of the East European countries, the number of women in the Polish parliament is over 30%, and I was astonished that women play such a large role in political and public life.”

“The meeting at the residence of the Israeli ambassador was also moving and filled us with Israeli pride and patriotism. It was a moment of sanity to discover during the course of a journey filled with insanity, that in the place where the darkest acts in the world were committed, our persecuted people have a representative.”

**What can you tell us about the delegation?**

“It was a very mixed group, ranging from a 17-year-old girl to 80-year-old women. Before we left I was a little apprehensive about this, but as the journey progressed I realized the huge contribution made by the Holocaust survivors who had joined us, who empowered and enriched us with their knowledge of the place and its history.

“Most of the group members were middle-aged and we all felt very strongly the warmth and protective presence that we have today with the existence of the State of Israel. In spite of the terrorism, the suicide attacks and the economic situation which make life in Israel difficult, it became clear to us there that this is the only country we have, and we returned determined to increase our contributions to this country.”
Etty Ashtar, Chairperson of WIZO Israel’s Training, Development and Culture Department which organized the journey — who for 15 years organized ceremonies and trips to Poland, but never participated in them — went this year for the first time. She witnessed how a year’s work comes to fruition in eight days, and the importance of planning and organization. “This journey was the first to be organized by WIZO Israel,” she says. “Fifty-four people set out from Israel and in a way we haven’t really returned, because this kind of journey is the beginning of something different within each individual.

“Being Alone with Mother”
Avital Blumental, Chairperson of the Family Welfare Department, went on the journey with her mother Rivka Shenhav, who was born in the Polish town of Shtulin. In her house the subject of the Holocaust had been taboo, something that wasn’t talked about, and thus “it was an amazing experience being alone with mother, cut off from the rest of the family. She told me stories that I had never heard, about the cousin who had survived the Holocaust and came to us in Israel. My parents gave her more than they gave to me and my brothers, even though they had very little. I remember that as a child I didn’t understand why they gave this cousin apples every day, and me only once in a while. This cousin, I discovered on the journey, had survived under a pile of corpses of the people of her village.

“For me the Holocaust changed from being an historic concept to something personal, beyond the private tragedy of the girl who grew up with no grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles or aunts.”

The journey lasted eight days, but Rosental says that it didn’t end in Poland: “In a certain sense this was the beginning of another journey — private, personal, for understanding my roots. My mother, for example, wants to go back again, to look for the village where she was born.”

Yochi Feller sums up: “It is very clear to me that the journey of the WIZO women of Israel to Poland will continue, and I hope it will become a tradition, both because the generation of survivors is dwindling, and because of the strengthening of the Israeli and Jewish identity which this journey provides. I hope that more and more people who are afraid to take the journey to Poland will agree to go as part of a group whose members support one another, a group which allows the value of solidarity to exist in a very clear and concrete way during the journey and also afterwards in each person’s own community.”

“I made a decision that journeys to Poland - in the wake of the federation that disappeared, bringing these wonderful women and their work back into history — would be one of my first missions as Chairperson” Yochi Feller, Chairperson WIZO Israel
The History of WIZO Poland

The first group of WIZO Poland was established in 1922 in Warsaw by Dr. Salomea Levite. In 1927 the three WIZO centers of Warsaw, Krakow, and Lvov, and their leaderships, were united into one Federation.

The training farm was in Czykow, a large private farm, and the WIZO girls who underwent the training were called the “training platoons.” This activity proved to be very useful, as they received permits to enter Palestine as agricultural workers and were thus saved from the extermination camps.

By 1939 WIZO Poland numbered 10,000 members organized into 102 groups. In the summer of 1939 the federation began to prepare for the war. The WIZO leadership met in Warsaw and together with a group of activists prepared a plan that was to be implemented when the war broke out, including instructions concerning the destruction of the offices, archives and libraries, and recommended norms of behavior for underground activity during the period of the Nazi occupation.

WIZO Activities During the War

The first meeting to enable WIZO to reorganize in the wartime conditions was initiated by Felicia Tsipper, the head of the Lodz group. They decided to devote themselves to bettering the miserable living conditions of the Jewish population. The volunteer work included the collection and distribution of clothing and shoes, arranging suitable work for people (when the Nazis forced all the Jews in the ghetto to work for them), supplying medical equipment and health services during periods of plague, supplying food supplements to children, arranging hospitalization for Jews from Vienna, Berlin and Prague who arrived in the ghetto and maintaining children’s centers to save children above the age of eight from being sent to do hard labor.

The women of WIZO Lodz also established WIZO for young women within the ghetto itself, and cultural activities continued in the home of Felicia Tsipper. Weekly lectures were held which provided the women with information and enabled them to be in touch with what was happening around them. There was a course in Hebrew poetry to warm the heart, preparations for the holidays and memorial days for Herzl and Bialik. Women read Hebrew literature, discussed issues relating to Zionism and sang “Hatikvah” without fear, despite the fact that Tsipper’s home was located alongside the barbed wire fence of the ghetto near the Nazi guards.

WIZO after the Liberation

Surrounded by the ruins of the past, the WIZO women tried to return a measure of wholeness to the destroyed lives of tens of thousands. In her first letter after the liberation the WIZO president wrote: “Thousands of orphaned children are desperate for the gentle and pleasant touch of a woman. Masses of women who remain alone are now seeking a creative way back to life. It is our obligation to create the conditions that will put an end to the feelings of loneliness and sorrow. At the same time we must help Jewish women reorganize towards active community lives. We must increase their role in the rehabilitation of Jewish survivors, and must also mobilize all our energy for the general struggle for the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine.”

With the exception of Felicia Tsipper and Alice Keall, the leaders of the group, and those who had settled in Palestine, not a single member of the former Lodz group survived.

WIZO began to organize in every city that had been under German occupation. One of the most important tasks was to obtain information about WIZO activities in Palestine and other countries. The cultural work among survivors included meetings and lectures to the ever-growing community of women. Courses in English and Hebrew were conducted on a weekly basis.

By July 1946 WIZO had managed to establish eleven shelters which housed almost 1,000 children and teenagers, and within another month succeeded in opening an additional 14 shelters. It wasn’t only these 5,000 penniless orphans who needed food, shelter, clothing and education. Thousands of other children remained without the basic needs for existence, and some of them, many of whom still lived in the ruins of buildings, began, thanks to the activities of the WIZO women, to slowly return to mental and physical health. The condition of the survivors returning to Poland was particularly grave, virtually all of them being broken human beings. Despite the fact that most of them tried to leave as quickly as possible, it was still necessary to feed and take care of them. WIZO activists also aided women who remained alone, women who were disabled in both body and mind, and also organized summer housing for some 250 girls and boys.

