

# WIZO Review



www.wizo.org

Summer 2015 ■ No. 337

WIZO Youth 1947



1920



WIZO  
95<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary



2015

WIZO Youth 2014





Dear Chaverot,

As we start a year of celebrations for WIZO@95 we can all be justifiably proud of our organisation, and our contribution to Israeli society – whether it be our ‘5-star’ day care centres, our wonderful youth villages where we ‘turn lives around’ or the professional help we provide for women to advance in their careers and personal empowerment.

As part of our celebration in WIZO House, we had a nostalgic exhibition of photos from 1920 until today – see some of them on various pages through the magazine.

We cannot talk about WIZO's history without giving centre-stage to our Honorary Life President Raya Jaglom – just one year older than WIZO. Her WIZO ‘career’ began in 1940; read her reflections **p.10**.

When I asked federations to pose four specific questions to veteran and young members, I was overwhelmed by the response. There were so many words of wisdom that this feature will be continued in the next issue. Sense the deep emotion in the words of the veterans as they urge the younger members to ‘continue the good work’. Sense the fears and challenges facing our younger chaverot. This feature begins on **page 14**.

We never know in the Review office what will ‘drop into our lap’. When I received an email from Shula Kopf some time last year asking about the first WIZO Conference in Mandatory Palestine in 1935, little did I know what this would lead to. Read the story (**page 18**) of Shula's aunt, Esther, founder of a WIZO branch in Poland in the 1920s.

In today's world, federations have to keep up to speed with new technology and new trends – and continually come up with new ideas to attract – and keep members. Read about some of them on pages **30, 32 and 33**.

WIZO Around the World: do you only look at your own country's coverage? If you do, please read the others – you will find some great fundraising and cultural events. WATW begins on **page 34**.

Last, but not least, we welcome three new presidents of federations. Good luck and much success to Simone Graumann of Germany, Eva Wyler of Switzerland and Michele Pollock of the UK.

As you will be receiving this issue just before Rosh Hashana, I would like to wish you, your families and all your chaverot, a happy and peaceful new year.

Enjoy reading!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Ingrid'.

Ingrid Rockberger  
Editor



## WILL YOU BE IN ISRAEL FOR SUCCOT?

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## World WIZO Executive Presidents or Chairpersons of Federations

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Belgium & Luxembourg	Vicky Hollander
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Brazil	Helena Kelner
Bulgaria	Marina Nanjova
Canada	Claudia Goldman
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	Gail Perl
Uruguay	Sara Laks Trachtenberg
Venezuela	Ena Rotkopf

## President's Desk

### My Dear Chaverot



*"To handle yourself, use your head;  
to handle others, use your heart."  
- Eleanor Roosevelt*

**M**azal Tov, WIZO is 95 and still going strong..... For me WIZO is a way of life and commitment, a feeling of belonging, a need to selflessly love and give to the less fortunate and to provide them with equal opportunities to improve their lives. WIZO is in my DNA.

I am proud to be a WIZO chavera and your president. I look to the future and see a glorious one with lots of young Zionist women from all over the world, working together with one heartbeat to create a new future for the children, youth and women of Israel so that they too can become part of our WIZO Family.

Many challenges face WIZO due to the reality in which we operate. The socio-economic situation sees the middle class collapsing under the burden of the high cost of living and unattainable housing; the poor and weak sectors of our society remain the same with little improvement or hope in their lives.

Together with you, our chaverot and Federations worldwide, WIZO will continue its blessed work to provide equal education to its service recipients, whose number grows all the time. WIZO will continue to provide hope, opportunities and life-changing tools to the babies, toddlers, youth and women that benefit from our projects.

But we must also consider the national situation. Israel is located in a very volatile region– the civil war in Syria, unrest in Turkey, the Iranian threat and Da'ash all have an impact on our security and safety.

Approximately 700 Syrian citizens, most of them injured in the civil war, have received medical treatment in Israel. At present around 490 Syrian nationals are inpatients at hospitals in northern Israel. Of these, 233 are at the Rebecca Sieff Hospital in Safed.

Although negotiations with the Palestinian Authority are on hold at the moment, Israel also allows thousands of Gazans to travel each year to hospitals in Israel.

Israel is also not as isolated as BDS, the Opposition and some of the media in Israel would have us all believe and the facts speak for themselves: Israel reached 9th place in the 2015 Eurovision Song Contest (25 countries voted for our song); FIFA's refusal to ban Israel; Israeli athletes participating in events all over the world; delegations that come from all over the world to learn from Israel, and favorable feedback to Israeli products, patents and gadgets at international conferences. Republican and Democrat Senators over the past few months have also reiterated that the bond between the USA and Israel is stronger than ever.

We need to stand steadfast against those who desire to break our bones or our spirit. We owe it to our ancestors and to our descendants, we owe it to ourselves and to those we instill with the age old Jewish values we cherish.

At 95, WIZO can look to its centennial as a strong women's social movement with hundreds of thousands of volunteers, benefactors and loyal staff – each playing a significant role in WIZO's collective success and strength; working together for one cause under the blue and white flag that we love.

Affectionately,

*Tova Ben-Dov*

Tova Ben-Dov  
President World WIZO

# Chairperson's Column



Dear Chaverot,

## Happy 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday WIZO!

**A**s this edition of the WIZO Review goes to print we are entering the 95<sup>th</sup> year since that unforgettable day, July 11<sup>th</sup> 1920, when Rebecca Sieff announced the founding of the Women's International Zionist Organization –WIZO at the Russell Hotel in London, England.

Neither Rebecca Sieff, nor her colleagues at that meeting, could have foreseen the amazing future. They could not have envisaged that WIZO would become an amazing international movement. Today WIZO is a huge montage – the WIZO montage, brightly coloured and ongoing.

What a milestone, what an achievement.

The last 95 years have brought such joy. Joy as we helped to build the State of Israel as full partners, putting our WIZO imprint across its landscape and society, and continually nurturing the incredible link between Israel and the Jewish world.

Today, 95 years on, we can shout out, loud and clear **'Yes, we did it'**. Our mothers, grandmothers and great grandmothers handed us, with pride and love, the WIZO legacy, and we will hand down that legacy to our daughters and granddaughters with equal pride and love.

Each and every one of us, volunteers in the Federations abroad and volunteers in Israel have taken on every challenge, and adjusted to every situation, determined to keep adding new colours and textures to the WIZO montage. Today, WIZO is just as relevant, needed and vital, as it was 95 years ago. Our enthusiasm, our loyalty, our devotion to the State of Israel, is infinite.

As each federation celebrates our 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary in various creative ways, it will be with the conviction and in the knowledge that hidden within each of us is the power, the commitment, the love and the determination, that drove our founders on the 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1920.

Each one of us can proudly announce, loud and clear: **WIZO - it is who we are!**

Across the oceans and as one sisterhood, may we all celebrate many more WIZO birthdays together.

**Mazal Tov, a resounding Happy Birthday to WIZO, and my best wishes to you and all your families for the coming year. Shana Tova!**

With warm regards,

*Rivka Lazovsky*

Prof. Rivka Lazovsky  
Chairperson  
World WIZO Executive



1953: Students at WIZO Nahalal having a laboratory lesson

## World WIZO Executive Resident in Israel

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**Helena Glaser**

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Beit Heuss  
**Chairperson: Saya Malkin**

The Next Generation  
**Chairperson: Sylvie Pelossof**

Special Projects  
**Tricia Schwitzer**



## New Auditorium for WIZO Gan VaNof

World WIZO President Tova Ben-Dov and Chair of the World WIZO Executive Prof. Rivka Lazovsky were joined by World WIZO Executive members and staff to welcome WIZO Switzerland to WIZO Gan Vanof Youth Village. Guests were impressed by the magnificent auditorium dedicated in memory of Roger Hirsch z'l, the late brother of WIZO Switzerland Past President Mrs Ruth Dreyfus who was joined by her husband and members of their family. Also



*A view of the new auditorium*



*(l to r) Ruth Dreyfus, her husband, Chief Rabbi of Chaux de Fonds*

present were immediate Past President Mrs Lucie Gideon and current WIZO Switzerland President Mrs Anne Argi along with family and friends from Switzerland and Paris. The Chief Rabbi of Chaux de Fonds, and close friend of the late Roger Hirsch also flew in especially for the ceremony and to affix the mezuzah. The Mayor of Petach Tikva paid tribute to WIZO's great contribution to his city. After a presentation and choral interlude by the students, guests enjoyed a festive lunch in the Minkoff Gardens.

## A New Day Care Centre for a New Neighbourhood

The newly developed Agamim neighbourhood of South Netanya is the location of the latest project sponsored by WIZO Switzerland. World WIZO President Tova Ben-Dov and Chair of the World WIZO Executive Prof. Rivka Lazovsky welcomed Mrs Anne Argi, president of WIZO Switzerland, her husband and daughters as well as members of the WIZO Switzerland Executive and friends to the opening of the new WIZO Agamim Day Care Centre. The Centre was dedicated in the name of all the volunteers and board members of WIZO Switzerland who work so tirelessly for the State of Israel. Guests enjoyed a Kabbalat Shabbat with the children and musical entertainment in the beautiful surroundings of this brand new day care centre to serve the young families living in the area, many of them new immigrants to Israel.



*The children enjoy Kabbalat Shabbat in the spacious new day care centre*

*(l-r) Prof Rivka Lazovsky, Deputy Mayor of Netanya, Gertie Lurie, president of WIZO Basel, Anne Argi, Tova Ben-Dov*



## Holon DCC Expanded

Thanks to a generous donation from long-time WIZO supporter and donor, Fanny Cohen from Venezuela, a multi-purpose classroom has been added to the existing Holon Day Care Centre.

Surrounded by family members, Fanny cut the ribbon and explained the significance of the names engraved on the plaque. The children of the dcc welcomed all the guests who also included Prof Rivka Lazovsky, Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive and Executive members. All joined in the singing and dancing and participated in a Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony, which is held every Friday.

Fanny addressed the guests and told of her long-standing association and commitment to WIZO, and how proud she is to see WIZO's accomplishments.

To the delight of all those present, two children brought in a beautiful 95<sup>th</sup> birthday cake for WIZO, prompting an enthusiastic rendering of Happy Birthday to WIZO.

The mezuzah was fixed to the new classroom and, as a parting gift, the children gave each guest a personal challa which they had prepared and wrapped up themselves.



*Fanny Cohen and Family cut the ribbon at the entrance to the new classroom*

## President's Award for Ghada

We are all familiar with the flowing robes and white scarves of WIZO Druze members at all our major events. None is more familiar than Ghada Kamel, long-time chairwoman of WIZO Daliat HaCarmel. Ghada was thrilled when she recently received the president's prize for volunteerism from President Reuven Rivlin, in recognition of her contribution to the advancement of the women of her community, which has changed the lives of many of them, while preserving their traditions.

Ghada was one of the first Druze women teachers and one of the first to subsequently pursue an academic career. Thirty years ago, she initiated and established the first WIZO branch in the Druze sector, and since then has always been extremely active in WIZO and has organised numerous courses, seminars, lectures etc for the women of her community. Ghada always makes sure the subjects she chooses e.g. home economics, psychology, leadership, health issues, business and employment initiatives etc., - will improve the life of the Druze women.

She also arranges meetings with WIZO members from other branches and from other organisations in Israel to ensure familiarity and integration into Israeli society.

Ghada has a degree in law, and her husband and all four children are also lawyers!

When asked what WIZO means to her, she replies: "Everything: WIZO is my life."



*Ghada receiving her award from President Reuven Rivlin*

## Hottest Ticket in Town

Friends of WIZO presented this year's Sponsor A Child Champagne Luncheon and Fashion Show in the splendid gardens of a private home in Kfar Shmaryahu. The elegant models, many of them ex-beauty queens and well-known models of yesteryear strutted boldly in towering heels, showing off the truly dazzling creations from renowned Israeli designer and valued friend of WIZO, Yaron Minkovski.

More than 120 women gathered to enjoy a delicious buffet and decadent desserts. The Friends of WIZO Executive headed by the inimitable Betty Crystal work tirelessly for their sponsored day care centre in South Tel Aviv, having transformed a previously unsponsored WIZO day care

centre into a model to be emulated, bringing smiles to the 80 plus toddlers who attend.



*FOW Chairman Betty Crystal surrounded by the fashion show models*



## Awards and Awards for Raanana

WIZO Raanana's English-speaking group has been in existence for over 50 years with over 300 members, new and veteran immigrants mainly from English-speaking countries. Due to Raanana's proximity to WIZO CHW Hadassim, over the years the group has formed a strong connection to the school. A scholarship fund in the name of the founder of the group, Fanny Eisenberg z"l, was founded many years ago, and each year a scholarship is awarded to two pupils recommended by the school.

This year, members of the group's Executive led by their tireless chairperson, Ruth Slater, originally from South Africa, awarded scholarships to Stav and Pavel, two students who have overcome severe personal family problems and are now excellent students looking forward to a successful future.

On the same day, the group dedicated a plaque in the library – the result of a donation received specifically to purchase books.

And – still with Raanana, at one of the group's recent regular coffee mornings, Ruth was surprised to see World WIZO Education Division Chair Carmela Dekel turn up unexpectedly. All was revealed when Carmela presented Ruth with a 'Certificate of Recognition' for her devotion and hard work to WIZO and the State of Israel for many years.



*Ruth Slater (holding certificate) with WIZO Raanana English-speaking Group Executive*



*Representatives of Raanana English-speaking Group at CHW Hadassim*

## In memoriam

### Neri Bloomfield



*Neri Bloomfield*

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) chaverot are deeply saddened by the loss of Neri Bloomfield. Involved with CHW for over 65 years, Neri filled almost every position within the organisation, and in 1972 was elected National President – the youngest in CHW's nearly 100-year history.

Neri leaves behind a legacy of philanthropy, particularly with her

work at CHW. A true leader and Zionist, Neri knew how to take CHW and its projects to new heights, and she did so with integrity and purpose. With a platform deeply rooted in Zionism, Neri saw great success during her term as National President.

Upon Neri's completion of her term as CHW's National President in 1976, she was honoured with the naming of the Neri Bloomfield Academy of Design in Israel, a project that she strongly supported for many years. At the time, Neri said of CHW, "I did everything I could since you bestowed the honour of president upon me in January 1972 until this day; I feel that I wore the mantle of leadership with Zionist pride and dedication to our ideals."

### Clara Sznajderman



*Clara Sznajderman*

World WIZO mourns the loss of dedicated chavera and co-founder and former president of WIZO Venezuela, Clara Sznajderman. A dedicated supporter of Israel and passionate Zionist, Clara co-founded WIZO Venezuela in 1945, served as president from 1946-1949 and from 1959 to 1965, and headed the Culture and Fundraising Departments.

She was also an Ad. Personam Member of the World WIZO Executive (1966-1976) and was later elected a World WIZO Honorary Life Member. She was known for her passion for WIZO and Israel, and often came to visit WIZO projects associated with WIZO Venezuela. Clara was also active and highly esteemed within the Caracas Jewish Community and held a number of executive positions in many organisations.

Clara (née Szydlower) was born in Poland and was educated in Warsaw. Her husband, Leon was an industrialist and was president of the Jewish community of Venezuela for five years and director of the Keren Hayesod drive. The couple had three children.





## WIZO@95 A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY



# Nearly a Century of Reflections: A Conversation with Raya Jaglom

*WIZO's Honorary Life President, Raya Jaglom weighs in on donor relations, the changing Jewish world and the future of WIZO*

Zohar Friedman



*Raya (r) with her mentor Rebecca Sieff*

This year, as WIZO celebrates her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, the editors of the WIZO Review sat down with WIZO's Honorary Life President Raya Jaglom, who has been active in WIZO since 1940. During those 75 years, Jaglom served as president for 26 years, and chairperson and treasurer of the World WIZO Executive. We don't exaggerate when we say that Raya has seen it all – and if not all, nearly all. Born in Romania in 1919, Raya arrived in Palestine in 1940, experiencing personally both the establishment of the State of Israel and the decimation of European Jewry at the hands of the Nazis. Her WIZO career is equally expansive and momentous, which she illustrates by casually mentioning highlights, such as, “the opening of the baby home in Jerusalem. Rebecca Sieff gave me this as an assignment. Five hundred women came to the opening. It was an amazing achievement.”

