



Association for Planning & Development of Services
for Children and Youth at Risk and their Families
Established by JDC-Israel and supported by the Government of Israel,
JDC-Israel and UJA-Federation of New York

Update: First Quarter 2008

May 1, 2008

Dear Friends,

Ashalim's activities thus far in 2008 span the gamut. Programs are expanding and reaching more at-risk children and youth, new facilities are being built, and hundreds of Israeli professionals are joining us in a variety of professional development initiatives.

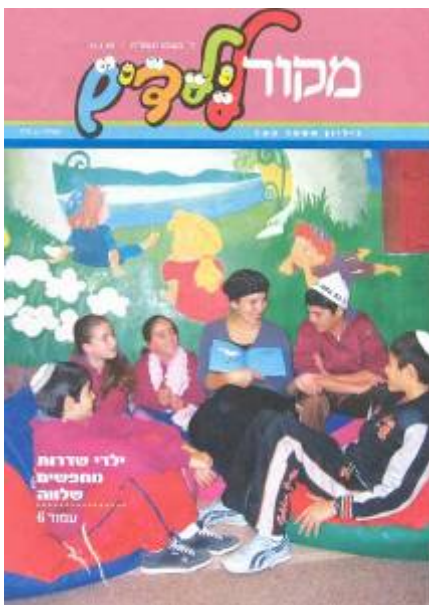
This year we celebrate ten years since the founding of Ashalim. We will be marking this momentous occasion on June 16-17 in Israel and in New York in the Fall. The celebration will be joined by our partners from the Israeli Government, the UJA-Federation of New York and from the field. This occasion offers us a time for reflection on our achievements and on the challenges that remain ahead. We look forward to continued success in our efforts to benefit Israel's disadvantaged children. If you will be in Israel in mid-June and would like to join us for the Tenth Anniversary events, please contact Kobi Tav at kobi.tav@jdcny.org.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Rami Sulimani
Director-General Ashalim*

*Ken Witover, Chair
JDC Ashalim Sub-Committee*

From the Field



"Sderot Children Seek Calm"
Ashalim's **Havens of Calm** program featured in a cover story in the weekend magazine of Makor Rishon.

Ashalim support is vital for children under fire in Sderot and neighboring communities

Ashalim staff continues to receive thank you letters from professionals and individuals in Sderot and the Gaza border region. We continue to hear that our services are crucial in relieving the suffering caused by the ongoing kassam rocket fire.

A Ministry of Education supervisor wrote lately about the **Red Color Song** program: "*Even when the siren goes off, teachers and children function without crying or screaming, and display admirable self-control. I am awed and learn from them to adopt behavior that is so correct and suited for the situation.*"

The therapeutic staff in **Ashalim's Havens of Calm** program, which is based in schools in Sderot and the Gaza border area, must be prepared to provide an immediate response given the acute volatile situation. One such example is Sara.

Sara (not her real name), an Ethiopian-Israeli second grade girl, missed her bus one morning. As she walked to school alone, she had to find shelter during ten kassam sirens. When Sara arrived at school, she was frozen in place and was having trouble breathing and speaking. The principal called in Tal, the **Havens of Calm** movement therapist. Tal related that Sara could only say "something is not right, something is not right." By using Sara's favorite toy in the room, Tal was able to help Sara overcome her shock. Sara's smile returned, and she was able once again to breathe and speak normally. Thanks to this immediate intervention, Sara was able to return to class and go on with her day.

Rebuilding the Galilee



Across cities and towns in the north of Israel, a network of intensive after-school centers for children at risk - *moadoniot* - are caring for hundreds of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This initiative, run in partnership with municipal Education and Welfare departments, has become more important since the second Lebanon War. Thanks to funding from UJC's Israel Emergency Campaign, Ashalim has been able to intensify activities in these *moadoniot*, including trauma counseling, renovating some of the facilities, purchasing equipment and offering a variety of enrichment programs.

This year, some 300 children in Haifa *moadoniot* had a chance to view their world through the lens of a camera. The unique photography workshop exposed the children to a medium that many do not have access to at home, enabled them to portray their lives in a creative manner and to develop feelings of pride about themselves, their families and their environment.