Although WIZO Poland was represented at the 1946 World WIZO Congress in Basle, the short-lived awakening after World War II came to an end when Poland became a Communist country. Although WIZO was reopened in Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia after the end of the Cold War, it has not been revived in Poland.

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Dedication of the WIZO Community Centre of Youth and Communications

The new WIZO Community Centre of Youth and Communications, in the name of Dr. Helena Kagan, dedicated on May 12th, will serve the residents of neighborhoods Katamon Het and Tet. The renovations and rebuilding of the centre were made possible thanks to a generous donation from British WIZO in cooperation with the Jerusalem Municipality.

Honored guests included Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry, Trade, Labour and Communications Ehud Olmert, Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski, World WIZO President Helena Glaser, World WIZO Executive Chairperson Tova Ben Dov, WIZO UK Chairman Michelle Vogel, Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel Rabbi Shlomo Moshe Amar, Susi Bradfield, a lifelong patron of WIZO UK, Leila Wynbourne, Past Chairman, WIZO UK, Ruth Sotnick, President WIZO UK, British UK President Sarah Glyn, participants in the British WIZO Lifeline Legacy Tour 2004, Kagan Centre Director Yochai Rottenberg, WIZO Jerusalem Chairperson Simi Mor and representatives of Katamon Het and Tet.

Since the creation of WIZO," said Helena Glaser, "the British WIZO involvement in the life of Jerusalem has been intense. Without the commitment, love, devotion, vision and the determination of Ruth Sotnick, we would probably not be standing here today. Ruth took up the challenge and systematically worked on every aspect of making this dream into a reality."

Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who served for many years as mayor of Jerusalem, said "I am happy to have been a partner in the decisions that led to the building of this special place. For years I have known that we can rely on WIZO to build day care centres for the city, centres for the treatment and prevention of violence in the family, centres for the aged, community centres and anything else which the city needs. When WIZO women need something, they know how to fight for it, and woe betide whoever does not agree to their polite requests."

Mayor Uri Lupolianski said that we always need to think of ways to give the youth an "appetite" to be in a place where they can increase their knowledge and grow up in an educational surrounding. Sephardic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Moshe Amar also spoke, and Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi Yona Metzger sent a warm message. Zion Iluz, Chairman of the Katamon Het and Tet authority thanked the visitors who had come from England in the name of all the residents of the neighborhoods.

Tova Ben Dov said that she was "excited and proud to be at the opening of the WIZO Kagan Centre. I thank everyone who played a part in the establishment of the centre, especially Susi Bradfield, whose donation is part of her embracing of the residents of Jerusalem."

Natanella Rabi, a graduate of the centre, explained that she had spent eleven years in the centre prior to its renovations and rebuilding. "The centre helped me with my studies and became my second home. Here I received attention, love, care and daily meals. I knew that I could come here whenever I wanted to. I was followed by my brother and my sister. This place is full of good memories for me and I thank WIZO, British WIZO and the city of Jerusalem for giving other children, as well as myself, the opportunity to progress, just as I did."

Susi Bradfield said that "Everyone has good memories which he carries throughout life. I believe that these are my memories which are filled with magic. I will remember today always. I was a young mother when I began hearing about the work that WIZO does and I wanted to help. We grew up in the Holocaust and me, my late husband and our families, never really recovered. Today, as I stand in this auditorium which is to be called in the name of my parents and the parents of my husband, I have been joined by their grandchildren, great grandchildren, and many other relatives who have joined me at this moving event. Thank you all for enabling me to be a partner in this project."
Two outstanding members of the Chilean parliament recently visited Israel, and were hosted by World WIZO President Helena Glaser, who was accompanied by Pnina Mellor. They were MP Maria Antonieta Saa Diaz and MP Carolina Toha Morales, who are known throughout Chile as enlightened, progressive parliamentarians, in the forefront of the struggle for women’s rights, family rights and human rights in general. The MPs were particularly impressed by their visit to a WIZO battered women’s shelter.

There are 15 female members of parliament in Chile, the same number as in Israel. We considered their visit to Israel and WIZO to be of the greatest importance, and they were excellent representatives of the Chilean parliament.

It was explained to them that WIZO in Chile is a movement of women that advances culture, Jewish tradition and social welfare via the CEFI (Committee of Jewish Women) in Chile. WIZO also helps to run a number of municipal schools, such as the State of Israel and Golda Meir schools. WIZO operates in Santiago neighborhoods, centers for mothers, the scouts, libraries, alcoholics rehabilitation centers and a hospital.

WIZO Chile is a member of ASONG (Association of NGO organizations) and a partner in SEP-NAM (National Service for Women). This year, on International Women’s Day, WIZO organized a special meeting in the home of the Israeli ambassador.

Helena Glaser told the guests that there are three WIZO day care centers in Israel that bear the name of Chile — in Ramat Eshkol, Ma’aleh Adumim and Kiryat Motzkin. She also described WIZO’s activities for battered women.

At the WIZO Battered Women’s Shelter, where they were received by director Rivka Neuman. The guests were particularly impressed by the openness they experienced there. One of the women in the shelter described the violence she had experienced at home, and how WIZO’s shelter had helped her to be rehabilitated. The MPs noted that in Chile there is not enough of a consciousness about this issue, and they asked how the women arrive at the shelter. They were also impressed by the professionalism of the staff, and asked if there are academic courses that prepare people for such work, and what laws were on the books to deal with issues of family violence. Unlike the current situation in Chile, Israel does have academic studies to help prepare people for such work.

At the conclusion of their visit, which was held under the auspices of the Foreign Ministry, the two MPs said that the visit, and the accompanying explanations, really helped to expand their horizons. Their perception was that the situation of women in Israel was better than the situation in Chile, and they hoped to be able to apply some of things they had learned back home.
New York

Children for Our Children Spring Fashion Show

WIZO New York organized a very successful Children For Our Children Spring Fashion Show and Luncheon at The Pierre Hotel, with close to 100 children participating. It was organized under the leadership of Gail Perl, Chairman of WIZO New York and chaired by Edward and Joyce Misrahi. Azita Aghravi, Gabriela Shnay and Jackie Siegal chaired the Benefit Committee; Marci S. Waterman and Debbie Cooper chaired the Journal; Esther Chetrit, Kris Fuchs and Pauline Sitzer chaired the Raffle Committee; Mireille Manocherian and Victoria Sakhai were the Fashion Show Coordinators and Carol Ostrow Hochfelder choreographed the Fashion Show.