With this background, Raya greeted us at her beautiful Tel Aviv home for a riveting conversation on her unique perspective into both WIZO and the world of Jewish philanthropy. With barely batting an eye, Raya can recount detailed histories of and levy shrewd insights (and when necessary, constructive criticisms) at WIZO – where the organization is headed, what it has accomplished, and mistakes and learning opportunities along the way.

## Changes in the Jewish world

As the saying goes, there's no substitute for experience. So what does one ask a person with nearly a century of existence, and a high percentage of that near-century dedicated to raising funds for the benefit of Israeli society? To begin with, we posed Raya the question on the biggest





*Raya with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher at the opening of the Sderot Margaret Thatcher Day Care Centre*

challenges facing WIZO and the Jewish world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With some sadness, she pointed to changes sweeping the larger Jewish world, from which WIZO is not exempt. "Israel is no longer the attraction it used to be. All of the big international Jewish organizations are complaining."

### **WIZO specifically...**

In terms of WIZO specifically, the increase in the size of the organization worries her. "We built a lot 'in the good years', but now we must abstain from building too much. A brilliant idea of Toni Hauser was to have federations sponsor individual projects and commit to their support and upkeep. That still works," Raya explained, "No one wants to let down their school or day care centre. Even then we had to ensure the federations did not over-commit themselves, but today they are raising less money than they used to. Those projects that aren't supported by individual federations have become the responsibility of World WIZO, and it is very difficult to maintain them."

### **An emerging crisis: affordable elderly care**

Raya is also very concerned about a new social crisis emerging in Israel. With the average lifespans of Israelis increasing due to Israel's advanced healthcare system, the country is on the cusp of a quickly-developing elderly care crisis. While there are elderly care options available for those citizens who can no longer take care of themselves, the costs are extremely high and usually unrealistic for a significant portion of seniors. "The situation of elderly people in Israel is a disaster. The WIZO Parents Home is WIZO's only live-in facility for the elderly – it is important, but not enough."

"Who takes care of the elderly? The State's welfare organization isn't enough. There didn't used to be such a huge social gap. What has changed? One doesn't make it known enough," Raya frustratingly declares.

### **Tapping the potential of the younger generation**

As anyone will tell you, Raya is a lifelong community leader who fought tooth and nail for her values and beliefs – of which one of them is ensuring there is continuity for Jewish organizations. As such, Raya sees tapping the potential of the younger generation as paramount. Always a realist, however, Raya understands the challenge of recruiting, mentioning younger members of her own family who are difficult to persuade to take up the helm of communal leadership.

When asked why the younger generation doesn't place as much value on volunteerism as her generation, Raya attributes it to a lack of education. "We have to educate them on the value of giving. If we don't educate them, they won't know. Giving isn't an attraction or value anymore – the young people don't know about it."

Raya also points to a group of emerging, young Israelis entrepreneurs and business people who are amassing their personal fortunes, but who haven't yet been targeted by philanthropic organizations. "Some, but not enough of them have been approached," she explains. "We must bring them in, show them the institutions and tell them the problem. When they ask, we'll tell them how they can help us."

### **It's a matter of trust: donor relations**

In addition to community leadership, Raya's reputation in WIZO as a fundraiser is legendary, with a long history of successfully acquiring substantial donations for WIZO. So naturally, we asked her about donor relations: how does one find donors and how does one instill confidence in potential donors?

"Philanthropy largely operates on a social level, not really a financial level. I usually find my donors among people I know. Friends or acquaintances, people who trust me. It's a matter of trust," Raya explains, underscoring the importance of personal connections. "It also helps tremendously," Raya points out, "if they know that you, yourself, are also a donor."



*Auschwitz Birkenhau: Raya and Rahel Limon at the head of the international Aviv seminar to Poland 1989*

Also, if they have the confidence in you to know their money is going to the purpose that's being asked."

"In Israel we definitely need to raise more money. I still have my donors that I can always ring up – of course you have to know them and they have to have confidence. But they won't take on a whole institution as their responsibility; they'll give for a specific purpose."

### A message for chaverot

To conclude our interview, Raya has some important words of advice for all WIZO chaverot, new and veteran, working for the sake of Israel. "My message is, simply, for the sake of yourselves and for the sake of Israel, you must continue your work. You must believe in your work. This is a healthy organization that is very well developed, but if we don't feed it, it will collapse. You have to fight for it."

**She pauses for a moment before adding, "You have to know what you're building is for forever, not just for today or even tomorrow."**



*Raya surrounded by children at a WIZO day care centre*

### Not Only WIZO

In Raya's autobiography, there is a section entitled **Not Only WIZO**, where her numerous other philanthropic activities are highlighted. From the Tel Aviv Museum of Art to the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Israel Museum – the list goes on and on. One of the causes most dear to Raya's heart is anything to do with education, as education is the key to a successful future in so many ways. Throughout the years Raya has given generously to both Tel Aviv and Hebrew Universities, including setting up a fund for student scholarships at Tel Aviv University.



*Raya in front of the plaque adorning the auditorium*

As vice-chair of the Board of Governors of Tel Aviv University, Raya had complained for years that the meeting room for the Board was too small and cramped. Successive TAU presidents had told her that there was no money to build a dedicated facility for the Board. Eventually, plans were drawn up for an auditorium in 2009, but the project was again shelved through lack of money. Finally, Raya decided to take on the project – but after discussing it with her son, Elan, he declared he would take it on as a befitting memorial to his father Josef, who died in 2007 aged 104.

Raya's dream became a reality in June of this year at a festive opening of the Josef and Raya Jaglom Auditorium at the beginning of the annual meeting of the Board of Governors. Four generations of the Jaglom family were present in addition to numerous dignitaries and personal friends. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was performed by two of Raya's great-grandchildren Eitan and Yoav.

Chairman of the TAU Board of Governors Prof. Jacob Frenkel, current President of TAU Joseph Klafter and former President of TAU Prof Haim Ben Shahr all paid tribute to Raya.



*Raya surrounded by her family as her great-grandchildren Eitan and Yoav cut the ribbon at the entrance to the auditorium*



*Celebrating*



**WIZO@95**  
**A PHOTOGRAPHIC**  
**JOURNEY**

# From the Past to the Future

As WIZO celebrates 95 years, and as we look around the country and see WIZO's touch all over the map, be it day care centres, youth villages or women's centres, we can be justifiably proud. For this special issue, WIZO Review posed relevant questions to our senior members and our future generation around the world.

## We asked the seniors:

- When did you join WIZO?
- What motivated you to join?
- What was the atmosphere in the Jewish world at that time regarding Israel?
- What advice would you give to the younger generation of WIZO?

## We asked our future generation:

- How long have you been active in WIZO?
- What motivated you to join the movement?
- How will you motivate others of your generation to be involved?
- What do you think are the greatest challenges facing young Jews today?

## Here are their responses...

### AUSTRALIA



**Marianne Van Der Poorten** 101 years old from Sydney

"I joined WIZO in 1939 in Holland, before the State was established when friends introduced me. Some friends who were worried about the state of Jewish life in Europe had already left to settle in Palestine.

I only came to understand the full significance of the Zionist movement while in a concentration camp. I knew that the Dutch people who survived the war could go back to Holland and pick up the threads of their former lives. But what of the Poles, Russians, Germans and others classified as displaced persons who would have nowhere to go? The necessity for a homeland for the Jewish people was forcibly impressed upon me once I settled in Sydney in 1951. I then rejoined WIZO soon after arriving in Sydney. I am still an active member.

My advice to the younger generation? Take every opportunity to go and see the WIZO projects in Israel in order to give meaning to your membership and to motivate you to continue to be an active member. You should also try and attend Aviv conferences and the world EGM every four years. I have attended 14 of these conferences in my lifetime. I am even thinking about going in January 2016 at the age of 101."



**Keren Loyer** Aviv Member from Melbourne: "I started up my own WIZO group called WIZO Matan in January 2009. Prior to this, I supported the functions of other WIZO groups.

I was born in Israel and as a child was always part of a Jewish youth group, and - as an adult I was looking for an outlet that connected me to Israel. I was invited to a WIZO function by Anita Bejerano, where I was fascinated by the amazing WIZO projects in Israel. At that time there was no group for my age, so with Anita's encouragement I started a new group for young mothers.

I believe by educating this generation about WIZO and then empowering them to give back is what will encourage and motivate. It's crucial that anyone travelling to Israel visits a WIZO project to see what we do and where the money goes.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to find women to become involved in anything. Our generation has both parents out in the work force, whilst raising their children and paying their mortgage, so they are very time poor. At night they are too tired to attend a function, and there are so many organisations running functions that it's competitive. So I guess it is all about organising a FUN function that appeals to our age group, and drawing people in that way. Once they have come to a few WIZO functions, I believe it is all about empowering them.

### BRAZIL



**Cota Levy (WIZO Para)**, at 101 years old, still has an excellent memory, and is one of the most respected chaverot in her home state and in all of Brazil. "I remember when WIZO Brazil was founded (in 1946) and I followed the first steps of World WIZO. I was already married with my children when I joined. I joined because I wanted to do some volunteer work for Israel, and it

was also important for me to have a circle of friends. At our meetings we always talked about what was happening in Israel, and fundraising was the most important thing to us."



**Helena Lerner, 85 of WIZO São Paulo:** I was a member of WIZO before the State was created. At that time our organization was called the Red Shield of David and as a joint project with the Red Cross we sewed clothes to send to Israel. My motivation was Zionism and love of Israel. However, those times, [just after World War II], was a really sad period. We had just

lost 6 million Jews and our only chance of salvation was to go and live in Israel. My advice to our younger WIZO chaverot is to remember we have over 800 projects in Israel and they should fully commit themselves to continuing with our work.





**(WIZO RIO GRANDE DO SUL) Patricia Buksztejn Menda Oliszewski, 38,** has been active in WIZO for 10 years: "I was not involved in community work at that time and joining WIZO gave me the opportunity to reconnect with former classmates from my kindergarten and Jewish school.

Apart from the satisfaction of helping others, I believe the main motivation today to volunteer in WIZO is to show that being Jewish is a privilege. Being part of a movement that cares about the past, present and the future of the Jewish people is a way to attract young people. Another way to attract young people to WIZO is to show that the movement is becoming increasingly professional.

There is no doubt that assimilation is the greatest challenge our generation is facing in the Jewish world today.



**WIZO RIO DE JANEIRO Danielle Balassiano Ptak, 40,** has been active in WIZO since 2011. "I have really been active in WIZO since I was about three, when my mother became involved. I grew up listening about WIZO, living WIZO, breathing WIZO. When I decided to volunteer, I was totally familiar with WIZO. It is like a second family! I will motivate others in my generation by

telling them about the positive experience in my family, the importance of the movement to Israel, and most of all how important it is for the younger generation to continue with the work and commitment.

Like many of my generation, I consider our greatest challenge is fighting anti-Semitism and assimilation.

I believe that all Jewish women have to make time for community work; not only is it satisfying to help those in need, but it strengthens our Jewish traditions and is an example for our children. I am very glad that I am part of this Zionist organization.

## PANAMA



**Dora Sasson:** All my life WIZO has been part of me and I have been part of WIZO. I learned very early in life from my mother, Sarie Hanono to care for the welfare of others. I was motivated to work for WIZO because it meant being connected to other women in the Jewish world and our beloved Israel.

**My advice to our younger women:** Use every congress as an opportunity to grow with the organization as well as learning from all the great WIZO leaders.

From my experience, we WIZO women must educate the young girls from their early school years to follow in our footsteps, to use their creativity relying on the elders'

knowledge and to remember that WIZO is Israel and working for WIZO is working for a better, safer Israel.



**Betty Eskenazi:** I became a WIZO member in 1973. My first WIZO experience as a young girl was when I accompanied my mother to her WIZO meetings which I loved to do. And I will never forget when I was 13 years old, my friends and I went to see a ship that had docked in the Panama Canal with survivors from Germany. I was so impressed to see the attention and

loving care WIZO Panama ladies gave them offering food and other necessities. These impressions have stayed with me and till today it is part of my nature to help others.

**My message to the young generation** is that we are facing turbulent times ahead of us and technology and liberal behaviour tend to confuse our youth. Our challenge is to find the ways and means to educate our young members, to teach them Jewish values and to be active helping those in need.



**Yvette Esses** became a WIZO member in 1961. "My main motivation in dedicating myself to WIZO has always been to help Israel. The atmosphere in the Jewish world at that time [I joined] was of admiration and pride for the State of Israel.

I would advise the young women of today to listen to all the news about Israel and to give their best for Israel because the outside world will always be against the Jewish people.

We must teach our children to love and help Israel always... now and in the future. Take them to see the Holy Land that G'd gave us as it is written in our sacred Torah.

## GERMANY



**Dr Vanessa Faktor** has been an active member of WIZO since 2007. "I have always admired the great work WIZO accomplishes worldwide and wholly identify with the WIZO philosophy. I want to be part of this important endeavour and I realize working in an organization like WIZO offers me the best chance to work for my Jewish community and Israel.

I talk to my peers about my personal motivation for joining WIZO and the satisfaction I enjoy from helping with WIZO's remarkable projects which have improved so many lives.

United in the sisterhood of WIZO, we feel we can move mountains. Another bonus of our WIZO work is getting to know all the other generous and dedicated women around the globe.

One of our greatest challenges is the growing violence of anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli attacks. To counter the increasing radicalisation of - mostly- Muslim youth we should concentrate more on information programmes going into schools and universities. We need to initiate a dialogue with them but also we need to reach the western intellectuals who show such violent anti-Semitism and are highly influential in their society.



Born in Poland in 1923, **Dr Gitta Guttman** was very much involved in re-establishing WIZO Germany [after the war] and founded WIZO Frankfurt in 1958. "I joined at that time because my child had died and my husband suggested that the best way for me to get over painful memories would be to help others. At that time, the atmosphere in Germany was very cool towards Israel, as there was a feeling in Israel that Jews should not live in Germany. We had a hard time convincing our fellow Jews [in Germany] that Israel was the only support for Jews in the world that could give us a Jewish identity. We succeeded slowly in this endeavor and convinced more and more women to join WIZO."

**My advice to today's young women:** Look for a task and 'go for it.' Motivate your friends. Give some of your energy for the wellbeing of others so that WIZO can grow and flourish.

## USA



**Co-Founding President Evelyn Sommer:** "Although I am not quite 90 years old, I am probably the most veteran leader of WIZO USA as this Federation was established only in 1982. In 1959 I was invited by the Israeli Ambassador to ECOSOC and UNICEF to represent WIZO in the process of registration as the first Zionist non-governmental organization in the UN system. As I was born in Argentina, I was aware of WIZO's work in Israel and the Jewish communities around the world and testified successfully to achieve our NGO status. Our motivation was to introduce the international community to the extraordinary work that WIZO was doing on behalf of women and children."

**My advice to young WIZO members today:** How lucky you are to be born in a world where there is a State of Israel. Immerse yourself in its great achievements and values.

Secondly, how privileged you are to be part of an organization like WIZO, that for 95 years has helped the vulnerable to integrate successfully into Israeli society. Multiply your efforts in reaching your generation to identify with WIZO's goals at this critical time that Israel is facing so many internal and external threats. You must be resilient, confident and proud Zionists and I am absolutely sure that you will make WIZO's future worthy of its brilliant past.



**Arielle Himoff, NY Young Leadership Co-Chair**, has been active in WIZO since February 2014.

"I wanted to help make a difference in Israel's society in order to benefit its future and serve as an example to our generation that making a difference can be done at any age! We need to support our country through thick and thin, and stand proudly as their representatives in the Diaspora."