New Parent-Child Centers Countrywide

The **Parent-Child Center** model, developed by Ashalim with the Ministry of Social Affairs, is expanding to include new regional centers that serve a number of small communities, as well as centers for parents and their adolescent children. This model helps families who have trouble functioning and offers therapies for both children and parents under one roof. Today there are 36 centers throughout Israel and two more in the planning stages.

The start of services at the new **Woolf Family Parent-Child Campus in Afula** was marked by an opening event in March. The official opening of the expansive and impressive facility will take place with the Woolf family during their upcoming trip to Israel. This campus brings together a number of child and family services: a parent-child center, a young adult center and a family well-being center.



Dr. Rami Sulimani at the opening event

ECHAD Partnership:

Early Childhood Family Support and Enrichment Centers

Ashalim, together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and local municipalities, is developing an early childhood version of the parent-child center model. These Early Childhood Family Support and Enrichment Centers are being introduced to the Arab-

Israeli population through the **Echad Partnership** with the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties.

In March, Arab-Israeli social workers from early childhood centers in each of the six **Echad Partnership** communities began a training course initiated and planned by the **Echad Partnership**, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Health's Developmental and Clinical Psychology Center in Haifa. In addition to enhancing professionals' knowledge and administrative skills, the course offers training, guidance, and supervision regarding developmentally and culturally appropriate case management.



Jack, Charles and Gene Ribakoff

Ribakoff family visits Corky Ribakoff Center

Three generations of the Ribakoff family visited the **Corky Ribakoff Center** at the Maalot residential facility in Jerusalem to dedicate the new soccer field and outdoor exercise equipment. Dr. Rami Sulimani and Dr. Zvi Feine thanked the Ribakoff family for their commitment to the center, which began a number of years ago with the purchase of the building. The children, who live at the center full-time, are benefiting greatly

from the Ribakoff's recent contributions - additional therapeutic staff, cultural activities, computer and music rooms, library, sports fields and physical fitness activities.

Workplace & business training for Turning Point youth

Through Ashalim's **Turning Point** youth employment and entrepreneurship program, over 70 youth at risk participated in experiential training programs that sharpened their business acumen and awareness.

- The intensive weeklong **BizCamp** in January received coverage on Israel's Channel 10 evening news program. **BizCamp** participants had the chance to meet and converse openly with Smadar Barber-Tsadik, CEO of FIBI - First International Bank of Israel, a **Turning Point** program partner.
- In March, fifty youth who work in seven **It's A Deal** youth-run business ventures benefited from workshops on interpersonal communication, conflict resolution and teamwork. **Turning Point** program partner Zionism 2000 together with Eurocom (Nokia representative in Israel) is organizing this new training series.



"I learned that if I want to achieve my goal, it all depends on my attitude and on how I present something."

Celebrating Purim

"It was as if the walls of the prison came down"

It was an emotional event for all involved – mothers, children, social workers, family members and prison staff. Though children are allowed individual half-hour visits to their parents in jail, many times the visits do not take happen; travel is an impediment, mothers do not want to expose their children to searches as they enter the compound or to the unfriendly environment, or the parent's incarceration is kept as a secret from the child. Ashalim's **Incarcerated Mothers**

program, which works to maintain and cultivate the mother-child bond even under these most trying circumstances, raised the importance of face-to-face contact between jailed mothers and their children by sponsoring a gala visiting day at the Neve Tirza Women's Prison.



Forty-four children, ranging in age from two to eighteen, descended on the jail. They hailed from Eilat in the south to Maalot in the north of the country, from the homes of family members, residential facilities, foster homes and emergency centers. In the prison courtyard, specially decorated for the Purim holiday, mothers could sit leisurely with their children or play ball. A photographer captured the mothers and children and developed the photos on the spot. And then, in a crafts workshop, the mothers and children decorated picture frames.

The day left its mark on all involved. For the mothers, it was motivation to complete a rehabilitation process and return home. For the program partners – the

Ministry of Social Affairs, the Treatment and Rehabilitation Division of the Israel Prison Service, and the National Insurance Institute – it reinforced the need to ensure ongoing mother-child interactions during the mother's term in jail.