Evelyn Sommer, President of WIZO USA, presented Wall of Life Awards to Joyce and Edward Misrahi and Caren and Arturo Constantiner, and expressed the deep gratitude of World WIZO to Gail Siegal for her support of the organization.

By participating in the event, our WIZO New York children demonstrated a significant and moving bond of love and friendship with their counterparts, the children of the WIZO Nir Haemek School in Israel.
From Haifa to New York

Dr. David Alexander, Director of the Neri Bloomfield School of Design in Haifa, was the guest speaker at the reception at the home of Nurit Kahane-Haase and Werner Haase. Dr. Alexander gave an informative talk about the great efforts of WIZO to educate the coming generation of professionals in Israel.

Anti-Poverty Emergency Campaign

Mira Sofer, WIZO USA Vice President for Development, led a successful Anti-Poverty Emergency Passover “Tzedaka” Campaign in Long Island, Westchester and New Jersey to help fund vital services for women and children in WIZO centers that include providing hot meals and distribution of food packages to families for the Sabbath and holidays.

New Jersey

Children’s Spring Fashion Show

Under the leadership of Chapter Chairs Bat Sheva Halpern and Ariela Spialter, WIZO New Jersey held its second annual Children’s Spring Fashion Show in Short Hills, New Jersey. This successful event, a Sunday brunch for the entire family, was organized by Event Chair Sheree Mandelbaum with the support of her committee: Alice Charnofsky, Luisa Finberg, Shoshana Hirsch, Rebecca Kaplan, Sherri Lahav, Sima Lambert, Carol Lugashi, Debbie Maurer-Hollaender, Neely May, Susan Moskowitz, Barbara Reuven, Karen Rosen, and Eve Wasserman. Debbie Maurer-Hollaender chaired the chapter’s Casino Night in June. The festive event featured a shopping fair and musical performances by talented amateurs.

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Washington

Celebrating Italy

WIZO Washington held its annual Life Membership Luncheon in May at the Dennis and Phillip Ratner Museum in Bethesda. The luncheon was a huge success with over eighty women attending, 25 of them new members. The theme of the luncheon was “Celebrate Italy in All Its Glory” and featured Italian food, handbags, Venetian glass judaica and fine Italian ceramics. Gail Perl, Chair of WIZO New York, gave an eloquent and inspiring talk about her recent trip to Israel and her visit to the WIZO Nir Haemek School. The successful event was co-chaired by Helene Hendricks and Susan Levin under the leadership of the chapter’s newly installed Co-Presidents Margie Blumberg, Annette Forester and Nancy Reed. Proceeds from the luncheon went towards new playground equipment, two new air conditioners, and the annual funding commitments to WIZO Washington’s day care center in Rehovot.

Los Angeles

Annual LA Luncheon

Under the leadership of Western Region Vice President Malka Fogel and Barbara Limon, the Annual Luncheon of WIZO Los Angeles was held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles. The guest speaker was Carol Aminoff, Senior Consultant to AIPAC and a political and philanthropic consultant to members of the business and entertainment community. The luncheon was chaired by Ruth Davidov, Orly Maciborski, Nava Marmur and Shirley Sherman and included a fashion show by Simin. Malka Fogel and Board member Gisele Joffe presented a special award to WIZO supporter David Kahan.
Membership Drive

WIZO Los Angeles Membership Chairperson Louise Collin recently spearheaded a campaign to increase the membership of the Chapter. The response has been most successful.

We are happy to welcome the following ladies to our membership:

Diamond Members: Robin Broidy and Roxanne Kroll.

Florida

23 Bat Mitzvah Girls

Once again, WIZO helped twenty-three girls become Bat Mitzvah during a magnificent ceremony organized by WIZO Ilanit-Tikva, one of our Aviv Chapters headed by their Chairperson Vicky Abadi. Under the careful and loving supervision of Jenny Ivcher Klinbaum and Mariana Wiznitzer, Event Co-Chairpersons, as well as their wonderful Working Committee, each participant attended a five-month period of classes and shared unforgettable experiences together. They learned from carefully chosen rabbis and teachers the meaning of our great tradition. They visited children less fortunate than themselves, brought them toys and gave them hope. They sang together and understood the importance of this pivotal moment in their lives.

The Bat Mitzvah ceremony was held at Aventura Turnberry Synagogue. More than 800 people filled out the beautifully decorated sanctuary. Among them were visiting Venezuela Chairperson Ena Roptkoff and her husband, who shared the evening with WIZO Florida President Mercedes Ivcher and WIZO Senior Vice President Rosita Retelny, among others.

The Bat Mitzvah Girls: Judy Abadi, Ester Amselom, Miriam Argy, Lianne Azizolahof, Joanna Berkowitz, Rosi Cababie, Becky Cohen, Clarita Corkidi, Karina Esquenazi, Jessica Haim, Tere Jaffif, Rebecca Kanarek, Alexis Kanarek, Andrea Klein, Danielle Lacs, Peerleen Lederman, Andrea Levy Bimblich, Tamar Levy Bimblich, Marcelle Malca, Micaela Masri, Myrna Perez, Mazal Perez and Jessica Wiznitzer.
Adisia Promotional Tour in America

It was a privilege to go on my first promotional trip for Adisia, the WIZO Ethiopian crafts project, and I would like to thank the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, for making the trip possible. The response I received from all I met was extremely positive.

In New York, the gift shop at the Central Synagogue, the largest Reform Synagogue in the city (Mayor Blumberg is a member) placed an order, as did a foundation which is remodeling a synagogue in Chinatown. So did gift shops at the Jewish day school in Westchester, arranged with the help of my friend Nancy Parkes, and the Reform gift shop in New Rochelle. The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, thanks to Amy Jablin, did a fantastic job of providing me with a full itinerary, which resulted in numerous orders. I also participated in a meeting of WIZO Washington, at the home of Annette Forsetter, and many of the chaverot purchased items. Tami Lautman, the WIZO secretary, also arranged for her synagogue to sell Adisiya items at their Chanukkah market, and I had a successful meeting at the nearby Baltimore Jewish Museum.

In New Haven, Connecticut, Wendy Novick arranged a fantastic brunch, where I showed the Adisia CD and a video on Ethiopian aliyah. I also met an ex-Israeli who purchased some items to take back to Denver. In Stamford, Jonathan Fass, Director of the JCC arranged meetings, and all the people I met purchased items. In nearby Springfield Massachusetts I stayed with Galina Vromen, and many orders were placed at the JCC. This part of the trip included a visit to Mt. Kisco, New York, (the Clintons have a home there), and I made a great sale at a beautiful gift shop in that exclusive area.