Once people understand how crucial WIZO is to the social welfare of Israel and what a difference it makes for the future of Israeli society, we can build a big support system with the younger generation and create the future of WIZO supporters.

For me, the greatest challenge facing my generation in the Jewish world today is Jewish education. Living in the Diaspora without a Jewish education can make people feel disconnected to their roots. It is hard to blame anyone who assimilates if they didn't have a Jewish education, because they have no foundation on which to value their heritage and tradition."



**Tanya Low, NY Young Leadership Co-Chair**, has been a member since 2013. "Several things motivated me to join WIZO. My grandmother has been a WIZO member in Antwerp for many years, so I grew up hearing about WIZO. Spending a lot of my life in Israel, WIZO was a household name for me...so when my time came to be part of an organization, WIZO was the natural home for me - especially because the WIZO cause really resonates with me and

I feel so at home with the wonderful WIZO women!"

As Co-Chair with Arielle for NY Young Leadership, we are trying to focus on connection and leadership. Our approach is to design events that target specific types of people, leading to more unique and personalized events and relationships. By making events that are more intimate people are exposed to a very select group of people which will help them feel a personal connection.

By making events that are more intimate people are exposed to a very select group of people which will help them feel a personal connection to the organization and want to help and be involved.

Challenges facing my generation? Sadly, technology has truly affected personal connection, and just simply made it easier for people to act from home. We have so many amazing potential leaders, our mission is to bring these leaders forward to shine and guide future generations in the same light as well as to help connect these leaders so they can motivate one another and work together.





**Judit Groisman,  
USA Vice-President**

WIZO has been part of my life ever since I was a little girl growing up in Buenos Aires, Argentina. My grandmother used to hold teas in the afternoon for the "WIZO girls" as she referred to them, in the back of her print shop. After I moved to Miami, Florida in 1982, at the age of 29, already married and with two young children, I started attending

my own meetings with the "WIZO girls".

My motivation was instilled in me by my dear friend and current WIZO USA Co-President, Jana Falic. She insisted I should join this group of young mothers that used to meet at her apartment and plan events to fundraise for the benefit of the children of Israel. Jana's personal charisma, her passion for the cause and the energy she invested in this project were contagious. After a few visits, I was a "WIZO girl" all the way.

I was born in Argentina. During the 1970s, the government was in the hands of the military which was impregnated by Nazi ideology. Thousands of people disappeared without a trace and those who went to ask for the destiny of their loved ones ended up disappearing as well. Young Jewish students and workers suffered the most; the few that were able to return told the stories of brutal torture as Jews were identified and separated from the rest of the detainees, ensuring a cruel demise. At that point, Israel was like an impossible dream; so far away and yet so close to our hearts. After the Yom Kippur war, and the famous 'Zionism is Racism' at the UN in 1975, the deterioration in Israel's international status just grew and grew.

My advice to our younger chaverot? Working for WIZO gives purpose to your life. There is nothing like showing your personal involvement and passion for Israel and its people to your children and spouse. It allows you to lead by example and it gives meaning to your being and pride to your family. They say in your life you should plant a tree, have a child and write a book. I think we must add that you should work hard for WIZO to materialize your bond to Israel by contributing to the wellbeing of thousands of Israeli families' future. Make your life count.

## S. AFRICA



**Cindy Polakow** of Johannesburg has been active in WIZO Aviv for the past 18 months. "I love the difference WIZO makes in the lives of abused women and children; WIZO quite literally turns lives around. We try to show people what WIZO does through exciting events and functions. I think our biggest challenge is how to combat anti-Semitism."



**Etti Buch, 95, born exactly two months to the day before WIZO, is Chairman of Tikvah Branch of Bnoth Zion WIZO Cape Town.** "I started as a young teenager of about 10 or 13 years old, going with my mother to collect Blue Boxes. In 1949 when I got married, I knitted socks for the soldiers to send to Israel; we even put messages in the socks! We

also collected money to send to Israel. We knew we had to send money from the Diaspora, otherwise Israel could not survive.

During those years, the 'Grey Shirts' [S. African Nazi Movement of the 1930s and 40s] were very prevalent. There was anti-Semitism in the small towns as well as the larger major cities. We as Jews had to stand proud and do what we had to, so that Israel would always be there for us!

My greatest wish: that all young women should join WIZO and become dedicated to our 'homeland' as I have devoted my whole life to WIZO. If only the young women could visit Israel and see the needs of the Israeli people, they would understand that their needs are enormous, and come back to South Africa and get involved, and raise funds so as to support the many projects in Israel for the care of women and children.

It is also important that young Jewish people get involved in local Jewish communities so as to bring Judaism into their homes and families."



**Bella Silverman, Executive & Honorary Officer Bnoth Zion WIZO Cape Town, joined WIZO in the 1950s.** "A few of us decided to form a Women's Zionist League Branch. We were a handful of Jewish women in four neighbouring villages, who met once a month, and planned educational programmes about Israel.

We also raised money for WIZO by means of dances in the community and participating in fundraising organised by WIZO in Cape Town.

My motivation for joining was that I had visited Palestine in 1946 with my father, and I was dedicated at that stage to help WIZO - as I witnessed what they were doing to help the people. During those early years, Israel had to fight for its existence and the Zionist atmosphere [in the Diaspora] was very strong.

My advice to the young WIZO women of today is to study how WIZO helps women and children in their schools and institutions and understand how important this work is to Israel."

**Editor's Note: This is Part I of a two-part series. In the next issue of WIZO Review, look out for the ladies of Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Switzerland, and the UK, and more from some of the countries in Part 1.**

# The Story of Esther

*A story not about Esther from the 'Megila' we read on Purim, but Esther, a WIZO activist in Poland in the 1930s, who met her fate as one of the six million Jews who were murdered in World War II*

Shula Kopf



Esther Nussbaum Sawczycka was a dreamer. Even as a small girl she told her little brother, Shmuel, that one day they would all go to Eretz Israel and build a house near the sea and never be afraid of who they are. They would look at people straight in the eyes, she said.

Esther never got to realize that dream. Probably the last person whose eyes she saw was the German who shot her dead on December 17, 1942 and didn't even notice her as her body slumped into a mass grave along with her husband, her mother and 3,000 others in the Polish town of Baranowicze. She was just two months short of being 39.

## Esther and WIZO

But while she lived, Esther did fulfill a few dreams, mostly involving WIZO.

Esther had founded the WIZO chapter in Baranowicze, a town in the easternmost part of Poland where she lived once she married.

As soon as she heard in 1933 that a WIZO international conference was planned in 1935 in the new, white city of Tel Aviv, Esther decided she had to attend. What did it matter if it was not proper for a small town Jewish woman to make such a trip on her own? What did it matter that her

husband was completely against it and didn't want to give her the money? What did it matter that to reach Eretz Israel she would have to take a journey of several weeks including many trains and a ship? Nothing was going to stop her from being in the same auditorium with Dr. Chaim Weizmann, Golda Meir and David Ben-Gurion to see history in the making. There would be 400 delegates from 44 countries and Esther would be one of them.

Esther financed the trip by dismissing her Polish maid two years before the conference, doing all the cleaning and cooking herself. Every month she put away the salary she would have paid the maid into her "Palestine dream fund." She managed to save half the money she needed, and borrowed the rest from friends. She packed dry toast in her suitcase so she could save money on food.

## After the conference

Upon her return, Esther convinced her husband to make aliya. It was a hard sell because Fishel Sawczicki did not share his wife's passion for Zionism. When a local man was among those killed in the Arab riots of 1936 in Palestine, Fishel decided that Zionism was a dangerous enterprise and the prudent course was to stay in Poland. Six years later that decision would cost the family their lives. Only their daughter, Eva, survived.

## Esther's letters

Before the war, Esther had written soulful, intimate letters to a childhood friend, Yochaved Nosovski, who had emigrated from Poland to California. After the war, Yochaved gave the letters to Esther's daughter, Eva. The letters open a window into the soul of a Jewish woman, a Zionist, living in a small Polish town before the war. Below are some excerpts.

### Letter dated October 5, 1936

Dear Jachciu,

*Today when I am already the mother of a grown daughter, I still like to daydream during free moments and to transport myself to a magical world different than everyday reality. I cannot, to this day, live in reality. I always dream up some scheme, always create something in my imagination. I could not live any other way.*

*I suppose that if it weren't that way, life would lose its colour and meaning for me.*



Working committee of KKL in Baranowicze 1933-34. Esther is sitting on the front row



ועד הפועל של הקרן הקיימת לישראל בברנוביץ  
(1933—1934)

יושבים מימין: ד. קצנלסון, ד"ר פרס, מ.  
סוקסי, גבי סבצ'יסקי.  
עומדים מימין: ש. ברמן, איטה בילוצקי  
(ברמן), ח. רוזין, ב. צ. פולונסקי.

However, my husband, children and home are very important and fill up a large portion of my being, but I must admit - not entirely.

I don't belong to that group of women for whom domesticity fills up their entire existence. I must have my own ideas and my own dreams. About myself I can write to you that I live in a small town, more or less like Siedlce (where the two girls were born and grew up). I volunteer in community affairs. I am president of a Zionist women's organization called WIZO and our organization works very well. Last year I visited Palestine for our first worldwide conference [in Palestine]. I visited many Kibbutzim and, it goes without saying, many towns. After visiting Palestine, I travelled the length and breadth of Egypt. I also spent several days in Venice, in short, seven unforgettable days.

Reading about my travels you might get the impression that I am rich. That is not the case. We are middle class, with only limited resources, but I had decided to make my dreams of travelling come true. When I returned, I paid some of the debt [from the trip] each month. It was difficult because other than domestic work, I also help in our business and create the sauces that we sell. I also had an obstacle from Fishel who was dead against the trip. I overcame all the odds. And the trip was so beautiful that I am not sorry for all the tears I shed. I am not sorry about the extra work. I am not sorry about anything.

### Letter written on March 28th, 1937

I can't help but think what lovely little girls we were. Do you remember how we went once to Baruch Jaffe to ask him how much money would be needed to start a school in Palestine because we were planning to be co-directors of a new type of school that will have a very high standard of excellence. Do you remember how graciously he received us? He didn't laugh and spoke to us with such seriousness. Do you remember our joint piggybank into which we put our savings meant to create this new school?

I must confess to you, that very often it quite overwhelms me. I miss my childhood days and my childhood friends. I don't know what's wrong with me. By all accounts I should be happy. I have a very pleasant husband, two beloved children. I have the respect and esteem of those around me. I am valued for my Zionist activities. I gave a few speeches that were well received. It is easy to rise to the top in a small town.

So, I should feel happy and satisfied. I feel healthy and full of zest for life. I don't feel the weight of the years. Imagine that I still love to read travel books, I love Joseph Conrad. I love Jack London. I dream about travels. Reading these books I fantasize about being swept away to faraway places. I love waking up early in the summer and riding on my own on a bicycle far away from town. I pedal my way up hilly roads to have the thrill of riding a wild ride down. I go to the movies often. And if we have a theatre company coming to town, I would not dream of missing it.

In one word, I still feel light and young. It's a shame that circumstances forced me into a monotonous way of life. Fate likes to taunt us.

I, who feel alive only when I am on the move, when I create or achieve something, when I make plans, am forced to live in such a Baranowicze where it is difficult to spread one's wings, where a cultured social circle is difficult to find. I have many acquaintances, but no one really close because the ladies here are small town. Their psychology is completely small town bourgeois. Small minds and small hearts and I have nothing in common with them. I meet with them in WIZO meetings and other than that, not at all.

I was very happy to hear that you, too, work in a women's organization to improve the lot of women. I am happy that the idea of rebuilding Palestine is as dear to you as it is to me. I was very intrigued by your speech about the rights of Jews to Palestine.



Active group in the 'League for Eretz Israel.' Esther is centre front

Esther's last letter, written the year before Germany invaded Poland, proved to be chillingly prophetic.

### Letter written September 18, 1938

*Russia, which was supposed to be the country of liberty, has become a jail. It's horrible just to think about what is happening there. And in fact, what is happening all over the world. It's best at this time not to read newspapers and to shut off the radio when they start to announce the news. And in general it's best to be oblivious because otherwise you run into the danger of your hair turning prematurely white.*

*It is so bad in our world that only a few select people can claim to have moments of happiness.*

*We need to strive with all our strength for those few moments.*

### Esther, head of the Underground

It is not surprising to learn that Esther, feisty to the end, was the head of the women's section of the ghetto underground. Relations between the underground and the Judenrat were strained. Esther's husband, Fishel Sawczycki, a respected businessman, was elected to the economic section of the Judenrat. In his treatise on the Baranowicz ghetto, Hebrew University Professor Yehuda Bauer writes: "A third member of the Judenrat, Sawczycki, begged the Underground to consider their responsibility to the ghetto population as a whole and not to stage an uprising; he was evidently unaware that his wife was the head of the women's branch of the Underground."

Thinking about Esther, knowing what happened to her, it is heartbreaking to imagine her waking up early on a summer day and deciding to ride her bicycle far away from her small provincial town, lost in her own inner world. She strains and pushes to pedal her way up a hilly road not giving up until she reaches the summit. Then, she turns around, and with the wind blowing in her hair, she rides down, her feet off the pedals, a free, wild ride.



Esther (r) and a friend walking along a street in Baranowicz

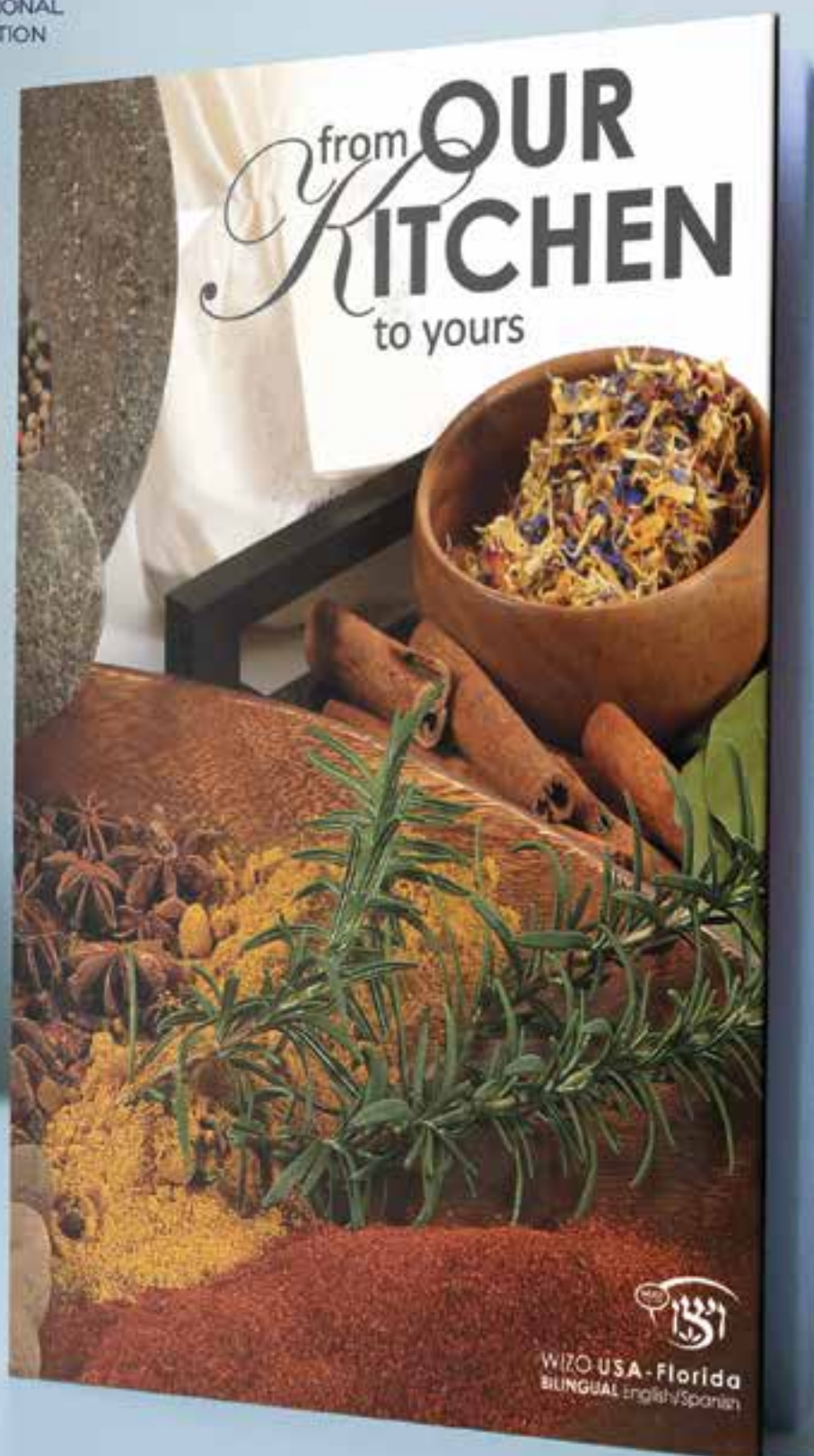
**\*Shula Kopf is Esther's niece, a journalist and a regular contributor to *The Jerusalem Report*. Shula has translated Esther's letters in preparation for a book she is writing.**





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# Balancing a Career and WIZO

*President of the highly-successful WIZO Australia federation, Gilla Liberman shares her insights on leadership roles in WIZO*

Zohar Friedman



Gilla Liberman

"I never thought I'd be the president of WIZO Australia," says Gilla Liberman. Today, WIZO Australia is a highly successful, effective and well run federation, with responsibility for several important and thriving WIZO projects; the federation's flagship project is WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim Boarding School in Haifa, a school where the most at-risk children are sent by court order.