From Acco to Sderot: Preschoolers send Purim gifts

Through the Purim custom of sending *mishloach manot*, gifts of food and goodies, we express the solidarity of the Jewish people by sharing our bounty with each other. In the Purim tradition, preschool teachers and children in the northern city of Acco participating in Ashalim's post-war **art therapy** and **Hibuki** programs decided to send messages of solidarity and support – along with sweets too – to their counterparts in Sderot. The children decorated packages and wrote personal messages, as did their teachers.

The excitement of the children and teachers in Sderot could hardly be contained when the fully loaded van and trailer arrived. Yet, in the midst of distributing the packages and letters, a Red Color alert sounded and the children quickly moved to the safe room to eat their treats.



Photo: Dr. Shai Hen-Gal

In their thank you letters, the children of Sderot expressed their wishes for their peers in Acco:

"May you have no wars and may you feel good"

"May you have much happiness and no kassams as we do"

"May you be blessed many times over and have many safe rooms"

Ashalim in the News

The article below in the professional journal **Pediatrics** was covered by Reuters, which resulted in articles around the globe about the **Hibuki** trauma intervention. Not only did the success of the Israeli-born **Hibuki** intervention receive media attention in the U.S., Europe and the Far East, it even appeared in the press in unlikely places - like Iran. It really is a small world after all.

Young Children's Reactions to War-Related Stress: A Survey and Assessment of an Innovative Intervention

Pediatrics, Volume 121, Number 1, January 2008

Avi Sadeh, DSc, Shai Hen-Gal, PhD, Liat Tikotzky, MA

Adler Center for Research in Child Development and Psychopathology, Department of Psychology, Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv, Israel

"Conclusions of studies: These studies suggest that a brief early intervention based on mobilizing the child's role as a caregiver to a needy puppy doll may serve as a cost-effective means to alleviate children's stress reactions after exposure to war experiences. If our results are validated by additional research, then this intervention could provide pediatricians and other child health care professionals with a valuable tool for early intervention for children exposed to stressful and traumatic events."

(**Hibuki** program partners: Ashalim; JDC-Israel; UJC-IEC; UIA Federations Canada; UJA Federation of Northern New Jersey; private donors)



Photo: Dr. Shai Hen-Gal

Ashalim interventions for youth at risk, struggling students, and children growing up in inner-city neighborhoods recently received acknowledgement in the Israeli press.

Troubled high-schoolers realizing potential as policemen

Haaretz, Vered Lee, February 3, 2008

"I didn't want to turn out like my father," Assaf says. "I have seen him only twice since I was born; Once on a visit to his prison and once when he was on furlough...The police studies program "helps me understand many things about my father...I feel the program makes me believe in myself, reinforces my self-image and develops qualities I never knew I had."

(**Police Studies** program partners: Ashalim; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Public Security; Israel Police; Ministry of Immigrant Absorption)

How to create social mobility in the educational system?

Haaretz Education Supplement, Yinon Avisar, February 2008

"The psycho-social educational intervention approach has been transformed, thanks to the widespread work of JDC-Israel and Ashalim in partnership with the Ministry of Education, into tens of flagship programs for advancing students at risk, which are implemented through thousands of teachers and leading professionals in local authorities, schools, cities and in the periphery.

The activities to further nurturing educational work on behalf of students at risk were examined by higher education institutions that train teachers in Israel. The results supported the power of the approach...."

(**Educational Intervention** program partners: Ashalim; Ministry of Education)

Radio Interview: Miri Asulin, Havens of Calm school coordinator in Sderot
Channel 2, March 2, 2008

"I come to school for another day, after a barrage of kassam rockets, after a sleepless night. As a teacher, I encounter children who are devastated. Emotionally devastated."

(**Havens of Calm** program partners: JDC; UJC-IEC; Ministry of Education; local authorities)

The Hope of Kiryat Malachi: A new JDC program makes wonders in an inner city neighborhood. Crime is down, unemployment has decreased and the children have gone back to school. Soon across Israel.

Maariv, Asaf Zlinger, March 12, 2008

"These days, **Better Together** is entering a third neighborhood in Kiryat Malachi, and in the city, residents cannot hide their smiles. "For me, the main success here is that the residents have begun to believe in themselves," says Shimon Amar, Kiryat Malachi's Director of Education."