In New Jersey, Ariella Spialter arranged a lunch with WIZO members, and they all promised to help promote Adisia. Finally, in Philadelphia, my family arranged for me to meet with their synagogue gift shop, and another gift shop at the Jewish Museum, both of which placed nice orders. They will also place Adisia on their Web site.

It was wonderful to meet so many dedicated people, who love Israel, and are only too willing to help promote Adisia, and to help the members of the Ethiopian community maintain their traditional crafts.

Jillian Milliner

Tova Ben-Dov in New York

During a recent private visit to New York, Tova Ben-Dov, Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive, was invited by WIZO USA President Evelyn Sommer to visit the new offices of WIZO New York and to meet members of the executive who are responsible for different spheres of activities. She was very impressed with the new offices and wished Evelyn and all the executive members lots of luck in their new premises. It was inspiring and heartwarming for Tova to meet the 24 members of the executive of WIZO USA and to feel first hand their dedication and love for their WIZO work and for Israel. She was very happy to hear from them of their wonderful plans for prestigious fundraising events in the future, for WIZO in general and for the projects that WIZO USA is sponsoring in particular. At a luncheon for her benefit, Tova gave an address about WIZO’s diversified activities and how we are coping with the severe financial and security situation in Israel. It was a mutually enriching and memorable experience.

Toronto Hadassah-WIZO Aviv Breakfast

Every Spring, Toronto Hadassah-WIZO holds its annual Aviv Breakfast in the home of one of its members. No cover charge is asked, but in order to attend, Aviv members are required to make a minimum campaign donation.

The six members of the organizing committee worked hard to locate an engaging guest speaker. They were lucky to get the agreement of Dr. Marla Shapiro to speak this year. A family doctor in the Toronto area, Dr. Shapiro is an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto, a medical contributor for Canada AM, medical expert on CTV Newsnet and CFTO News and host
of her own show “Balance” on CTV. Her program is seen daily on
CTV in Canada as well as internationally in Korea and Israel.
For the first time, corporations were approached to sponsor the
event. A number of them agreed to provide everything from the
bagels for breakfast to door prizes and product samples.
The event was attended by 78 women from the 13 Toronto
Hadassah-WIZO Aviv Chapters. Everyone who was there agreed
that Dr. Shapiro was an outstanding, passionate and attentive
guest speaker. Thanks in part to the sponsorships, the Breakfast
was a most successful fundraising event.

Bulgaria

Summer Camp for Senior Citizens
All year long, more than 100 Golden Age senior citizens wait
impatiently to leave for Bankja, a resort near Sofia, for a five day
summer camp in the newly reconstructed rest home, with clean
rooms, beautiful balconies and a swimming pool. The weather
was beautiful, with no rain, and people took long walks (long for
our age) followed by health baths to keep fit. It felt like we
climbed the Himalayas, even though the altitude was not more
than 500 meters.
The daily activities were organized by volunteers, some of them
WIZO members. These included morning gymnastics, news from
our beloved country Israel and how people overcome problems and
the stress in daily life, Jewish songs and dances and discussions
with our chaverot from different towns all over Bulgaria.
Our discussions focused on Israel, “the situation” and the
anti-Semitism which is pervading the world, without any borders.
I was able to share with everyone the important work WIZO is
doing during these challenging times.
The Erev Shabbat was a very emotional evening for us. Deep in
our hearts, we pray for peace and a better life for the coming
generations. We remember our shorashim, our roots, and the
difficulties our mothers and fathers experienced. We hope they
will never return.

Alice Levy, Vice President WIZO Bulgaria

France

World Premiere of “Gladiateur”
On September 28th, WIZO France hosted the World Premiere
Performance of a new musical, “Gladiateur,” before an audience of
over 3,000 enthusiastic people at the Palais de Sports in Paris.
Among those present were World WIZO President Helena Glaser,
Israeli Ambassador to France Nissim Zvili, former French Minister
Simone Veil and the head of the CRIF (French Jewish community).
The event was an outstanding PR and fundraising success.
“Children, particularly deprived children, are at the heart of our
struggle,” said WIZO France President Nathalie Cohen-Beizermann
in her introduction. “Commited WIZO women are working
throughout France to support this noble cause.”
“The 20th century has witnessed horrors which will forever mark
the memories of all humanity. The first victims of all the barbarism
have always been, and are still, children. Instability always hurts
the most vulnerable segments of society. It is because they have
rebelled against such injustices that WIZO women, in 50
federations around the world, have mobilized to provide support
and caring to all those who suffer. The eyes of a child who is
afraid, or who is suffering, cannot let us remain insensitive.”
“To invite you to attend the premiere of ‘Gladiateur,’ directed by
Elie Chouraqui, was a challenge that my friends and I decided to
face a few months ago. The gladiators struggle is the struggle of
men who are striving for their freedom, of women and children,
who one day said no to the pain that was inflicted on them. This
struggle that was conducted in 73 B.C. is still relevant today.
Let’s keep our capacity of indignation, and let’s mobilize for what
we believe is right.”
“The proceeds from this evening, that is both prestigious and
popular, will be earmarked to help the children from new
immigrant families at the WIZO Municipal Technological High
School in the Name of Maya Rosenberg in Rehovot, to whom we
provide an education to enable them to become integrated into
the Israeli society of tomorrow.”
“I hope that this evening will rekindle the spark that shines in each
and every woman attending this event today, whatever their age
and the time they have at their disposal, in order to join the
struggle conducted by WIZO, that for 85 years has put a smile on
the face of untold thousands of Israelis. Your attendance this
evening is the testimony of your spontaneous commitment to
WIZO, the leading women’s Zionist movement.”
Germany

Munich

Israeli Flag Flies High Above Castle in Bavaria

WIZO Munich invited 10 youths, outstanding students from various WIZO youth villages - together with a counsellor, Kobi Hillel, Director of the World WIZO Youth Clubs Department - for a week's vacation in a Bavarian castle. There they were hosted by the Heuser Family (the non-Jewish owners of the castle,) and were spoiled in the truest sense of the word every day from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.. Every wish of theirs was anticipated and fulfilled.

The group arrived at Munich Airport on the morning of August 13, 2004, was welcomed by the chairperson of WIZO Munich, Mrs. Helga Guttmann and then whisked away in two mini-vans by the Heuser Family to their castle, about 150 km away.

That evening, Mrs. Chaja Meiteles, one of the members of the board of WIZO Munich, drove to the castle to celebrate the Kabalat Shabbat with the children and the staff members.