Gilla's mother is a WIZO member, so she's grown up with an awareness of WIZO and the potential for a sisterhood of likeminded peers. But frankly – and Gilla Liberman is refreshingly straightforward and frank – the reality was that she joined as "a young mother of a little baby, who needed to get out of the house." That was some 35 years ago.

## A balancing act: a WIZO career and a teaching career

"Life is a balance," says Gilla. "Everyone has to make choices on how they spend their time." For Gilla, that meant balancing her career – as a teacher of History and English for over 35 years – with what she refers to as her "second career," WIZO, which has spanned serving as honorary secretary of WIZO New South Wales, to state president of WIZO New South Wales for six years, and finally culminating today in her role as President of WIZO Australia.

"My history within the movement – from the group level up – goes back well over 30 years. I've ended up in a leadership role in the Jewish community in Australia doing wonderful, rewarding work. This is my volunteer career."

As a career woman, WIZO leader, mother and grandmother, Gilla also has the ability to talk to young women about balancing career, family and WIZO – something which not all senior WIZO members can relate to. "Sometimes when I talk to young women and they say, 'I'm so busy, I can't do WIZO because I've got my children and I've got my career.' I say, 'Yes, and?' I had a paid career, but I always found time for

my WIZO career. I would leave school at 3:30, and I'd drive up to WIZO. It was always school, WIZO and of course my family. I have two daughters and five grandchildren now – which is yet another kind of career!"

## Recruitment

Regardless of the success WIZO Australia has experienced under Gilla's leadership, and the fact that Gilla may be a relatable figure to potential and emerging WIZO members, "recruitment is definitely an issue," she asserts.

"There are two questions – how to attract young women is one. How to keep them, though, is the bigger issue. Young women expect really quick results. WIZO is a lifetime commitment and that scares young women. We form young groups; after a few years, they fade away, they want to do something else. And then we have people relying on us who need our services and we can't abdicate that responsibility."

However, while the issue of long-term commitment is a puzzle for which Gilla is still looking for an answer, Australia has had successes in getting young women involved, even if it's just for the short term. "One thing we've done is to give them a goal," Gilla explains. "One young group raises money for toys. It keeps them involved and focused because they have a target."

Gilla also encourages new members by talking about "how our numbers matter." She explains to potential recruits, "We are at the UN. We have a strong, Jewish international voice. We are important in creating Jewish identity and continuity. Sydney held a rally in support of Israel during the Protective Edge summer campaign. I could send an email to 2000 women – 10,000 people showed up in support. We have a voice. WIZO gives us an opportunity to be part of a strong Jewish women's network."

## Seeing WIZO in action

Part of the puzzle of long-term commitment is seeing WIZO projects. "Organizing a membership tour is difficult because of the distance," Gilla explains, "but we've told members to let us know if they are visiting Israel: we'll organize a tour through the Tourism Department for them to visit some projects. They go to day care centres, WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim, or our women's centre in Modi'in. I cannot emphasize





*Gilla Liberman with her mother, Rachel Moses, receiving her Rebecca Sieff award*

enough how important those visits are. When they see the projects in the flesh, they can't help but get motivated. They come back enthused. They tell other members and their groups. We have made it part of the conversation. Despite the distance, we have one of the highest number of visitors to projects."

Gilla remembers the impression her first visit some 20 years ago had on her. "I took my family to WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim. I saw blue folders. I asked what they were and I was told they were individual learning programs for each student. At the time, I was trying to convince my school that we needed a remedial program. I could see a difference and I much preferred what was happening at WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim."

For Gilla, the opportunity to be part of this women's network has many layers of meaning and many possibilities. Currently, fundraising is on Gilla's radar as an important issue, right along with recruitment. "We've had some very successful campaigns renovating our dorms at WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim," she explains. "Now, we're renovating the school buildings – it's a major undertaking."

## The Jewish community

As with any WIZO federation, WIZO Australia is an integral part of the local Jewish community – and the issues that the community faces, WIZO faces. Australia is home to a sizeable Jewish population, approximately 100,000 members, distributed chiefly between Sydney and Melbourne, with smaller communities in Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide.

"We have the same challenges and problems as everyone," Gilla explains, "especially assimilation and intermarriage, and lately, increasing anti-Semitism. At one point, we felt protected and far away from anti-Semitism. Due to some recent incidents, the community now sees there are problems. Five people were attacked walking home on Shabbat. A few months ago, a group of teenage boys got on a Jewish school bus and harassed and scared the children. Then there was the act of terrorism in central Sydney by a Muslim extremist –although this wasn't directed at Jews. The Australian general community was shocked – this showed their naiveté. Australians were shocked that this could happen in the middle of the city on a workday to innocent coffee drinkers."

While the Jewish community is also shocked and dismayed by the rise of anti-Semitism and terrorism, Gilla explains that it has taken them less by surprise than their non-Jewish fellow citizens. "The Jewish community is more protected. We have community security groups to protect schools, synagogues and community functions. Melbourne has the largest community of Holocaust survivors outside of Israel. We have a history and a memory of violence against Jews, and it's made us take precautions."

## Combating anti-Israelism

The community, with the help of WIZO, has also had success in combatting blatant attempts at anti-Israelism, which many Jewish Australians see as veiled expressions of anti-Semitism.

"It is very distressing to see the continued attacks on Israel in the media. Our community, including WIZO members, reacts by writing letters to the press or complaining to TV stations if we read or see programmes that give the wrong view of Israel," Gilla explains. "Just recently there was a disruption at Sydney University when protests were led by Associate Professor Jake Lynch, to a speech by Colonel Richard Kemp supporting the IDF's attempts to avoid killing civilians when at war. A petition has been circulating with 6000 signatures to have Prof Lynch lose his job at the university."

There was also an incident where supporters of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement protested against patronizing a Max Brenner restaurant, an Israeli chain. "We encouraged our members and the community to continue to patronise these restaurants," Gilla recalls. "One sit-in was attended by politicians, both Jewish and non-Jewish as well as community leaders and members to show our support for this business. The attempt to destroy the Max Brenner franchise has faded away because of communal and general reaction."

"It is a constant battle and new attempts are continuously made to attack the Jewish community and Israel. WIZO members are fully involved in these communal responses, and we consistently add our voices to any relevant protests."

## It is good for the soul

For Gilla, WIZO is her vehicle for fulfilling multiple aspirations –her commitment to Israel, her passion for her local community, and her connection to worldwide Jewry

"WIZO, to me, is my connection to Israel and my work for the Jewish people. We have to do something positive in this life. That's what my WIZO work is. That's why I keep pushing and doing. I know I'm making a difference. It is good for the soul – I love it."



*Gilla Liberman and her husband, Henry Liberman*

# 'Young' Donor Appreciation

*A movement's strength rests on its values. WIZO's strength rests on the passing of these values from generation to generation*

*The stories below highlight how the children of chaverot from all corners of the world have learned these values and dedicated their Bat or Bar Mitzvah to WIZO*

## Shirel Feingold-Studnik, Berlin



*Shirel surrounded by the children at the WIZO Germany day care centre in Rishon LeZion*

When Shirel planned her visit to a WIZO day care centre sponsored by WIZO Germany in Rishon LeZion, she had no idea how powerful an experience it would be. The day care centre is located in a neighbourhood which is home to a large number of Ethiopian immigrants. Many of the children come from severely disadvantaged families or have been assessed as being at risk.

As a result of the visit, Shirel dedicated her Bat Mitzvah gifts to finance the renovation of a playground at the centre. Clearly, she is following in the footsteps of her mother, Shoshi, honorary WIZO Berlin board member, in working to improve the lives of people in the State of Israel. As a young woman entering the Jewish world, Shirel knows that "When you invest in children at a young age you can make an impact on their lives for a successful future."

## Josh Cohen, London

When Josh met with teenagers at the WIZO Gruss Community Centre (sponsored by WIZO UK and WIZO Holland) in Afula, he was surprised to learn that there are many children whose families are unable to provide them with a meaningful Bar or Bat Mitzvah experience. Deeply moved by the fact that these teens longed to have a Bar Mitzvah, Josh decided to help them.



*Josh Cohen*

He organized a 33km bicycle ride, passing locations which have played a major part in the first 13 years of his life: the hospital where he was born, his schools, home and synagogues. The proceeds of the ride, together with a proportion of his gifts, were used to purchase Tefillin for Bar Mitzvah pupils at the Community Centre.

## Sassi Liberman, Melbourne

Sassi is a well-spoken young lady, who wanted her Bat Mitzvah experience to be fun, exciting, and meaningful. A leader in *WIZO Kids* – a group for boys and girls ages 6-13 – Sassi clearly stated her commitment to keeping Jewish values strong, having learned them from WIZO Melbourne leaders.



*Sassi Liberman*

In honour of her Bat Mitzvah, Sassi donated her gifts towards WIZO Australia's Twinning Programme, which funds Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies for underprivileged boys and girls who otherwise would not be able to celebrate this milestone. A role model at 12, we know she will go far.



*Ella Singer*

## Ella Singer, Sydney

Looking into programmes for her Bat Mitzvah project, Ella heard about WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim, a boarding school for severely troubled teenagers sponsored by WIZO Australia. Intrigued to learn more, during their trip to Israel, Ella and her family had the opportunity



to visit the boarding school in Haifa, a visit which cemented her conviction to support this important project.

As Ella's mother, Julia says, "During such an important time in a child's life, we need to remind them of the many blessings they have and how there are many who may not be as blessed." The experience of her visit to WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim was formative for Ella who now states, "Today, I am ready to take on greater responsibility at home and within our community."



*Olivia Domansky*

## Olivia Domansky, NY

Olivia's Bat Mitzvah was all about learning; learning from the Torah portion of Noah who "had the responsibility to change all of mankind and not just his family and close friends;" learning from all four of her father's grandparents – all Holocaust survivors who, despite their devastating experiences, maintained a strong sense of Judaism, pursued a formal Jewish education for their children and kept a Jewish home. As she says, "I hope they know how committed I am to continuing our Jewish heritage."

Her commitment shines through her work for WIZO, particularly on helping children in Israel who were neglected by their parents and can no longer live in their homes.

One of the most meaningful parts for Olivia was "sponsoring Healing Art Kits which provide an emotional escape for the children in the south of Israel, who live in fear of missile and terror attacks. To me, this is the biggest mitzvah I have ever performed."

And, she adds, "As a people, we are each responsible for one another in good times and in bad. I feel such pride that I have a connection to Israel and to WIZO. My efforts for *Tikun Olam* will continue to be done through WIZO's work."

## WIZO Florida: A Community Bat Mitzvah

Every year WIZO Florida holds a Community Bat Mitzvah celebration. During weekly meetings, the girls bond together and are taught the importance of *Tzedakah* as a lifelong mission. Each girl is encouraged to venture out and create her own fundraising initiative. Every year there is a 100% participation in fundraising activities – every participant does something. The girls are taught first-hand that any amount can make a difference.

This year we boasted 44 exceptional girls from all over South Florida who collectively raised over \$18,000! This money was sent to aid and assist WIZO Bar/Bat Mitzvah programmes in Israel.

Daniella Ludmir sold t-shirts as an anti-bullying campaign. With her mother's help, Daniella sold them door-to-door and at local bazaars. Gabriela Abramowitz, another member of the group, baked and sold challahs every week for Shabbat. Through her generosity and love of community, Danelle Levi, granddaughter of Jana Falic, WIZO USA Co President, contributed to each and every Bat Mitzvah girl's campaign. She created a remarkable cycle of *Tzedakah*, a value and a family tradition which she holds dearly.



*Daniella Ludmir*

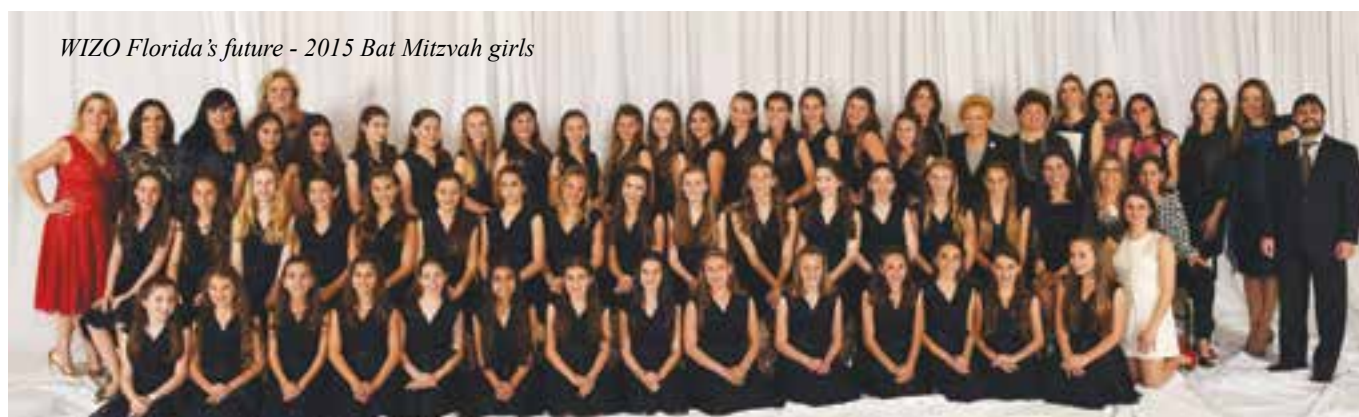


*Danelle Levi with her grandmother Jana Falic*



*Gabriella Abramowitz*

***These girls are our future and WIZO Florida has equipped them with the knowledge and understanding of Jewish values of charity and giving back to the community. We know they will take WIZO to new horizons!***



*WIZO Florida's future - 2015 Bat Mitzvah girls*

# WIZO Denmark - A small community, a small federation, but totally committed to WIZO and Israel

## Dorrit Reiter, president of WIZO Denmark

WIZO Denmark was established in 1946 by a group of ladies under the leadership of Mrs Meta Melchior who saw the need of supporting women and children in the Jewish homeland.