(**Better Together** program partners in Kiryat Malachi: Ashalim; Ministries of Education, Social Affairs, Immigrant Absorption; Municipalities; Police; Community Centers; local NGOs, corporations and academic institutions; Dorothea Gould Foundation)



Photo: Vera Etzion

Ashalim's **It's a Deal** youth-run business ventures continue to make the news:

The new recruit

Jerusalem Post, Michele Klein, January 4, 2008

"Tomer, one of some 2,000 adolescents in Israel in full-time care by court order, was the first boy to be assigned to the **Wing of Love** program....exactly two years after he arrived at **Wing of Love**, he was accepted for enlistment. In April, with great pride, he will put on his IDF uniform."

(**Wing of Love** program partners: Ashalim; Ministry of Social Affairs; Wing of Love association)

Root Canal: Youth at risk manage a nursery in Jerusalem

Ynet (www.ynet.co.il), Yoel Zohar, January 1, 2008

"**Yeelim** is a unique framework for youth at risk located at the Ein Yael Active Museum in Jerusalem. With the slogan "*to plant in order to grow*," twelve participants in the venture operate a nursery business. "We built the nursery with our own hands," Tom says proudly."

(**Yeelim** program partners: Ashalim; Zionism 2000; Matan - Your Way to Give; National Insurance Institute; FIBI- First International Bank of Israel)

New potential in a different landscape: The Ein Yael Active Museum and school gives troubled Jewish and Arab youth a second chance

Jerusalem Post, Shelly Paz, February 22, 2008

"Children who once couldn't take care of themselves are surprised to realize they can instruct others. All they need is an embracing environment and someone who believes in them," said Vaknin [manager and founder of **Ein Yael**]."

(**Ein Yael** program partners: Ashalim; Jerusalem municipality; Jerusalem Foundation; Etgarim)

Professional Development

Ashalim continues to share its program models with field professionals and learn from experts overseas. MAYDA-The Ashalim Center for Knowledge & Learning is taking on a greater role in imparting field knowledge and bringing together Israeli professionals.

Professional Exchange

Peretz Naftali Fund Seminar in Germany

Ashalim was represented by program manager Mrs. Judith Kirschbaum at the annual Peretz Naftali Fund seminar to promote dialogue and exchange of knowledge on socio-

educational issues between Israeli and German professionals. Participants included representatives of Israel's Ministry of Education, the Efshar Association, the International Federation of Educative Communities and its Israeli branch, and professors from Erfurt University and Alice Salomon University in Berlin.



At the *moadonit*, Bedouin children become computer proficient

Judith Kirschbaum presented a paper on "New Challenges of Social Pedagogy in Israel: The Bedouin Population – an innovative model adapted to their special needs." She described how Ashalim, together with program partners in the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs and the Abu Basma Regional Council, adapted the successful *moadoniot* after-school program model for children at risk to meet the particular cultural, educational and welfare needs of the Bedouin population in the Negev.

The **Bedouin *moadoniot*** are the sole after-school service in the region and offer desperately needed educational and arts enrichment as well as social services for the children and their parents. This year, with the support of the UJA-Federation of New York, Ashalim expanded this program further to meet growing demand and opened eight additional *moadoniot* in Bedouin schools in the Negev.

Dr. David Paige from Johns Hopkins visits Ashalim

Ashalim hosted **Dr. David Paige**, a recognized expert in the area of Community Health and Maternal and Child Nutrition, for two days of meetings and site visits. Dr. Paige, Professor of Population and Family Health who has a joint appointment with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the School of Medicine, advocated that early intervention to ensure a child's healthy growth and development begin already at pre-natal stages. He shared efforts in the U.S. to improve parental education and mother's health.

MAYDA – The Ashalim Center for Knowledge & Learning

MAYDA – Inaugural Conference

Mayda's first annual conference was held in January on the subject of "Community Empowerment" and was attended by over 200 policy makers and field professionals. Guest speaker Isaac Prilleltensky, Dean of the School of Education at the University of Miami, presented a model for community empowerment which emphasizes interventions such as prevention, early identification and support services that are needed for strong communities over treatment and rehabilitation services. The conference also included seven sessions presenting a range of Ashalim activities for children and youth at risk.



Dr. Rami Sulimani presents certificates of appreciation to MAYDA supporters Mr. Hagai Avisar (pictured) and the Dorset Foundation

New Series of Discussion Forums (Bamah Hama)

What is the role of mass media in social change? How can we promote a healthy relationship between the media and social services for the benefit of children and youth at risk? How do we deal with biased reports, with conflicts of interest and with inaccurate articles?