The next day Mrs. Helga Guttmann arrived with a team of the “Bayrischer Rundfunk” to prepare a program with the children that was shown the following Monday evening and Tuesday morning on Bavarian TV.

Sunday morning the group was driven to the Dachau concentration camp, where they met with Dr. Robert Guttmann and Dr. Max Mannheimer, who led them on a tour in Hebrew. There too they hoisted an Israeli flag and held a short memorial ceremony.

From there it was directly to the Israeli community center, where WIZO Munich together with the children, Mr. and Mrs. Heuser and their team of 10 custodians, the mayor of the city of Munich and many members of WIZO Munich hosted a “Sponsor a Child” lunch with speeches. The children sang “Yerusahlayim Shel Zahav” (Naomi Shemer’s “Jerusalem the Golden”) and everybody that attended went home with a smile in their hearts. Those present, along with friends and members of WIZO, that were unable to attend the event, all gave donations to the very worthy cause.

On Tuesday the group visited Munich one more time to do some sight-seeing and shopping. Then on Friday, August 20, 2004, they were bade farewell at the airport by Helga and Dr. Robert Guttmann, and left a very happy and enthusiastic group.

We would like once again to express our thanks to the Family Heuser for their generosity and loving care. From the very beginning Mrs. Heuser was nick-named by the children “Angel”, which speaks for itself!

Helga Guttmann

“Sponsor A Child” Gala Evening in Berlin

The challenge was enormous - could the success of the last gala evening be topped? WIZO-Berlin rose to the challenge - and proved that it could be! The “Sponsor A Child” Gala 2004 was an outstanding success!

Approximately 200 guests were welcomed at Hotel Savoy, each and every one wanting to do some good. Through their generosity, socially disadvantaged Israeli children in need will have the opportunity to face a better future.

A special thank you goes to our guest speaker, Dr. Michel Friedman, who, with his passion and conviction, aroused the generosity of our guests. “The beauty of WIZO is that, from every Euro, 100 Cents goes directly to the children,” he said, “and who, if not these children, have earned hope; hope, which we can give?” Dr. Friedman asked that Israel not be reduced to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and spoke about the tremendous growth of the country.

Five youthful Israeli singers from the WIZO Nir Haemek School and Youth Village entertained the guests with a wonderful show,
including the singing of the WiZo anthem. In addition, Jazz pianist J o j a Wendt, swept the public away with his virtuosity. The surprise of the evening was comedian Otto Waalkes, who spontaneously grabbed the microphone and brought the audience to “laughter and tears” with his songs and jokes.

WiZo Berlin President Michal Geleman moderated the auctioning of a Harley-Davidson leather jacket, generously donated by TV personality Thomas Gottschalk.

The willingness to give surpassed all expectations. It was well after midnight when the last guests, happy and in good humour, departed.

**Italy**

**4th Literary Prize**

The 4th Adei-WiZo (WiZo Italy) Literary Prize evening was dedicated to the memory of the late WiZo Italy Co-President Berta Kramer Sinai. It was held at the Auditorium Mondadori Multicenter in Milan on September 28th. The evening was opened by WiZo Italy President Ziva Fischer and WiZo Milan President Adelina Della Pergola.

The 1st Prize was awarded to three authors: Nancy Richler, Marcel Reich Ranicki and Soazig Aaron. 1st Prize in the children’s category went to Uri Orlev, and Dolph Goldstein Goren and Nedo Fiano received Special Mention. The evening was moderated by Lella Costa, with entertainment provided by Vladimir Denissenkov. The evening was held under the joint auspices of the Milan Municipality, the Milan District Cultural Foundation, the Italian Jewish Community and Adei WiZo.

**Switzerland**

**Dancing in Basel**

WiZo Basel held an evening of Latin American dance. Professionals, who have won many prizes, taught the guests secrets of rumba and samba. The success was such, that they are already preparing the next evening.

**Berne Bazaar**

WiZo Berne held an all day WiZo souk (bazaar). As always, in this beautiful souk it was possible to buy Israeli products, sweaters, second-hand books and antiques. Visitors were also able to eat falafel, salads, sandwiches, cakes and coffee. The event was very successful, and many people came to the WiZo souk.

**Fun in Friburg**

At the annual WiZo Friburg picnic, WiZo members with family and friends got together to talk, mingle and wander around in nature. And of course to enjoy grilled meat done on a barbeque. This picnic is a regular tradition in WiZo Friburg, which people look forward to every year.

**Enrico Macias Comes to Geneva**

A ball was organized jointly by WiZo, Maccabi and the Jewish National Fund. The jewel in the crown was singer Enrico Macias, who gave a wonderful performance.

**United Kingdom**

**“WIZO must fill gap between government spending and needy”: Tova Ben-Dov at the Annual Rebecca Sieff Day in London**

“Israel’s current dire financial situation is seriously affecting WIZO’s social welfare and educational services,” said Tova Ben-Dov, newly elected Chairperson of the World WiZo Executive. “With the increase in families living below the poverty line, WIZO must continue to fill the gap between government funding and the needy,” she told a gathering of 250 WiZo uk members attending the annual Rebecca Sieff Day in central London.

“Some 350,000 families are now living below the poverty line, around one third of the population. This is the worst crisis in Israel since our independence. Children are going to sleep on empty stomachs. We are distributing food parcels, especially before the Jewish holidays. Our aim at WiZo is that no Jewish child should go hungry or uncared for.”

Tova said that WiZo has to streamline its operations and expenses in line with current restraints and cutbacks. “Our greatest challenge is to manage our huge enterprise of over £110 million a year in the proper way. We will have to decide on priorities in certain areas that may require some tough decision-making. Yet we will continue to do our utmost to provide the quality services which are our trademark.”

Tova praised WiZo.uk, the mother federation and the leading UK organisation working solely for social welfare in Israel, as a “shining example to all other federations” and commended its “outstanding fundraising” this year.

Michele Vogel, WiZo.uk chairman paid tribute to new WiZo.uk members who have formed groups around the country, including three new AVIV groups in north west London, Bournemouth and south Manchester.

Women of Valour pins for outstanding generosity to WiZo projects were presented to Miriam Borchart, Leonie Ginsberg and Angela Landau. This year’s Rebecca Sieff Awards were presented to Muriel Jacobs, chairman of WiZo Ealing by WiZo.uk president Sarah Gly and to Hilary Black, president of WiZo Manchester Zonia by WiZo.uk honorary president Ruth Sotnick.