Within a short time, WIZO became the biggest Jewish organisation in Denmark reaching more than 500 members. Today, we struggle to keep up this figure; the Jewish sports club "Hakoah" has more members than WIZO. Nevertheless, WIZO Denmark has always been and still is a significant part of Jewish life in Denmark.

WIZO Denmark has an office in "The Jewish House" in which both the Jewish community and several Jewish organisations have their offices. Although Denmark is twice as large as Israel it is still a small country, with 5.6 million inhabitants. Traditionally, the Jews live in and around the capital, Copenhagen, so WIZO Denmark does not have branches, but many of the members are organised in small groups and they have their own meetings throughout the year.

## Many activities

All through the year, most of the members are very active in planning and executing the annual bazaar in November, and many other fundraising activities such as concerts, fashion shows, occasional lectures on a topical theme and festive balls. For many years, WIZO's bazaar has been the biggest annual Jewish event, but for the last few years the Jewish Festival has taken place – in which WIZO of course participates – and this attracts many people.

## WIZO Denmark's project

As WIZO Denmark is a small federation, we can only commit to supporting one project, which is the Lotus Day Care Centre in Karmiel. Lotus was established in 1995 in a building owned by the municipality of Karmiel and is located in a well-established part of the city. Seventy-nine children, including six welfare referrals and one special-needs child are divided into three classrooms. The children's ages are from six months to three years. Twelve percent are of Ethiopian origin, twelve percent are from single parent families and twenty percent are siblings of other children.

For the last six years the day care centre has operated unique programmes to assess and identify developmental delays in children, by training both staff and parents alike as well



WIZO Denmark Executive. Dorrit Reiter is 3<sup>rd</sup> from left

as teaching environmental awareness through a recycling project. In 2014, parents gave special lectures to the staff on a variety of subjects, including emergency health measures, such as CPR for children.

Ongoing activities include music, arts and crafts, story time and sensory motor games; gymnastics take place daily. The DCC runs a two-week summer camp open to all early-age children in the community, and has an extended hours' programme to accommodate working families. Family activities, including dinners and holiday celebrations, take place throughout the year.

## Additional support

From time to time, WIZO Denmark has given extra support to renovate playgrounds, classrooms, new awnings and anything else that was needed. Last year, the kitchen was renovated and enlarged in order to include a meat menu for the children. After a request from the municipality the DCC is planned to be extended this year into a Triple C – a Comprehensive Care Care (previously called multi-purpose) with support from WIZO Denmark.

Besides supporting our Lotus day care centre, when possible, WIZO Denmark participates in special World WIZO campaigns such as shelters in the South. Sometimes we get a donation which enables us to support Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations, Pesach baskets or similar important projects. We are currently supporting the renovation of a Family Unit in CHW Hadassim School and Youth Village.

All members of WIZO Denmark are happy to be part of an organisation like WIZO through which we can support the less fortunate people of Israel to have a better future and we wish to see the dream of peace between Israel and their neighbours come true.





WIZO@95  
A PHOTOGRAPHIC  
JOURNEY



# WIZO-Opportunities

**Noa** carries the key to their apartment tied to her wrist. She never knows where her mother is and the refrigerator is always empty. **She does not believe she has any opportunities.**



**Noa has no one to ensure she doesn't give up.  
That is why WIZO must step in.**

**Make an IMPACT – give these  
children, teenagers and women an  
OPPORTUNITY to shine.**

**INSPIRE them to dream again –  
and they will create endless  
OPPORTUNITIES for a better life.**

For further information, and to make online contributions, visit our website:

**[www.wizo.org](http://www.wizo.org)**

World WIZO Fundraising Division  
38 David Hamelech Boulevard  
Tel Aviv, Israel 64237







## The Coming Generation

WIZO is proudly celebrating her 95th birthday and I am shiny-eyed with pride at being a member of this historic organisation. My WIZO sisters and I are active contributors to Israel's history and are playing a quantifiable part in the history of our Jewish people. I walk with pride in the esteemed footprints of Rebecca Sieff, Vera Weizmann and generations of Jewish women of valour who have been grassroots members of WIZO in their lifetime. I strive to make a difference as they have, and to motivate WIZO Avivs worldwide to do the same.

Charged with the task of inspiring **Avivs - the Coming Generation of WIZO**, I reminisce with sparkling enthusiasm Aviv's leaps forward these past four years:

Championing our own vibrant **Aviv brand**, World WIZO Aviv Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp groups, blogging accounts and a huge global web of a tightly bound 'family'. Millennials (as the Coming Generation is termed) live in a world with different motivating factors than those of previous generations and understanding them is key to ensuring their participation in the next 100 years of WIZO.

This new generation is a **culture of collaboration** that uses technology to connect with the world and their peers in ways that allow them to have deeper and more globalised connections. We only have to look at 'sharing' via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc to know how inherently important connectivity is to them and how linked they really are. They access information in seconds, communicate anywhere in the world on Face Time, video conference in virtual time, crowd-source and information share with seamless electronic collaboration. Diverse in their thoughts, unbelievably creative and cutting edge, they are a valuable lot of WIZO women!

Harnessing this collaborative culture provides WIZO Aviv members with an opportunity to participate, feel fulfilment, unity and connection with Israel and Jews worldwide. This, in turn, builds commitment to the organisation.

Avivs want to find their purpose and be passionate about what they do. They want to know: **How am I making a**

**difference? How is this meaningful for me?** They demand transparency and want to see where their money goes. They want to see international collaboration, partnering and sharing of expertise. Education, sports, cultural exchange programmes, volunteer programmes, social programmes and much much more. The global WIZO network is the millennial form of membership.

WIZO as a 95-year-old established international network with the delicious bonus of being a sisterhood, further connects global Jewish women on an emotional and spiritual level, and fulfils our WIZO members' desire to participate in meaningful collaborative social altruism.

As much as the citizens of Israel rely on the support of WIZO's global family, so too do the Jewish communities of the world need a vehicle for unity with Israel to combat anti-Semitism and BDS in their own communities and to continue to give each other strength.

WIZO is the beacon of light and the answer to Aviv's global connection to Judaism and our beloved Israel.



*Laurienne  
Baitz*

# Professionals with a purpose

*Young professionals from the UK spend a hectic few days experiencing WIZO and Israel*

Rolene Marks

*"It was wonderful to see first-hand the difference WIZO makes. Regardless of race or religion, WIZO offers the people it helps a nurturing, caring and empowering environment.*

*I can now proudly call myself a WIZO supporter."*  
Kaela Starkman

WIZO is all about empowerment! Over the last few years, delegations of young professionals from the United Kingdom (Young WIZO Professionals) have been visiting Israel with the aim of living WIZO, breathing WIZO and returning home to fundraise. Young WIZO is also about changing the perception amongst the younger generation of what WIZO is all about!

Visiting the WIZO projects and witnessing first-hand the incredible work done by the professionals and volunteers is enough to turn anyone into a WIZO fan (and hopefully member!) for life!

## Why young professionals?

So why the focus on young professionals? Young professionals are not only the future leaders but also give valuable insight and ideas as how we can adapt our movement to changing times. They are also the contributors and decision-makers of the future. It is all about empowering professionals to have purpose and what better than to become WIZO members for life.

The most recent group was comprised of a variety of professionals working or specializing in different fields. From marketing to social media gurus, these impressive young people were encouraged to bring their skill sets and think BIG! How could they help with the following?

- Build a brighter future for the people of Israel through charitable giving
- Integrate with society and support people in poverty
- Grow and be the driving force of WIZOuk

The group was accompanied by life coach, Alan Abrahams, who encouraged the participants to open up and truly look at themselves. The philosophy behind this was when you can help yourself you can go forward to help other people. Alan spoke about relationships, how to achieve your goals, making valuable contributions, the six human needs and



WIZOuk Young Professionals outside WIZOuk sponsored Rebecca Sieff Centre for the Family, Jerusalem

how to channel all this into WIZO. The aim is to educate young people about the importance of WIZO to Israeli society, and show them the WIZO projects.

## Export this idea

Hearing about the projects and then experiencing them first hand is invaluable and this model has been extremely successful in the UK. This is an activity that can be exported to all our Federations.

Here is what some of the participants had to say about their life-changing trip:

### Rachel Posner, 28, Owner, Megabooth, – YWIZO Co-Chair

*"I didn't know too much about WIZO, besides an older lady mentioning it to me in Synagogue once.*

*I absolutely loved the YWIZO Israel trip! An experience that has opened my eyes to WIZO projects and boosted my passion for WIZO for life! The group was carefully selected and it was so easy to get along with everyone and feel comfortable. Keeping the group small and personal works wonders!"*

### Simon Cyna, 27, Accountant, Islington,

*"The YWIZO Trip for me was really life-affirming. It was incredible to see the scale of support WIZO provides, and amazing to see what an integral role WIZO plays in 'modern day' Israel. It was really great to see that WIZO actually makes such a positive contribution to so many lives"*

### David Weinberg, 35, IT Manager, Elstree,

*"I saw WIZO as a women-focused fundraising organisation, which my mother supported.*

*The YWIZO trip was very inspiring. I now have a deep understanding of what WIZO does and who they support. I have come back with a passion for supporting WIZO."*

**It is clear that WIZO is not only improving and impacting the lives of Israeli citizens but also has significantly charmed professional men and women who are perfectly poised to be the next generation of leaders. I think we can say it is empowerment at its best.**



# One World: A WIZO Summer Camp in Israel

*People say that in WIZO, dreams can come true...*

Six months ago, the idea of the first ever WIZO Summer Camp in Israel was just a dream. The World WIZO Organization & Tourism Division teamed up with **BIG IDEA Educational Projects** – an Israeli company specializing in summer camps in Israel. An exciting programme, impressive and eye-catching brochures were distributed to participants at the 2015 MOR (Meeting of Representatives), and our expectations were high.

## The camp opens

After months of hard work, the first session of the WIZO-ONE WORLD Summer Camp in WIZO Nir Ha'emek Youth Village (sponsored by WIZO USA & WIZO Argentina) was launched in the first week of July.

As expected, WIZO Federations immediately engaged in an outstanding effort to provide scholarships enabling WIZO students to attend the camp. This is the essence of our great movement: WIZO chaverot worldwide united in the bonds of sisterhood, showing unconditional love and a deep commitment to helping needy children in Israel. Their benevolence made it possible for 28 children from different WIZO institutions to participate in this memorable and life-changing experience and to them we say a huge thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

## Five fascinating tracks

ONE WORLD is synonymous with fun, excitement and enrichment within a safe, supportive, open and collaborative environment. ONE WORLD appreciates the natural world, demonstrated through its five tracks:

- Outdoor Survival Skills
- Impact-Media in Action
- Horseback Riding & Animal Caring
- Natural Arts & Photography
- Re-Powering the Planet

This year, WIZO touched the lives of a hundred children from both Israel and abroad in two exciting camp sessions. The feedback we received from parents, children and the staff has been overwhelmingly positive. Here are some of their reactions:

**Teddy, father of Lea:** "Thank you for making our daughter so happy. How do you and the team create such wonderful and magic moments? Lea had an amazing time and I know that she will keep in touch with many new friends all over the world."



*Prof Rivka Lazovsky and WIZO Nir Ha'Emek school director Esti Cohen (5th and 6th from left at back) enjoying time with the 'Happy Campers.'*

**Marina, mother of Nir:** "Nir came back from camp more mature and with renewed self-confidence. He had a wonderful time and asked me to enquire about the second session. I want to thank the camp counsellors for their professionalism and personal attention."

One of the campers said: "This was the first camp where I didn't cry, the children were friendly and non-judgmental and I really enjoyed the activities."

When interviewed about connecting and communicating with the campers from abroad, **Shay, a student from WIZO Nahalal**, remarked that he was in a group with a girl from France and they spoke in English all the time. In the beginning he was anxious about the language barrier but if he made a mistake his fellow campers were understanding and always willing to help.

These stories are testament to the fact that ONE WORLD is a big success. We look forward to offering more children this wonderful opportunity and expose them to ONE WORLD next year, in the summer of 2016.

We encourage all our WIZO Federations to help us spread the word about this special summer camp. In the coming months, we will be sending you promotional materials and **would love to see children from your community at WIZO-ONE WORLD 2016.**

ONE WORLD helped to realize the dream of the WIZO movement, as well as parents and children from all over the world. Participating in ONE WORLD gave these youngsters a better understanding of WIZO, at the same time enjoying an unforgettable experience full of WIZO values and gave them the chance to meet Jewish peers from all over the world – the WIZO way.

# Creative, confident & connected

## *WIZO women utilise their professional skills and success for WIZO's benefit*

Ninety-five years on, and WIZO women continue to raise the bar, bringing crucial skills and expertise to strengthen WIZO around the world. These women, who have carved successful careers in a variety of fields, utilize their resources to benefit our movement, adding value to their volunteerism.

As Gloria Vanderbilt so aptly put it: "I've always believed that one woman's success can only help another woman's success", and there is nothing like a compelling, personal story to inspire and motivate other women. We invite you to meet just a few of these exceptional women who combine professionalism and volunteerism not only for the greater good of WIZO in their home federation and their local Jewish community, but also for the Jewish world.

### **Myra Osrin – Bnoth Zion WIZO, Cape Town South Africa**

In 1967, as a young mother of two small children, Myra Osrin joined Bnoth Zion WIZO, Cape Town. She founded the Hadar Aviv branch, becoming a member of the Executive and serving as chairman of Bnoth Zion WIZO from 1980 to 1982. In 2000, she was elected as its Honorary Life Chairman.

Myra served on the Western Province Zionist Council 1980-1992, where she chaired the Aliyah and Hasbara Committees. From 1984-88, she was chairman of the Council (the second woman to hold this position since its establishment in 1940). During her term of office she founded the successful communal monthly newspaper, the Cape Jewish Chronicle, and the Cape Town Holocaust Memorial Council which promoted and coordinated Holocaust remembrance and education in the Cape Town Jewish community. Myra also served as a member of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (Cape Council), from 1984- 2002.

### **Travelling 'Anne Frank' exhibition**

In 1993 Myra accepted an invitation from the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, to organize an extensive national tour of South Africa of its international travelling exhibition "Anne Frank in the World." The eighteen-month exhibition tour commenced in March 1995, a month before the first post-Apartheid elections which brought to an end white rule with its institutionalized racism. The exhibition tour was a great success, drawing huge attendances throughout the country, including many thousands of school pupils and their teachers.

Through this experience, Myra recognized that the history of the Holocaust and the issues it raised could play an important role in assisting the fledgling democracy of South Africa to understand and appreciate the nature of democracy and to heighten public awareness of the

dangers of stereotyping, racial discrimination, intolerance and the implication of indifference.

### **Holocaust Centre opens**

In 1996, Myra starting working to establish a permanent centre for Holocaust remembrance and education in South Africa. With the assistance of community leaders, the Cape Town Holocaust Centre opened in 1999, with Myra serving as its Honorary Director. One of the Centre's principal goals was to promote Holocaust and Human Rights education in schools. The success of the Centre exceeded all expectations with an ever increasing number of pupils and their teachers participating in its educational programmes. The Centre developed valuable teacher support materials and conducted extensive teacher training workshops.

In 2002 the National Department of Education revised the curriculum for the "new" South Africa, taking the significant decision to introduce a study of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust as a mandatory module in the Grade 9 History curriculum in all government schools. The revised curriculum was implemented in 2005 and, to meet the ever-growing need to provide education programmes for pupils and teachers, Myra promoted the formation of the South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation with two additional Centres in Durban and Johannesburg.

The Cape Town Holocaust Centre, with its world class exhibition and acclaimed educational programmes, has been universally acknowledged. After retirement as Director in 2006, Myra has continued to play a significant role on the Board of Trustees of both the Cape Town Centre and the national Foundation.



