

10th Anniversary



אשלים
ASHALIM

Shana Tova Greetings

September 29, 2008

Dear Friends,

As we wrap up Ashalim's third quarter of activity in 2008 and bring in the Jewish New Year 5769, we would like to highlight an Ashalim program that reflects our growth and our hopes for the coming year.

The chair featured here and those on the next page were created by junior high students in the **Maleh-Alternative Learning Spaces** dropout prevention program. **Maleh** gives a school's most difficult students a combination of individualized academic and emotional attention in an alternative setting out of the homeroom class. Ultimately, **Maleh** helps them reintegrate into the regular school routine.

For students in school, a chair can signify much more than just a child's seat in class. Many of us have memories of what happened at school while we sat for hours on that chair, hopefully positive memories of interesting classroom discussions and friendly interactions with our classmates seated nearby. However, for underachieving students, that same chair is a reminder of their troubles in school and is a seat in

which they would rather not be sitting.

Through the "My Chair" art project, this **Maleh** program gave its alienated students an opportunity to express their ambivalence towards school. Their creations show how they are not sure just where they fit in, that they want to feel strong but don't, that they dream about a pleasant world but live in a troubled reality.

Thousands of other children and youth at risk whose futures and welfare Ashalim works to advance share the feelings and inner conflicts represented by the chairs.

The Ministry of Education's recent announcement to adopt the **Maleh** model is heartening news for these students. It signifies not only the program's success, but also ensures its sustainability within Israel's education system.

It is our prayer that the coming year be filled with many opportunities for nurturing and growing. We wish you and yours a Shana Tova U'metuka, a sweet and good new year.



"Boredom" by Rachel, 8th grade. From "Artists in the Community" exhibit by Maleh students, Gedera Regional High School.

Dr. Rami Sulimani
Director-General Ashalim

Ken Witover, Chair
JDC Ashalim Sub-Committee

Maleh: "My Chair"



This year, the Gedera regional junior high school provided its **Maleh** students with a chance to give the schools' broken chairs a personality. The final products express the students' feelings of belonging to Israeli society and their involvement in school life. The "My Chair" exhibit drew the attention of all students and staff in the school, and allowed **Maleh** participants to show their talents in a public forum.

The **Maleh** program in Gedera serves 40 students from seventh to ninth grade, and each year offers a means of artistic expression, with an accompanying exhibit. "In **Maleh**, we view our students' needs broadly, and consider the reality they face in school as well as out of school," says the principal, Mrs. Rachel Tal.

Mrs. Tal relates that **Maleh** succeeds in advancing the students in the program – their behavior and scholastic achievements improve, and they are gradually able to return to their homeroom classes. **Maleh** has also had a positive affect on the overall school atmosphere, taking control of those students who would wander the halls or be consistently late to class. She is especially proud of her **Maleh** students' participation as members and counselors in local youth movements. Says Mrs. Tal, "There is no question that without **Maleh**, all this could not have happened!"



The **Maleh** program began in Kiryat Malachi in 2000, and has grown dramatically. It now operates in 70 schools nationwide, and assists over 1,000 students annually. The program is recognized for its success in retaining a school's most difficult students and in helping these underachievers and troublemakers achieve the unthinkable, a high school diploma.



*When Erez (not his real name) came to **Maleh** two years ago, everything about him said scared and introverted. He stood stooped over, and avoided eye contact with everyone, even other teens. But, as Erez began to feel more secure in the nurturing **Maleh** environment, all this changed. He became more communicative, would speak up and ask for help, and started to make friends with others in the program. His attendance improved, as did his performance in school. The progress even shows in the way he carries himself – Erez smiles regularly and stands tall.*

For more information about **Maleh**, go to http://maleh.org.il/about_en.html