**Sponsor A Child goes from Strength to Strength**

This year marks the 10th anniversary of WiZo’s Sponsor A Child annual luncheon in London, which raised a magnificent £70,000 towards caring for young children at WiZo day care centres and
Brazil

Argentina

Annual Conference
The annual conference of WIZO group presidents and directors of fundraising and membership departments was held in May. The participants all had a high level of understanding about WIZO and its goals. It’s important to note that WIZO activity, which had been halted due to the economic situation, has been resumed in Salta, Santa Fe, San Juan and Tchako. It was a very successful conference, and the main points of discussion and conclusions were summarized and sent to all of the WIZO groups throughout the country.

Cordoba Seminar
A seminar was held in Cordoba on June 11th and 12th with the support of the Jewish Agency. Nester Pelner spoke on “Israel and the Media,” and Baleria Feldman gave a presentation on Israeli society. Claudia Appleman, Deputy Director of the Latin American Jewish Congress spoke about “Anti-Semitism 2004.” Sergio Caliavsky gave a presentation on fundraising, and Clara Fisch, Director of the Education Department gave a presentation on strategies of activity. One of the highlights was a quiz presented by the WIZO Cordoba group on WIZO history. The seminar was concluded by WIZO Argentina President Amalia Polack. The members of the WIZO Executive who participated in the seminar were Clara Fisch - Organization, Marta Hadida - Education, Argentina Halac - Activity, Ana Bercovich - Membership and Estela Vilmoski - Media, Distribution and Publicity. WIZO Cordoba President Graciela Efron and her chaverot devoted much energy and responsibility to organizing the event. Thanks also go to moderator Miriam Llanos and Mrs. De Horbacovsky and the cultural group.

Amalia Polack

Brazil

Albert Sabin Award to Sarita Schaffel and Zilda Sauer
At an impressive ceremony on August 30th, WIZO Brazil President Sarita Schaffel and Honorary Life President of WIZO Rio Zilda Sauer were granted the prestigious Albert Sabin award, together with other noteworthy Brazilian citizens, who are struggling to combat racism, anti-Semitism and any other kind of racial prejudice against mankind. Rio de Janeiro’s Alderman, Dr. Gerson Bergher, created the Albert Sabin Medal.

WIZO Brazil President Sarita Schaffel and Brazilian Federal Supreme Court
Minister Nelson Jobin at the Award ceremony

At the Glasgow luncheon:(l to r) Betty Crystal, Tova Ben-Dov, Michelle Alexander who hosted the event, Flora Glekin, Glasgow chair for Sponsor A Child and Michele Vogel

The Tree of Life
The Tree of Life, an elegant and symbolic wall sculpture, created in burr maple wood with silver and gold leaves by leading artist Dorothy Brook, is now prominently on display at WIZO House in London. This beautiful wall sculpture was especially commissioned by WIZO UK honorary president, Leila Wynborne MBE, to celebrate the life of her grandson David Wynbourne (1975-1979). Leila has worked closely with Dorothy Brook to bring the concept to fruition. Each new leaf added to the tree will be individually engraved to celebrate a joyous occasion, from a birth to a milestone anniversary. A commemorative book is also being exhibited in the Miriam Sacher Lounge, inscribed with the name of each donor. The funds raised will sponsor therapy for ‘at risk’ children attending WIZO schools and day care centres throughout Israel.

WIZO UK Honorary Life President, Leila Wynbourne MBE (l) and sculptor Dorothy Brook at the September launch ceremony for the Tree of Life sculpture at WIZO House. To date over 120 names have already been inscribed and the leaves are proudly adorning our Tree of Life.

WIZO President Sarita Schaffel and Brazilian Federal Supreme Court
Minister Nelson Jobin at the Award ceremony
Minas Gerais Yom Ha’atzamaut Workshop

Chapter President Elisabeth Bronfen welcomed the local WIZO groups to an afternoon gathering in her home. WIZO chavera Ada Mandil, educational director of the center, led a workshop for Israeli Independence Day on the theme “What does Israel lead you to?” A number of the veteran chaverot told their own, moving experiences about what they felt on that historic day, 56 years ago.

“Plates of Love” in Rio Grande do Sul

Sixty-five well-known artists painted and donated “Plates of Love” for a WIZO Rio Grande do Sul art auction. About 300 people participated, under the guidance of Porto Alegre’s number one auctioneer Paulo Gasparotto and auction trustee Evelyn Berg Loschpe. The auction was a tremendous success, and it received broad coverage in the local press and TV, thanks to the chapter’s Promotion and Publicity Department. Fifty-two out of the 65 plates were bought on the spot, and the other 13 will be place on sale at WIZO Rio Grande do Sul’s annual “Fraternity Fair.”

Sarita Lea Schaffel, President WIZO Brazil

Annual Dramatic Presentation

Every year the WIZO Aviv-Monterey Group organizes a dramatic presentation. This year’s play was presented to the Monterey Jewish community. Among those present were the mayor of Monterey, the community rabbi, the president of the Jewish community, WIZO Mexico President Sylvie Mizrachi, Director of WIZO Mexico regions Emma Adler, and Dona Chayet, coordinator of WIZO Monterey. The proceeds were donated to the local government, to be presented to children from needy families. This annual undertaking is greatly appreciated by the Jewish and general community of Monterey.

“New Life in a New Millenium”

WIZO Mexico initiated a special project to honor children born in the new millennium, coordinated by Sima Kipnis. The idea is to provide every Jewish child born since January 2000 with a special plaque inscribed with his/her name.

WIZO Month

One of WIZO’s priorities is concern for the welfare of children. To realize this goal, WIZO Mexico organizes an annual WIZO Month, geared towards providing support for a better quality of life for children in Israel.
Uruguay

70th Anniversary Celebration

We are celebrating the 70th anniversary of WIZO in Uruguay. We organized a special activity on July 24th for all the WIZO centers. It included a musical presentation entitled “Exotics,” directed by Brazilian choreographer Jorge Heller, with impressive backdrops and costumes. There were 50 dancers on the stage. It was a true show, at a high artistic level.

Among those who attended were the Israeli ambassador and his wife, diplomatic representatives from other countries, many members, friends, supporters and community leaders. We also prepared a special publication for the event that we are very proud of. It contains a description of the history of WIZO Uruguay, with some very interesting reading material and photos.

We are very proud of our achievements over the years. These have been 70 years of efforts, in which we invested the best of our energies. We greet all of our chaverot, who with great dedication and effort succeeded to organize an unforgettable event, beyond our expectations.