*Myra Osrin*



## Miriam Wizman, Chairperson WIZO Los Angeles

Integrity, hard work, and serving a greater cause are principal values to Miriam Wizman. Born in Santiago, Chile, Miriam moved to Israel with her family as an adolescent, just before the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. Too young to serve in



the army, Miriam volunteered to help soldiers by handing out food to them. When asked about her leadership style, Miriam explains, "I learned early on to count on myself and do what needs to be done". After living in Europe while her husband attended medical school, the family relocated to Los Angeles in 1989. At first, Miriam worked as an employee in an insurance agency before venturing out on her own. Motivated by her love for her family, she built up a thriving business based on 'hard work, honesty, and always doing her best' and soon became a top national producer and financial advisor, serving as a consultant for leading companies in the field of insurance, retirement and pension planning.

### Assisting WIZO with professionalism

From the outset of Miriam's association with WIZO, she channelled her professional expertise into assisting the organization in many ways. It is thanks to Miriam's efforts and generosity that WIZO Los Angeles was not only modernized but given work space in her office. "I am very proud that WIZO Los Angeles is so cost efficient. That way, all of the money raised goes directly to those in need in Israel." Miriam's effective management skills have helped WIZO Los Angeles develop into the influential chapter it is today.

Miriam has established one of the leading insurance agencies in Los Angeles, and utilized her success to spotlight WIZO's activities and spearhead recognition of Israel. Miriam's leadership and passion has attracted significant acclaim. The Consul General of Israel is a constant presence at WIZO events and numerous WIZO supporters credit Miriam with their involvement. WIZO member Rinat Newman says, "Miriam embodies the values of WIZO. Her compassion, warmth, and sincerity are remarkable. I like and identify with WIZO, but my commitment is because of Miriam."

## Recruiting younger members

Despite her success Miriam acknowledges that much still needs to be done. "We face many challenges; the most important is making WIZO relevant and attractive to the new and younger generations: recruiting younger members is the key to WIZO's future."

Miriam is devoted to her family, and also contributes to various commercial organizations. She believes that reaching out to the wider community will also advance WIZO's cause.

## Stephanie Esquenazi - WIZO Florida

Stephanie Esquenazi has been a dedicated and beloved member of WIZO Florida's Ilanit Tikvah chapter for over two decades. She spearheads the very popular WIZO Florida Community Bat Mitzvah programme and manages all aspects of its organization.

Professionally, Stephanie is a pillar of the community as the owner of D'Events, a prominent events planning business established almost 20 years ago in the South Florida area. She is not only committed to WIZO on a personal level but her business has been a major supporter of the organization. Thanks to Stephanie's kindness, love for WIZO and generosity the Community Bat Mitzvah and various other WIZO Florida events are planned with precision and executed to perfection. Stephanie and her family are devoted members of the South Florida community, supporting numerous local community centres, synagogues and agencies.

Stephanie is committed to instilling Jewish values and tradition in the future generation thus strengthening their Jewish identity. She is also passionate about helping Israeli children in need and recognizes that children are our future; they are our jewels and it is our duty to nurture, love, protect and cherish them.



**Editor's note: This is Part 1 of a two-part series**



## Argentina

### Active Argentina

OSFA WIZO has been holding a variety of events from the beginning of their year of activities, which, in the southern hemisphere, begins in March. The federation held its annual WIZO Grand Prix at the Buenos Aires Race Track, and an event for International Women's Day which featured prestigious lecturers, who spoke about legal and violence against women issues.

As usual, OSFA WIZO participated in the local Zionist organization's celebrations for Israel's 67th Independence Day and chaverot also enjoyed a social tea gathering.



*Chaverot enjoying a social tea. (l-r) Michele Bogatirsky, Dana Feinsohn, Louise Feinsohn, Nicole Kovalivker, Katy Gueler, Amalia Polack, Anita Bercovich, Perla Diamant, Tuni Honigman*



*(l-r) Alex and Dana Feinsohn helping their aunt Nicole Kovalivker at WIZO's stand for Israel's Independence Day*



*WIZO Argentina's International Women's Day event: Standing: Clara Broide, Chairperson of OSFA-WIZO Argentina Sitting (l-r) Dr. Martha Lerman Head of the Education Department of OSFA-WIZO, Silvia Plager, Margarita Barrientos, Deborah Plager, Dr. Bousquet*

## Australia

### Melbourne

### Purim Education

King David School invited WIZO Victoria to participate in their Purim activities with third-fifth graders. The children made butterflies using jelly beans, which were later to be sold at WIZO Purim parties, with the proceeds from the sale to be spent on equipment for the "School of Life" at WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim in Haifa. Additionally, the Bar and Bat Mitzvah Twinning Programme video was shown to the pre Bar/Batmitzvah-aged children.



*(l-r) Ruth Kurc, Rochelle Efron, Tania Black, WIZO Victoria President Sylvia Green*

### WIZO Victoria AGM

Some 150 people gathered at Beth Weizmann for the WIZO Victoria 67<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, where Sylvia Green was re-elected as WIZO Victoria President and many volunteers were honoured with awards acknowledging their many hours of dedication and commitment. WIZO Victoria also launched the 2015 edition of WIZO's "Women" magazine during the evening, with copies distributed through the Australian Jewish News. Guests were also shown a slide show showcasing WIZO's latest fundraising efforts – the rebuilding and refurbishment of the classrooms, the "School of Life," at WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim in Haifa.



*(l-r) Sylvia Green, WIZO Victoria Co-Treasurer Hilary Cohen, Linda Jechilevsky, Lee Lits*



## Bioterrorism Lecture

WIZO Victoria was honoured to invite Dr. Ronald Atlas, Professor of Microbiology at the University of Louisville (Kentucky, USA), to give his insights and reflections on bioterrorism at one of the federation's major functions. Professor Atlas has been a regular commentator on CNN and has met with multiple presidents in many different countries. Guests also enjoyed analysis from Michael Siegal, Chair of the Jewish Federations of North America Board of Trustees, on Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech to the US Congress, and his thoughts on the rise of European anti-Semitism.



(l-r) Sylvia Green, David Green, Jo Gostin OAM, Dr Ronald Atlas

## Perth

### Road of Hope Certificate Awarded

Esther Finkelstein has been a committed member of WIZO since joining as a young married woman. Whether holding a formal position, as a committee member or simply by filling in where needed, Esther has been a dedicated and passionate advocate for WIZO's work. Her innovative ideas, enthusiasm and hard work are legendary. Most recently Esther has devoted her talents to Mah Jong, spending many hours devising lessons, running classes and forming the outstandingly successful WIZO Mah Jong Club. Esther's children, family and friends joined WIZO in laying a charcoal brick in the Road of Hope at WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim so that there will always be a permanent recognition of her many years of hard work.

## Sydney

### Seniors' Morning Tea

WIZO in Sydney paid tribute to its elderly members by hosting its traditional Seniors' Morning Tea at the Montefiore Home. The ladies were treated to a delightful breakfast and musical entertainment, while WIZO NSW President Gloria Newhouse presented members with an update on WIZO Australia projects in Israel.



(l-r) Marla Sonnabend, WIZO Australia President Gilla Liberman, Raya Perkel

## Austria

### AVIV Purim Party

Twice a year the Jewish ZPC School of Vienna's canteen is transformed into an exciting party room for the youngest members of the Jewish community. WIZO Aviv chaverot arranged a wide array of activity stations for the youngsters including handcrafts, photography and a beauty corner. In addition the children gave *mishloach manot* to the residents of the Jewish retirement home.

Young and old dressed up in the spirit of Purim, and joined in the reading of *Megilat Esther*, led by Austria's chief rabbi Haim Eisenberg. The first prize for the raffle was a flight ticket to Israel, generously donated by El Al. Funds raised during the afternoon were sent to WIZO Austria's Zalkind Day Care Centre in Rehovot.



Some of the delicious cakes for sale at the Aviv Purim party

### Honouring Dr Feng-Shan Ho

WIZO was part of a very special ceremony in honour of the late Dr Feng-Shan Ho, who was consul general of China to Austria in 1938.

Dr Feng-Shan Ho witnessed the oppression against Jews in the streets of Vienna and felt that he must help his Jewish friends by issuing them visas to Shanghai and other places such as Palestine and the USA. He issued thousands of such visas, and occasionally stayed for hours in a Jewish house to protect the residents from the Gestapo. He continued his work despite being reprimanded and punished by his own government, and being forced out of the consulate building by the SS.

The ceremony was held on April 17<sup>th</sup> this year, when a plaque in German and Chinese dedicated to Mr Feng Shan-Ho, was placed on the building where the Chinese consulate



was in 1938 – today the Ritz Carlton Hotel, which sponsored the event. Ms Manli Ho, the daughter of Dr. Ho, who arrived with the Chinese delegation, gave a very moving and inspiring speech about her father.

Manli Ho (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) and the Chinese delegation at the dedication ceremony



## Belgium

### A 'Nobel' Evening

A very special guest was the speaker at a fundraising event at the home of Mr and Mrs Nogaret. Organised by Lea Gutterman, guests were enthralled and honoured to listen to Nobel Prize Winner Prof. François Englert, who, together with Peter Higgs, discovered the 'boson'.

Interviewed with tact and intelligence by Prof Thomas Gergely, Professor Englert exuded compassion and simplicity with a touch of humour. He took the audience through his life's journey describing the period of the Nazi occupation of Belgium when he had to hide.

The highlight of this scientific and philanthropic evening was when the professor explained to those in the audience 'not so knowledgeable about quantum physics,' exactly what the 'Higgs boson' is. Higgs and Englert originally discovered the theory of the 'boson' in the 1960s, but it took until 2012 until it was 'discovered'. The two were awarded the Nobel prize in 2013.

All those present will never forget this most prestigious evening.

## Brazil

### Board Meeting 2015

Thirty seven chaverot from Minas Gerais, Paraná, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo took part in the WIZO Brazil Fiscal and Executive Board meeting in São Paulo. The accounts for 2014 were approved and plans were made for 2015. Helena Kelner, WIZO Brazil President, talked about the MOR and visits to WIZO institutions. Former WIZO Brazil President Sarita Schaffel talked about anti-Semitism; the chapters discussed strategies to address chaverot on this topic.



*Chaverot at the Board meeting*

## Brasília

### Independence Celebrations – x 2!

WIZO Brasilia chaverot attended two separate celebrations for Israel's 67<sup>th</sup> Independence Day. The first was held at the Israeli Embassy in Brasilia with over 700 people present including (apart from WIZO chaverot!) leading community members, politicians and Army representatives. Israeli Ambassador, Reda Mansour, who is of Druze origin and much respected by the Brazilian authorities, welcomed the guests and spoke about several Brazilian diplomats who had helped save Jews from the Holocaust.

The second celebration was with Embassy personnel and the Israeli Cultural Association. In addition to the inevitable singing, dancing and food (of course!) the Aviv group held a contest about Israel, requesting that participants complete the sentence: "To me, Israel is..."

Hilton Katz won first place, with the sentence: "To me, Israel is a unique place, precisely because it is pluralistic." Second place was awarded to Luciana Katz, with the sentence "To me, Israel is old and new, beautiful and longing... the hope for a better future."



*WIZO Brazil President, Helena Kelner (centre) with WIZO Brasília chaverot at the Israeli Embassy event*

## Minas Gerais

### International Women's Day

WIZO Minas Gerais organized a celebration lunch for International Women's Day, honouring chaverot Mara Kraiser Miranda and Altina O'Hana, with speeches and numerous compliments.



*Minas Gerais chaverot celebrating International Women's Day with Altina O'Hana (standing second left) and Mara Kraiser (standing third right)*



## Pará

### Friends' Trophy 2014

WIZO Pará was honoured by Pará's Jewish school, Beit Sefer Marcos Serruya, with the *Friends' Trophy* for 2014, for all the support and contributions to the school. The trophy was given to WIZO Pará president, Esther Luna Bemuyal by chavera Cota Ben-Athar.



*Esther Luna Bemuyal (left) receiving the trophy*

### Two Simultaneous Celebrations

At WIZO Pará's joyful Purim celebration, the new Queen Esther was Anna Sarah Bemerguy Cortes, a 5<sup>th</sup> generation WIZO member! On the same day, celebrating International Women's Day, WIZO Pará honoured three women for their volunteer work for the local community: Mrs. Celeste Pinto Serruya, founder and director of the *Marcos Serruya School*, Mrs. Perola Nahon Benguigui and Mrs. Myriam Barcessat Serruya, activists of *Chevra Kadisha*.



*Anna Sarah with WIZO Pará chaverot*

## Paraná

### Closing Activity

WIZO Paraná activists organized a dinner at the Israeli Center of Paraná to close activities for the year 2014 and celebrate the results of their Bazaar. Chaverah Mariza Teruzkin, from WIZO Rio Grande do Sul, who was in Curitiba for a meeting with the Sara Zugman Aviv Group, attended.



*Chaverot from WIZO Paraná with chaverah Mariza Teruzkin*

## Pernambuco

### XXIII Jewish Culture Festival - Chanukah 5775

WIZO Pernambuco took part in the XXIII Jewish Culture Festival at the Moyses Chwartz Israeli School. Students sang Chanukah songs, danced and played musical instruments. WIZO ran a booth selling Israeli products and typical Chanukah food.



*Chaverot with items for sale at the WIZO booth*

## Rio de Janeiro

### Donating Hair for Cancer Patients

Daughters, mothers, grandmothers and friends of WIZO Rio de Janeiro chaverot expressed their solidarity for cancer patients by getting their hair cut and donating it to make wigs. Well-known professionals generously joined the project. Through this deserving campaign, several young



*Wonderful examples of two charming young ladies: the granddaughters of chaverot Helena Kelner and Silene Balassiano*

chaverot committed to our volunteer work. After all the hair was cut, WIZO Rio delivered the wigs to the Laço Rosa Foundation. Kol Hakavod!

## Israeli Independence Day Celebration

WIZO Rio, WIZO Brazil and the ARI synagogue celebrated Israel's Independence Day together. The beautiful event was filled with joy, warmth and the feeling of togetherness and solidarity.



*Israeli Independence Day Celebration*

## Passover Celebration

More than 200 chaverot from the Henny Landau sub-chapter of WIZO Rio de Janeiro held an unforgettable and extremely enjoyable Passover celebration, organized under the leadership of Eliane Eidelman and attended by WIZO Brazil President Helena Kelner.

Hazzan David Alhadeff played an extraordinary musical repertoire and guests were treated to a creative exhibition of original Passover Seder plates.



*Chaverot pose at the Passover celebration with their seder plate*

## Rio Grande do Sul

### Presidents' Meeting

WIZO Rio Grande do Sul President Malvina Dorfman hosted a happy hour at her home where the 2015 work plan was presented. Porto Alegre group presidents attended, as well as the WIZO Rio Grande do Sul Executive. All attendees enjoy the spirit of coming together, innovation and idea exchange.



*Presidents' Meeting*

### Visit to the Anne Frank Home

WIZO Rio Grande do Sul representatives visited the Anne Frank Children's Home, where the warmly welcomed chaverot were treated to a lively performance by four and five-year-old children.



*WIZO representatives at the Anne Frank Children's Home*

## São Paulo

### Touching Memorial to Berta Kramer

A memorial ceremony was held at the WIZO office, which was packed to capacity, in honour of our dear chavera Berta Kramer. A WIZO activist for decades, Berta left her mark on several departments in our organization. As a sponsor and member of the Sharsheret Choir, she chaired several projects, bringing the WIZO name to several parts of Brazilian society. Family, activists and friends took part in the ceremony.





*Rabbi Dov Goldberg honouring Berta Kramer at the memorial ceremony*

## International Women's Day

To celebrate International Women's Day, WIZO São Paulo paid homage to an important Brazilian educator, Maria Alice (Neca) Setúbal. As president of the Executive Board of Tide Setubal Foundation, an NGO that offers classes and cultural projects, Neca changed the lives of young people in one of São Paulo's most deprived areas. She talked about the transforming power of education. "It is the great leverage for a world that is fairer, with less disparity. Everything has to do with education."