These and other questions were addressed at **MAYDA's** first *Bamah Hama* - a new and innovative series of discussion forums with influential personalities offered to field professionals who work with children and youth at risk. The guest speaker, Smadar Peled who is a senior journalist for Channel 2 News covering welfare and society issues, held an open and honest discussion with participants about questions of professional integrity, processes of decision-making, reporting, balancing social needs with the needs of rating, and much more. "*Bamah Hama is a unique opportunity to discuss issues that we deal with in everyday life during our work, with experts that we don't usually have the opportunity to meet,*" said a participant.

Bamah Hama will continue to offer bi-monthly meetings with a wide variety of experts from various fields, such as law, communication, ethics, education, and health.

January - March: Conferences, Seminars & Professional Training

Children with ADHD:

Coping Strategies in the School System

Over 70 education and community services professionals attended a seminar to present the successful results of the "Idud - Encouragement" diagnosis and treatment school-based program for students with ADHD. The seminar was co-sponsored by Ashalim, the Ministry of Health, the Jerusalem Education Administration and the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, which evaluated the program.



Seated in front row on left: Mrs. Rivka Shai, Ashalim Area Head for Programs for Children and Youth with Special Needs. Photo: Elizabet Mizrahi

Healing of Children in Distress and in Crisis:

The Role of the School

This conference, held in conjunction with the release of the second edition of the book **Bearing the Trauma**, was attended by 360 professionals primarily from the North, Sderot and the Gaza border region. Conference speakers discussed aspects of the complex task faced by schools in helping students heal from traumatic experiences.



Pictured from left: Anna Ornstein, MD and Dr. Flora Mor, Ashalim Area Head for Educational Interventions

Guest speaker, Anna Ornstein, MD, retired Professor of Child Psychiatry at University of Cincinnati and now a Lecturer on Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Supervising Analyst at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, reflected on how the Israeli school counselor's challenges are compounded by the frequency of terror attacks that leaves little time for recovery. She related her personal experiences in recovering from the trauma of the Holocaust and noted the role of silence in allowing trauma victims to recover gradually and attend to their futures. Dr. Ornstein also met with professionals from Sderot and the western Negev region after the conference.

Youth Advancement Services in the World of Work: Opportunities and Connections

This national conference addressed the growing place of various job-force preparation programs in the work of Youth Advancement Services, and highlighted the new **Turning Point** youth employment and entrepreneurship programs. The 220 participants included supervisors, advisors, principals, youth advancement staff and **Turning Point** program partners. The conference was co-sponsored by Ashalim, the Ministry of Education, the Israel Association of Community Centers, and the city of Holon.

Better Together

The **Tel-Aviv Better Together** program sponsored the first conference about **Better Together** in advance of the city's intention to implement **Better Together** in an additional nine inner city neighborhoods in south Tel Aviv. The 200 attendees included heads of Tel Aviv municipal departments, supervisors from the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs, and 80 professionals and residents from other Better Together cities. Speakers described how the cooperative and inclusive platform forged by **Better Together** has changed the way in which service providers operate and interact on behalf of their beneficiaries and has promoted greater interest and involvement of local residents.

Seminar: Treatment Response to Sexual Abuse

This seminar in Bet Shemesh, organized through Ashalim's **Treatment Response to Sexual Abuse** program, presented to local professionals the work of the newly-established steering committee in caring for child victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse. The seminar was extremely well attended with representation from all sectors of the local population and from a wide variety of services and professions - social workers, police, school principals, guidance counselors, teachers, truancy officers, and mediators for the Ethiopian-Israeli community. The seminar took place just a few weeks prior to the exposure of a particularly shocking case in the city of child abuse and incest within the family.

Forum for Principals and Supervisors of Residential Facilities

One hundred Ministry of Social Affairs headquarters staff and supervisors as well as residential facility principals gathered at MAYDA to discuss the role and challenges of the counselor in residential facilities for children and youth at risk. The program included research results, a panel with counselors, drama session and discussions. The forum meets three times a year to share experiences and lessons on issues facing the field and the Ministry, and is organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Association for the Advancement of Treatment and Rehabilitation Residential Facilities in Israel and MAYDA.