South Africa

A Story of Conscience and Bravery

“I was raised a Moslem, but now I’m Jewish. My brother in Mexico City is a Christian and my sister in Sarajevo is a Moslem; but we are all one family united in love. “With these words Sara Pechanac, tall, slim and dignified began her story, which held her audiences spellbound. She had been invited by the Women’s Zionist Organisation of South Africa to launch their Biennial Campaign. At every meeting, the audience listened in hushed silence as she told her story of tragedy and despair, which was replaced by hope and optimism.

The first recorded Jewish presence in Sarajevo, today the capital of independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, dates back to the 14th century. By 1941, when Yugoslavia was invaded by German, Hungarian and Bulgarian fascist armies 14,000 Jews lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina. One of the first acts of the Nazis was to burn the city’s Sephardic synagogue. Some Muslims tried to protect their Jewish neighbours; while others collaborated with the Nazis and their local equivalent, the notorious Ustashe.

Against this background of unmitigated terror, Sarah’s Moslem grandfather, Achmed Sadik and her parents, helped to save the lives of many Jewish families. “My grandfather arranged for false papers for the Jewish families to escape from Sarajevo via Italy to what in 1948 became Israel. But the Nazis caught him and we never saw him again.”

Fortunately her parents survived and over the years kept in touch with the Jewish families they had helped. This led to the Pechanac family being officially recognised by Israel in 1984 as “righteous Gentiles.”

Sara grew up in communist Yugoslavia, became a lawyer, married a computer engineer named Moce Pechanac and has a daughter Stella, now aged 21. In 1991, a brutal civil war erupted between Serbs and Croats. “We lived for six months in the cellar,” recalled Sara. “We ate once a day, soup made of grass; it took six hours to fetch water. People were being killed everyday.”

And then came a ray of hope. In Israel, plans were made to evacuate the Pechanac family together with almost the entire Jewish population of Sarajevo. This was implemented by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in 1991. On the very last convoy of buses carrying 300 people, protected by United Nations armoured cars, the Pechanac family was taken through the various militia check points to safety.

They settled in Tel-Aviv and live in the same neighbourhood as several families that Sara’s parents and grandfather had saved half a century earlier. In January 1994, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin granted them Israeli citizenship. Sara works in the archives at Yad Vashem and she says “It’s not easy to work with people’s last letters,

their last songs. After Sarajevo I feel closer to that part of history.”

Sara, her husband Moshe and their daughter Esther have fully integrated into Israeli society. Their decision to embrace Judaism was influenced by the strong feeling of Jewish community they experienced in Sarajevo and since their arrival in Israel. Sara and Moshe were married in Jerusalem in September 1995, and their daughter Esther is serving in the Israeli army and speaks fluent Hebrew. Sara ended her poignant and emotional story by thanking WIZO South Africa for their efforts to build a better life for all our children and grandchildren. “You make a living from earning but you make a life from giving.”

J ane Levitas

Australia

WIZO Australia Triennial Conference, Sydney, May 22-24

WIZO Australia was honoured by the presence of the World WIZO President, Mrs Helena Glaser, at our 20th Triennial Conference. The Conference began with an address from outgoing WIZO Australia President Rony Bognar, followed by greetings from the State Presidents and the official opening address by Helena Glaser.

The opening session reviewed the achievements and challenges for five Portfolios - Wills and Bequests, Fundraising, Education, Tourism and Aviv.

Sunday morning opened with an address by Helena Glaser. Following a report by the Treasurer, the delegates divided into groups for a workshop which examined funding needs at the projects sponsored by WIZO Australia. Each group went through a “budgeting” exercise in which they tried to allocate an amount of funding to various needs. After reporting on the results, it was obvious that each project needed more funding, and Rony Bognar then asked for an instant boost to WIZO Australia’s

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fundraising through a commitment from the delegates. More than $10,000 was raised from this commitment! For the afternoon session, the delegates again divided into different groups to explore the possibility of relaunching the Coffee Club fundraising initiative. The session closed with an examination of our current Membership situation and an address by World WIZO Public Affairs and NGO Chairperson Brenda Katten. Delegates then participated in an “instant Membership Drive” by filling out letters to friends which were mailed the following day. These letters have generated many new members in each State.

Sunday evening took the form of an events night, with a large audience of WIZO members and partners and others from the community. All were very impressed with Helena’s moving and inspirational address. A highlight of the evening was the film which the World WIZO Publicity and Information Department produced for WIZO Australia. A donor was moved to donate $15,000. The evening ended with an emotional presentation to Rony Bognar to mark the end of her term as President of WIZO Australia.

The opening session on Monday was devoted to Wills and Bequests, and the delegates were polled (anonymously) about their own intentions in terms of bequests. This was a practical demonstration of how important it is to constantly reinforce the message that every WIZO woman must make a bequest to WIZO. Leanne Piggot, a lecturer in Middle East studies, spoke about changes in US Policy towards the region and the many conflicts which make up the “Middle East Conflict”.

The final working session was devoted to a Fundraising Ideas Exchange in which each State presented a successful fundraising event or programme, with “How To” details handed out to all delegates.

The afternoon featured the presentation of new Honorary Life Members, voting on the Conference Resolutions and the election of the new President, Jo Gostin, who presented her new Executive to the Conference. Rony Bognar congratulated Jo on her election, and offered her full support to her and her incoming Executive. The consensus was that this had been a very stimulating and informative Conference, with delegates able to participate, discuss and interact with each other.

All the Conference proceedings, and particularly the public event on Sunday evening, were enhanced by having a guest of the stature of Helena Glaser. Helena’s address gave her audiences new insights into the value of WIZO’s work, and her contributions to all the discussions were unfailingly stimulating. WIZO Australia is very grateful that Helena was prepared to commit to such a long journey and such a long time away from her family, and her WIZO commitments. The benefit of her inspiration, and the outstanding example of selfless dedication which she personifies, will be felt by this Federation for years to come.

New South Wales

WIZO New South Wales was delighted to host WIZO Australia’s Triennial Conference under the leadership of President Rony Bognar. Helena had the opportunity to visit Masada College and WIZO members on the North Shore. She was the keynote speaker at South Head Synagogue’s Shavuot Dinner where she addressed over 200 people and discussed the anti-Semitism and WIZO’s work. Helena spent valuable time meeting WIZO members of all ages and was an inspiration to all who heard her speak. Betty and Gershon Wilkenfeld hosted a brunch for our older members and Sharon and Gary Hendler hosted an evening for our Aviv members. Both functions were well attended and re-inspired our members about the importance of working for WIZO. Helena also spent time with major donors who valued the opportunity of meeting with our World President. Helena’s good humored approach and her continued energy was very much valued and appreciated. Her ability to impart WIZO information in an interesting way ensured that all who heard her speak learned new facts and understood the value of the work constantly being done by WIZO in Israel.