*Neca Setubal with her trophy*

## Women's Excellence Award 2015

Chaverot Geni Rinsky, Margarida Grin and Rebeca Rosenberg, from WIZO São Paulo, were honoured with the Women's Excellence Award 2015, offered by Ciesp and Fraternidade Aliança Aca Laurência.



*Geni Rinsky (first left) and Rebeca Rosenberg (second right) with Dina Neuman, Sarita Rawett, Clara Aizemberg, and Laura Rozen*



*Margarida Grin with friends and WIZO chaverot*

## Chile

### WIZO Chile Celebrates 90

WIZO Chile celebrated Israel's Independence Day and the federation's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a gala concert featuring one of Israel's foremost singers Achinoam Nini – affectionately known as 'Noa'. The concert was held in the community centre of the Synagogue in Santiago to a packed audience.

WIZO Chile President Agnes Mannheim introduced the evening by describing the importance of WIZO throughout its history. She stressed that WIZO's achievements have been made possible by the movement's wonderful members – the women who are a wonderful example of volunteerism and commitment that is passed from generation to generation within the great WIZO family.

Agnes concluded her speech by thanking all present for participating in the successful event which launched the celebrations of WIZO Chile@90.



*Noa on stage*



*(l-r) Deborah Kuperman, Daisy Nachari, Carolina Garate, Carola Vera, Fanny Rosenberg, Agnes Mannheim, Marisol Garriga, Lucy Kuperman at WIZO Chile's 90th celebration*



## Colombia

### Honorary Member Celebration

WIZO Colombia came together with the Bogotá Jewish Community to celebrate three honorary members: Bluma Ramler, Marianne May and Paulina Guberek. All three women were born in Europe but moved to the then mostly unknown Americas, participating in the establishment of the Colombian Jewish communities and supporting Jewry through WIZO and other institutions and movements. WIZO celebrated their accomplishments and their immense dedication to the Jewish people, both locally and in Israel.



*WIZO Darmstadt annual bazaar*

## Germany

### High in the Sky

WIZO Germany celebrated a spectacular 'Design & Vintage' Ladies' Night in the Pan Am Lounge in Berlin, dedicated to the Anilevitch Street WIZO Day Care Centre in Rishon le Zion, sponsored by WIZO Germany. Over 160 ladies enjoyed fashion, art and Israeli delicacies high above Berlin's rooftops, displaying amazing dedication to the plight of underprivileged Israeli children through their generous sponsorships. WIZO Berlin thanks the designers, shops, companies and wonderful guests who made the evening such a great success.



*WIZO Berlin Ladies' Night fashions*

### Darmstadt WIZO Bazaar

For the 17<sup>th</sup> year, the WIZO Bazaar charmed and entertained the Jewish community of Darmstadt – held this year on Mother's Day. The event will benefit the Auguste and Robert Meder House for girls-at-risk in Eilat, which fosters and supports young women and girls from the ages of 13 to 25. With 100 dedicated helpers on-hand, the tables bent under the weight of the many goods and delicacies available for purchase. In addition to cakes, pastries and Russian specialties, there were donations of toys, books, cosmetics, jewellery and clothes. Books by Jewish and Israeli authors were sold in cooperation with a local Darmstadt bookstore, as well as a number of Jewish religious and cultural items, such as kippot, Israeli flags, candle-holders and mezuzot.

### Lifestyle Boutique

Right on time for the holiday season, WIZO opened its doors for the third WIZO Lifestyle Boutique, which once again took place at the Frankfurt Hilton. The numerous visitors were welcomed with tasty pastries and great gift ideas in all price ranges. The WIZO women's power could be felt everywhere, and the preparations, which began last spring, definitely paid off. The Frankfurt Hilton hosted a lovely coffee lounge, and "Eintracht Frankfurt", the city's first league soccer club, sponsored a booth selling merchandise, while WIZO women contributed decorations for the advent season and designer clothing.



*WIZO Frankfurt Lifestyle Boutique*

### A Yiddishe Mama

WIZO Frankfurt hosted a reading by the author, director and actress Adriana Altaras, who charmed the audience with parts of her book *Doitscha*, which describes the day-to-day life of a slightly hysterical 'Yiddishe Mama,' her serene Westphalian husband and their two pubescent sons. "We could have saved ourselves the trouble of printing invitations, that's how great the demand for tickets was after we first announced the event", joked Simone Graumann, then Vice President of WIZO Germany, as she welcomed the guests. She went on to thank the sponsors and emphatically described the condition of the WIZO Germany's day care centre in Rishon LeZion, the project being supported by the proceeds of the reading. The donations will fund the construction of another group room and a bomb shelter.





*A reading by Adriana Altaras from her book Doitscha*



*WIZO Germany Executive with Honorary Presidents Diana Schnabel, Rachel Singer and Lala Susskind*

## Purim Lunapark

This year's Purim Lunapark children's festival took place at the Ignatz-Bubis-Community Centre. Several weeks earlier, the WIZO team had started preparing for the event, which included entertainment such as a clown, slides, a bull ride, table-tennis tournaments and much, much more. One of the highlights was the Purim-themed raffle with many prizes, but the greatest gift of all was the joy and fun the children had. Food was provided by dedicated volunteers, and included hamantaschen, waffles and cakes. This great day wouldn't have been possible without these helpers and their great initiatives and ideas.



*The WIZO Team at the Lunapark*

## Delegates' Meeting of WIZO Germany

Forty-five delegates from eight local groups gathered at the WIZO Germany Delegates' meeting in Frankfurt, which included a presentation of the year's activities and financial reports, as well as a great idea-exchange. The representatives thanked the outgoing chairwomen for their tireless commitment to WIZO, especially during last summer's Gaza conflict, and welcomed in the new WIZO Germany Executive Board. Alongside Diana Schnabel, who is finishing her term as WIZO Germany President, the delegates bade farewell to Vice President Michal Gelerman from Berlin, Treasurer Esther Sharell from Frankfurt and Angelika Jung-Sattinger from Stuttgart. Newly elected President Simone Graumann spoke affectionately about all the ladies, handing out awards to the outgoing chairwomen, and presenting Diana Schnabel with a very special "Oscar" award.

## Sunday Brunch

Following the tradition of previous years, WIZO Munich hosted their annual Family Brunch, where multiple generations of families from all walks of life enjoyed a gourmet buffet held at the trendy Käfer restaurant. The brunch is an innovative new fundraising concept, where funds are raised for hot meals, and donors and members are approached in a relaxed, positive atmosphere. With special entertainment provided for the 45 children who accompanied their parents, the brunch exceeded all expectations and was a great success.

## Munich Gala

This year's Munich WIZO Gala drew a superb crowd of 250 people, including the Lord Mayor of Munich, Dieter Reiter and his lovely wife Petra, as well as long time WIZO friends Erich and Regine Sixt. Highlights of the night involved a phenomenal performance by the Israeli singer Shay Hamber and a French violinist. The guests danced to tunes from a hit band until long past midnight.

## Greece

### Purim Party

WIZO Greece held a delightful Purim party in Athens, with everyone dressed up for the occasion and dancing the night away.



*WIZO Greece celebrates Purim with fun costumes*



## Holocaust Commemoration

WIZO Greece participated in several Holocaust commemoration events. Chaverot visited Thessaloniki (Salonica) to show victims respect at the site where the first train deported local Jewry to Auschwitz. The visit comes after the actual train was recently discovered, derelict and abandoned in a small town in northern Greece. The railway station, no longer in use, now functions as a memorial, and flowers were placed in the wagons to honour the victims.

Furthermore, a Holocaust memorial was installed at Salonica University, which used Jewish gravestones to build the university shortly after the war. Salonica Mayor Boutaris proved himself to be a great friend of Greek Jewry in his commitment to commemorating the Holocaust.

## The Future Generation

Earlier this year, WIZO Athens celebrated their annual Bat Mitzvah event. Five lovely young ladies, Anatoli, Nelly, Miriam, Rhianna and Vivian took part in the ceremony and were officially presented to the community. In their lovely white dresses they are like a breath of fresh air, and gives WIZO Greece hope for the future.



*WIZO Greece President Heather Nahmias surrounded by the Bat Mitzvah girls*

## Holland

### Cooking with the Stars

WIZO Holland, in cooperation with several culinary specialists, offers a wide variety of cooking classes, smoothie workshops, lectures and tastings. From West Africa to northern Asia, the club explores, creates and tastes the wonderful culinary legacies and signature dishes of diverse places, as well as stories behind the cuisine.



*Cooking with the Stars*

## Hong Kong

The Jewish Women's Association of Hong Kong continues to support WIZO projects. At a recent meeting with World WIZO Fundraising Chair, Esther Mor, Co-Chairs Shani Brownstein and Marissa Raccah discuss their next project.



*(l-r) Co chairs Shani Brownstein and Marissa Raccah with Esther Mor*

## Italy

### Milan Opens Italy Season

The first event of the new season for Adei WIZO Italy was a diverse show of music, song and dance held at the Auditorium Theatre in the centre of Milan.

Among the artists performing were the Italian Women's Orchestra conducted by M. Roberto Giuffrè with special guest M. Bruno Canino, an Italian pianist of international fame and dancers from the Carcano Ballet School. The event was an outstanding success, both socially and financially.



*(l-r) Nelly Weissy, Esther Mor, Susanna Sciaky, Claude Cohen*

## Mexico

### Museum Visits

WIZO Mexico organized several fascinating museum visits, giving chaverot the opportunity to celebrate friendship and culture. One large group of chaverot visited the Tamayo Museum to enjoy the exhibit by the famous Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama. On another occasion, the Organization Department together with the Cultural Committee organized a visit to the Dolores Olmedo Museum and to Xochimilco, a tourist attraction outside Mexico City.



## WIZO Dinner with Husbands

With the goal of introducing their husbands to the work of WIZO and to give them an idea of why they donate so much of their time to it, WIZO chaverot organized a Husband's Hanukah Dinner at WIZO House. WIZO Mexico President Shula Shrem talked about WIZO's work for children, youth, women and seniors. A video film about WIZO was screened, that greatly impressed everyone present and inspired several 'husband donations' for Sponsor a Youth. Several of the husbands showed their interest by putting forward various ideas for future activities.

## Membership Campaign

WIZO Mexico launched its annual Membership Campaign, one of the federation's most important activities, which not only ensures the continuation of existing members, the driving force of our organization, but also introduces WIZO to the younger generations, pupils motivating them to join. Lilian Helfon, Membership Campaign President, decided that this year's slogan would be: "With today's actions we will ensure tomorrow's success." In tandem with the Membership Campaign, Diana Kuba gave a talk to group presidents on the importance of having many members. The campaign also featured an inspirational visit from Ms Tamara Strugo who talked about the great mitzva that all WIZO chaverot do through their work.

## Honouring Dedication

WIZO Mexico recognized the over 60 years of hard work, brilliance and dedication of four chaverot: Emma Adler, Raquel Gila Bank, Sara Goldberg and Sima Kipnis, who were named Honorary Presidents of WIZO Mexico at a moving ceremony. These chaverot are examples for both current and future generations and have rightfully earned the respect, admiration and gratitude of the entire WIZO family.



*Emma Adler, Raquel Gila Bank, Sara Goldberg and Sima Kipnis with WIZO Mexico President Shula Shrem*

## Auction for Education

WIZO Mexico's Project Education culminated with a very important event: An Auction for Education "Art in Books". Under the leadership of Arielle Weizel, after many months of team work, the chaverot achieved their goal to aid children through education. With the support of more than 50 recognized national and international artists who painted wooden boxes as books, the event was attended by an admiring and supportive public, who purchased the boxes to raise funds. The chaverot were particularly excited by one

of the boxes, which had been painted by pupils from the WIZO Hadassim Youth Village, who sent it to WIZO Mexico along with a signed copy of Shimon Peres' autobiography.



*WIZO Mexico 'Project Education' Committee*

## General Assembly

After a fruitful and industrious year, WIZO Mexico chaverot gathered for the annual General Assembly, where WIZO President Shula Shrem gave a summary of the year's activities and achievements. At the same event, a chavera from WIZO San Diego-Tijuana, Hanna Galicot, was named Honorary President of her branch as well as a member of the Directive Council of WIZO Mexico, for her outstanding work for WIZO and the Jewish Community in San Diego-Tijuana.

## Remembering and Celebrating

WIZO Mexico commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day in the presence of Rabbi Amram Anidjar who has served as a guide on many March of the Living trips. Daughters and granddaughters of survivors lit six candles symbolizing the six million Jews massacred by the Nazis. A week later, to honour Israel's fallen soldiers, chaverot fulfilled what they called a "moral obligation of being part of the Jewish people," and remembered them not only as soldiers, but as sons, fathers, husbands, brothers and friends. That same afternoon, as if turning a page in a book, they then celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut, the 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Israeli independence, which included a procession of flags carried by group presidents, as well as lively Israeli dances.



*Chaverot commemorate Yom Hashoah*



*Mexico Chaverot celebrate Yom Haatzmaut with Israeli flags*



## Holiday Sales & Activities

Many of the WIZO Mexico groups held very successful activities, events and fundraisers. The Neshama Group sold Passover finger puppets carrying the symbols of the ten plagues, while the Koaj Group sold *mishloah manot* for adults for Purim. Three other impressive groups held three activities together at the same venue: The Jayeinu Group organized a big golf tournament, Ahava, WIZO Mexico's youngest group, held a big festival that was attended by approximately 300 children, and the Esther Szmora Group, whose members are around 80 years old, held an art sale. All three activities became one at the Bellavista Golf Club, which was a great success, combining children and adults.



*Esther Szmora Group art sale*



*Jayeinu Group golf tournament*



*Ahava group children's festival*

## Panama

### WIZO Star

WIZO Star, a singing competition for children from Jewish schools, was created by WIZO Panama's Aviv Jay Group, under the leadership of group president Rossana Malka. To prepare for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual event, the chaverot interviewed 50 youths, ages 8-15, to choose 12 of them for the final show. After undergoing two months of preparation and coaching, the 12 finalists were ready to perform in front of a nearly 1000-person audience, dressed in various colours in support of their respective favourite contestants.

A panel of three judges gave feedback and praise to each contestant and chose three winners at the end of the evening, each of whom received a prize. All participants were given a trophy and certificate of participation. The high-publicity event helped create awareness for WIZO's important work and was a social and financial success.



*WIZO Star competition*

## South Africa

### Israeli Independence Day Celebrations

WIZO South Africa celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, around the country. Everyone got into the spirit of the occasion with delicious food, great entertainment and a fun and informative quiz on Israel.



*WIZO South Africa chaverot celebrate Israel's Independence Day*



## Cape Town

### Theatre Night

Bnoth Zion WIZO Cape Town enjoyed a Night at the Theatre with South African satirist, performer and activist Pieter-Dirk Uys. The hysterical evening was a night to remember.



(l-r) Felicity Isserow, Pieter-Dirk Uys, Tamar Lazarus

### Annual General Meeting

Bnoth Zion WIZO Cape Town held their 114th Annual General Meeting with guest speaker Arthur Lenk, Israel's Ambassador to South Africa. The meeting was productive and memorable.



(l-r) Bella Silverman, Felicity Isserow, Ambassador Arthur Lenk, Suzanne Luck

## Johannesburg

### SAZF Conference

WIZO attended the SAZF (South African Zionist Federation) 48<sup>th</sup> Conference and Expo in Johannesburg, where every local Zionist organization in South Africa was represented. With the WIZO stand organized by Naomi Dinur, WIZO members and staff turned out in force to lend a hand on the day. Passersby were invited to enter a competition at the WIZO stand, which gave the WIZO team the opportunity to explain what WIZO is and does, which encouraged many people to sign up as new members.