Gilla Liberman
Visiting Western Australia

We were privileged to have Helena visit us in Perth. Friday morning tea was hosted by Esther Schenberg at her home. The girls showed Helena their “quilts in progress” and she spoke about organising a tour in 12 months to “bring the quilts to WIZO’s Ahuzat Yeladim (sponsored by WIZO Australia) and see them on the beds in person”.

We met the newly appointed Principal for Carmel School, with Jewish Study Teachers in attendance. We then went to meet with all the High School students, and Helena spoke beautifully to the assembly. We were also able to show WIZO’s new promotional DVD, and that seemed to clinch the pupils understanding of what our organisation does. Helena’s address to the school was the most down to earth that they had heard in a long time, and they really loved it.

Shabbat dinner with 16 people was hosted by Melanie and Neil Silver, and Helena spoke about our work and the importance of fundraising, building and mentoring the new membership.

Shabbat lunch was hosted by Gail Bareket. Straight from lunch, we went to Ruth Topelberg to meet the State Council members and WIZO Aviva, and there was not a dry eye in the room... Helena reinforced our need to continue our efforts, she praised the work we do and the new DVD is a powerful tool to help ensure our membership in Perth grows.

An evening dinner party with 35 people was held at the home of Pepe and Julian Todes. We showed the DVD and the husbands were very impressed with our work. Harry Hoffman asked for one hour of Helena’s time and she promised that she would take him to see WIZO projects next time he visits Israel.

Helena has gone back with a sense of how wonderful our membership is in Perth, but how isolated we are from up-to-date information on WIZO’s work. There is no doubt that Helena connected with the hearts of almost every person she met on this visit.

Vivienne Levin

Visit to Victoria

A cocktail party was organised for the evening of Helena’s arrival for major donors and important communal personalities at the home of Eva and Tab Fried. She addressed the crowd in her usual inspirational fashion. From there she was taken to the Israeli group function where there was a very good question and answer session.

Judy Pack organised a morning tea at the home of Carolyn and Henry Jolson, where Helena spoke about specific cases of children and their integration into WIZO schools. The Jolson’s daughter showed a great deal of interest in getting involved in WIZO, and we hope a new WIZO Aviv group will be established.

At Monash University Ann Zablud arranged a meeting with the Dean of Education and NAB WIZO Yachad Scholar Marie Hammer, where they discussed integration into WIZO schools of children with learning difficulties. Helena was then interviewed for The Age. That night there was a meeting at Lisa Farber’s home with a wonderful turn out of 80 women and some husbands. She inspired everyone with her talk. At the end of the meeting, one of the girls told Helena that there is a group of women who might be interested in forming a Russian WIZO group.

A very early breakfast was organised by JCCV for 25 professionals from Jewish organizations. This was followed by a combined meeting of the Executive of WIZO Victoria and the Federal Executive. Helena gave us an honest opinion of the needs and requirements of WIZO and Israel.

Ann Zablud organised a late morning tea with three women Parliamentarians. The discussion centred on women in Parliament in both Australia and Israel and about WIZO’s School for future women leaders in Israel. At Domestic Violence Victoria, they were very interested in hearing about WIZO’s work with domestic violence.

The State and Federal President and the past Presidents met Helena for an early dinner. This was followed by a Cocktail Party to which both Jewish and non Jewish Communal leaders were invited. Then about 80 people heard Helena speak at a public meeting. The enthusiasm that Helena’s visit engendered spread throughout our membership.

Paulette Cherny
**On To Adelaide**

Helena’s visit to Adelaide was an amazing PR experience. Helena addressed over 280 Jewish and non-Jewish people, and increased public awareness of both WIZO and Israel. Lunch on Wednesday was at the home of South Australian President, Miriam Millingen, where she met with members of the State Council Executive. She then visited Massada College and spoke to the 100 pupils. In the evening, Helena addressed some of the younger Jewish women, potentially a new WIZO group. On Thursday a Women’s Division Achiever’s Luncheon was held for 150 guests, organised in conjunction with the Australia Israel Chamber of Commerce SA/NT Division. Invited guests included high profile business women, politicians, leaders of local women’s organisations and the media. Following the luncheon, Helena addressed a group of women leaders at the South Australian Multicultural & Ethnic Affairs Commission. A function was held that evening and about 70 Friends of WIZO and members of the Christadelphian community attended. Helena’s visit to Adelaide raised awareness of Israel and especially WIZO, and we feel that the public relations that this visit has achieved is immeasurable. All who met with Helena commented on her dynamic and warm personality and her amazing empathy. She was very inspirational and we hope to maintain some of the enthusiasm she created for WIZO in Adelaide.

Miriam Millingen

**Charming them in Queensland**

Helena’s visit was a great success, and she charmed everyone with her graciousness, knowledge and eloquence. Friday night dinner at Myrna Freed was attended by the entire Executive and husbands. At the Kiddush on Saturday morning there were over 100 people, with many bar-mitzvah guests, and Helena presented the bar-mitzvah boy with a WIZO Bar-Mitzvah Certificate. A reception at my home on Saturday night was packed with academics and non-jews, and Helena held their rapt attention for nearly an hour. A Sunday morning brunch was held at the Gold Coast with 25 women from WIZO and the National Council of Jewish Women, and some husbands. The Sunday afternoon activity attracted a full house for Helena’s final address. All our functions succeeded beyond expectations, and the whole weekend has considerably raised WIZO Queensland’s profile.

Ruth Tarlo

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**Letter to the Editor**

**Pen-Pals Across the Ocean**

The editors of WIZO Review were quite moved when they received the following request:

I realize this is a long shot, but would there be any possibility to have this message forwarded to Ms. Heyut Aspav, who was featured on the cover of your Spring 2004, No. 306 issue of WIZO Review?

I am a young Jewish man living and working in south Florida, USA, my photo is attached. I was completely taken by Heyut’s natural beauty, and would be grateful for nothing more than to make her acquaintance and possibly establish a friendship with her by mail. I have attended many WIZO events in Miami.

Thank you

Name of correspondent
Remember the WIZO Living Legacy Program

The WIZO Living Legacy Program allows you to shape the legacy by which you want to be remembered.

With the WIZO Living Legacy Program, you can design a specific planned giving program that meets your goals. And, at the same time enjoy substantial tax savings*, today and tomorrow.

WIZO is ready to answer your questions about how you can provide for WIZO in your will, and through insurance policies, family foundations, trusts, and annuities.

Please contact your local WIZO Federation to learn how you can design your personal WIZO Living Legacy Program.

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