Chaverot at the WIZO stand at the SAZF Conference

### The Butler Speaks

WIZO Johannesburg hosted an evening to remember with Marc van Bergen, an international butler who shared his real life butler stories. He also spoke on the true art and etiquette of table setting and service.



(l-r) Dafna Sher, Ronen, Marc van Bergen, Brenda Trope, Felicity Isserow

### AGM

WIZO Johannesburg held its 101<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting. Tribute was paid to the WIZO women who with dedication, love and commitment have worked tirelessly to improve the lives of women and children in Israel, as well as to the Jewish community. The morning's proceedings began with a Dvar Torah about the role and influence of women to uplift and improve the conditions for underprivileged women and children in Israel. The audience was kept enthralled with Daphne Kuhn's interpretation of the Jewish influence on South African theatre. The Chairman's report then covered the many and varied functions and educational programmes that WIZO undertakes. Nava Gonen paid a fitting tribute to executive administrator Sandy Kramer who left WIZO after 12 years. The treasurer reported that in spite of the decline in the economy, WIZO Johannesburg had managed to achieve its target. The incoming Executive Committee was then announced, with Lee Joffe and Andrea



Wainer elected as Co-Chairs for the ensuing term of office, and Cindy Polakow, Shoshi Shachar and Andie Schwartz elected as Vice-Chairs.



*New Co-Chairs Lee Joffe (l) and Andrea Wainer*

## The Key to Self-Fulfilment

WIZO South Africa hosted an amazing forum with four women who shared their personal stories, lessons learnt and ideas about how to live a fulfilled, happy life. With Adele Bernstein moderating, the panel consisted of: Otilia Ncube from Thuthuzela Creche, Nadine Waner, owner of the bakery, The Tart, and Rebbetzin Gina Goldstein. The rapt audience listened to the speakers' tapestry of stories and lessons, internalizing the message that we need to work on finding meaning in our lives, step out of our comfort zones and give of ourselves to others in order to attain self-fulfillment. After the forum, everyone enjoyed lively discussion over a delicious tea.



*(l-r) Nadine Waner, Andrea Wainer, Otilia Ncube, Rebbetzin Gina Goldstein, Adele Bernstein*

## The Key to Peace in the Middle East

WIZO Forum started the year with an in-depth look at the Israeli elections with speaker Michael Freeman, Deputy Ambassador at the Embassy of Israel, who explained the origin of the main political parties and connected them to Israel's history as a fledgling state. He gave an analysis of

party percentages, the reason for the formation of coalitions and possible breakaways.



*Peace in the Middle East WIZO Forum*

## Natan Sharansky Visits

Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky and his wife Avital were guest speakers at the BZA WIZO South Africa Central Meeting. They gave a captivating talk and chaverot were honoured to meet them.



*(l to r) Felicity Isserow, Bella Silverman, Lynne Hirsch, Tamar Lazarus, Shelley Friedman, Mathy Danon, Natan Sharansky, Linda Saban, Avital Sharansky, Suzanne Luck*

## Spain

### Bowled Over in Barcelona

Following the successful revival of the Spanish federation in Madrid, next stop is Barcelona. WIZO Spain President Astrid Mizrachi arranged for Chairperson of the World WIZO Executive Rivka Lazovsky to visit Barcelona and re-establish a WIZO chapter in that city.

The community consists of around 4000 people and boasts a young, dynamic leadership. Some of these were present at the inaugural meeting held at the home of Estella Vaks, and showed great enthusiasm to be involved in WIZO's revival. Sophie Karsenti Haziot will be in charge of the renewed activities which will be merged within the existing framework of the Jewish community.

The main event of the visit was attended by about 90 people, including community leaders and members of other Jewish



organizations. Professor Lazovsky gave a presentation outlining the full spectrum of WIZO's work and distributed the new WIZO information booklet which has been issued in Spanish. All present were extremely enthusiastic and wished Sophie much success – and so do we!



(l to r) Sophie Karsenti Haziot, Rivka Lazovsky and guests at the opening event of WIZO Barcelona

## UK

### WIZO Aviv Fashion Show

Over 200 guests attended the WIZOuk Aviv fashion show at St John's Wood Synagogue, which was hosted by Gillian Joseph, Sky News presenter, with entertainment by singer songwriter Kelly Erez

Volunteer male and female models wore a selection of stylish outfits from Suzy D boutique, blu boutique, Moss Bros, Morella Sasoon, and BNV Benveniste. Models wore a beautiful array of hats by Eliane Sarah. Hair was styled by Joseph Koniak, make up by Philippa Louise and Let Your Beauty Shine, with accessories by Bosari Jewellery. Guest of honour Zahava Taub wife of Israeli ambassador Daniel Taub commended WIZO's welfare work in Israel. The committee headed by Ronit Ribak-Madari WIZOuk Aviv Chair, created a fun and exciting atmosphere. Proceeds from the evening were donated to WIZO's work with victims of domestic violence in Israel.



WIZO models Ossi Main (l) and Ilana Metzger

### Praise for WIZO's Work

"Helping over 8000 people in Israel is unbelievable," exclaimed Esther McVey MP, former Minister of State for Employment, as she commented on the "outstanding work that WIZO does getting people back into the workplace." McVey was guest speaker at WIZOuk's gala dinner held in central London.

Zahava Taub, wife of the Israeli Ambassador spoke about the role of women both in Israel and within WIZO: "We should give greater recognition to the role that women have played in the establishment of The State of Israel" and reminded guests, "that women founded and continue to lead WIZO's projects and have made an enormous contribution to Israeli society."

Talented musicians Adiel Shmit, Orian Shukran and Harel Ben-David from WIZO's music school in Ma'alot Tarschicha, Israel, entertained the guests. The event was an outstanding social and financial success and the funds raised are being donated for vocational training at WIZO's Rebecca Sieff Centre for the Family, Jerusalem.



At WIZO uk's gala dinner (l-r) Karen Pollock, Michele Pollock, Esther McVey, Gabrielle Mandel, Ilana Metzger

### Dancing Strictly in Glasgow

WIZO Glasgow's first 'Dancing Strictly' event was a great success with over 500 people attending at the Couper Institute in Glasgow.

A social and financial success, the event was attended by many town dignitaries. Trophies were presented by Scottish Labour Party leader Jill Murphy and WIZOuk Honorary President Michele Vogel



Grand Finale at 'Dancing Strictly'



## Uruguay

### Celebrating International Women's Day

The first event of WIZO Uruguay's new year of activities was an event for International Women's Day with guest speaker Dr. Maria Julia Muñoz Uruguay's Minister of Education and Culture. The Minister gave a far reaching presentation on the role of women today, both in Uruguay and worldwide. Dr Munoz has extensive knowledge of WIZO's work and expressed her appreciation at the commitment and dedication of WIZO volunteers.



*(l-r) Prof. Edda Symner de Brener, WIZO Uruguay President Sara Laks Trachtenberg, Dra. María Julia Muñoz, Sra. Ana Rother*

### Commemorating and Celebrating

At a joint event for Israel's Remembrance Day for Fallen Soldiers and Independence Day, Chavera Diana Sudisky gave an emotional tribute in memory of Israel's fallen, and the Israeli Ambassador Nina Ben Ami gave an informative update on the current situation in Israel.

Chaverot enjoyed the music of Diego Chiodo, the singing of Anya Wainberg and Berta Margulis reading the poem *Hannah Senesh* by Anita Luksenburg.



*Israeli Ambassador Nina Ben Ami addressing WIZO Uruguay chaverot*

## USA

### Florida

### Family Walkathon

The Annual Walkathon was a family event geared to all ages, starting with a short 1/4 mile walk through a beautiful park, where the paths were lined with inspirational sayings and quotes about WIZO centres in Israel.

After the walk, the children were entertained by a magician, karate show, soccer games, volleyball, face painting and music with a DJ. A popsicle truck appeared with cold treats in case the children were getting hot and thirsty!

The adults were certainly not left out – with activities such as yoga and volleyball matches for the more energetic.

An added attraction to this successful event was a representative of the Maccabi games, which will be played in Florida this year, who came to "hand over the torch."



*(l-r) Amy Costo, Carol Fischzang, Gaby Brecher, Vivi Wald still smiling after the walkathon!*

### Memories in the Living Room

Every year during Holocaust Remembrance Week, WIZO Florida hold their annual *Memories in the Living Room* event, to share stories of survival and educate those who do not know or understand about the tragic and horrific events that happened to so many people during the Holocaust.

This year, some 50 people gathered in the home of Laura and Ronald Waldman to hear the story of Norman Frajman.

Mr. Frajman spoke about his experiences as a boy from 11 years old thru 15 in the Majdanek, Skarysko, Buchenwald and Shlieben concentration camps.

He told how he was separated from his family never to see his mother or brothers and sisters again. Many years later he was reunited with his father who had survived because, unbeknown to Norman, he had been sent to Siberia to work there.



During the famous “death march” Norman and many others were liberated by the Soviets. He was wearing the uniform which he had with him at the evening, and which he takes to all his lectures. Seeing the uniform had a profound and emotional effect on all present.

Mr. Frajman teaches people of all ages and all religions to never forget what happened 70 years ago and believes he survived only by divine providence



(l-r) Michael Waldman, Norman Frajman, Laura Waldman

## Los Angeles

### Funding Rocket Proof Shelters

At a meeting of the WIZO Los Angeles Book Club, dedicated to raising funds for rocket-proof shelters for WIZO's day care centres, Co-chairs Irene Sirebrenik and Analya Sater invited renowned authoress and poet Marjorie Agosin to talk about some of her books. Marjorie featured two of her books *Always from Somewhere Else* and *The Cross and the Star*, both of which describe the experiences of her grandparents' emigration from Europe to Chile.

The 60 guests participated in a lively dialogue with the author on the subject of the migrating Jews around the world, some of them sharing their own experiences which added to the success of the evening.

The event was held in the beautiful home of the Shomof family who generously provided delicious refreshments.



(l-r) Shomof family, Debby Amir, Ahuva Koren, Miriam Wizman

## New York

### WIZO NY Purim Ball

Earlier this year, WIZO NY held its first Children for our *Children Purim Ball*, chaired by Debbie & Glenn August and Lizzie & Scott Domansky, to benefit women, children and the elderly in Israel. Nearly 500 guests gathered at Guastavino's in New York City to support the organization's social welfare projects in Israel. The evening featured a silent and live auction led by brilliant auctioneer, Bippy Siegal, husband of Executive Board Member, Jackie Siegal, which helped to raise record breaking funds for New York's 35-year-old chapter.

This year's Bnei Mitzvah children were awarded plaques for choosing to donate their Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts to WIZO. This year's honorees were: Sammy Aschendorf, Daniella Siegal, Ilyana Mitchell, Olivia Domansky, Mathias Salmon, Eliza Shapiro, Shireen Sakhai and Jake Sandler.

Another highlight of the evening was the honour of having Orian Shukrun, former WIZO student address the guests and share with them just how children such as himself benefit from WIZO's work.



WIZO NY Purim Ball Chairs: (l-r) Debbie & Glenn August, Lizzie & Scott Domansky



## WIZO Young Leadership

In just one week, WIZO New York's Young Leadership held two highly successful events – both socially and financially. Stephan Sakhai, Jonathan Aghravi, David E. Ash, and Noah Krinick organized a 3V3 basketball tournament, which drew a crowd of over 60 young men.

The tournament was won by Adam Cooper, Joshua Stern and Stephen Rosenblatt. The proceeds raised will benefit the Gina Fromer Shelter for Battered Women in Ashdod.



*Participants in the 3v3 basketball tournament*

The second event was a Wine & Cheese night in support of the same project. Approximately 50 young women gathered together to learn about wine and cheese pairings as well as about WIZO's mission. The Kosher Wine Society and the Psagot Vineyards, through the generosity of WIZO USA Co-President Jana Falic, and Sima Ghadadian, Board Member of WIZO New York, sponsored this event. Another social and financial success!

Last but certainly not least - WIZO New York Young Leadership had another sold out Charity Ride, this time at Soul Cycle. Becky Stein, daughter of Board Member, Arlene Stein, sold out the entire spinning studio in support of WIZO's work in Israel. This high energy workout was not only fun and competitive but good for the soul.



*NY Young Leadership sampling a variety of wines*



*WIZO Soul Cyclists taking a break*

## WIZO Goes to Broadway

Through Board Member, Arlene Stein, WIZO New York's newest fundraising event is selling premium seats at Broadway's hottest shows! The highlights of our Broadway season were: *It's Only A Play* starring Matthew Broderick, *A Delicate Balance*, starring Glenn Close & John Lithgow, *The Elephant Man* starring Bradley Cooper, and *A Fish in the Dark* starring Larry David, creator of Seinfeld. All proceeds from this ongoing group benefit WIZO USA sponsored projects.

## WIZO New Jersey Revived!

Earlier this year, The New Jersey Chapter of WIZO USA was reborn! Over 80 women gathered at a local Chabad, united by their belief in WIZO's mission and desire to be involved in one of the largest Zionist movements in the world. With great emotion they watched a video about Sderot and cried together in solidarity with the women and children under attack during the last war in Gaza. The group was welcomed and addressed by Mery Nathan and Galina Shenfeld, the two new Chairwomen of WIZO New Jersey, who shared their plans for fundraising and future programming for this new and exciting group.



*New Jersey chaverot set for success!*

## Shanghai - China

Although WIZO doesn't have a federation in China, World WIZO Fundraising Chair Esther Mor has established contact with the Jewish community in Shanghai and the ladies of this community are very interested in WIZO's work. They recently held a women's social gathering attended by Esther, where they spoke about WIZO and were truly inspired. Esther distributed the WIZO Review to the ladies and other WIZO publicity material.



*Shanghai WIZO supporters Sophie Wilmet, Edee Simon Israel, Hadas Haham, Paula Joseph, Lisa Katz and others*



SAVE THE DATE  
and  
**TAKE THE LEAD**  
with  
WIZO WOMEN



**26<sup>th</sup> World WIZO Enlarged General Meeting (EGM)**  
January 17-21, 2016 • Hilton, Tel Aviv

## COME JOIN US AND

- Network with WIZO members from all over the world
- Hear how outstanding Jewish and Zionist women are taking the lead in Israel and abroad
- Meet leaders of Israeli society, politics and security
- Experience WIZO's projects across Israel
- Take part in empowerment workshops
- Discuss current events and WIZO's vision for the Jewish people

**Exclusive events  
will be held for  
Aviv Participants  
& spouses**



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For more information,  
visit our website: [www.wizo.org](http://www.wizo.org) or write to us: [wizo@wizo.org](mailto:wizo@wizo.org)



www.wizo.org

# WIZO *Facts and Figures*

**50 FEDERATIONS WORLDWIDE**

**250,000 MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS**



## **25,000 Children and Babies in Good Hands**

- 183 Day Care Centres
- 100 After-school programmes for children of working mothers
- 45 Afternoon Therapeutic and learning centres for children at risk
- 23 Emergency Centres for babies and Children at Risk



## **Some 100 Programmes for 13,500 Teens**

- 2 Vocational Schools for youth who have dropped out of school
- 5 Youth Villages including dormitories for students from dysfunctional families
- 34 Youth Centres
- 19 Empowerment Groups for teenage girls at risk
- 21 Warm Homes and afternoon centres for teenage girls at risk
- 3 Rehabilitation Centres for teenage girls
- 500 Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies for underprivileged children



## **12,665 Women Enjoy a Wide Range of Services and Programmes**

- 30 Legal Advice Bureaus
- 2 Shelters for Battered Women
- 22 Centres and over 70 support groups for single-parent families
- 80 groups for Employment Enrichment
- 3 Centres for the Treatment and Prevention and Treatment of Domestic Violence
- 12 Leadership training courses for high-level political and managerial positions
- 70 Women's Empowerment Groups



## **Community Programmes**

- 55 branches across the country
- 30 foreign language groups for immigrants
- 50 second hand clothing stores for the needy
- 1 Retirement Home
- 1 Family Life Enrichment Centre