



**MARLA GOODWIN ZIPPER
AVIV DELEGATE REPORT
NOVEMBER 2009**

Recently I had the privilege to represent Montreal as one of four Canadian delegates to the WIZO AVIV Seminar held in Tel Aviv November 2009. Coordinated by Ahuva Koren, Sylvie Pelossof, Janine Gelley, Briana Simon, and Rachel Dar, the experience was one infused with a palpable sense of energy and excitement. 45 women representing 12 countries from around the world all gathered together toward a common cause – to learn from each other and professionals about how to raise money to benefit women, children and healthcare, to obtain a better understanding of the challenges facing the organization and to learn about the projects that our collective fundraising efforts support.

This unique experience combined lectures about the challenges of membership retention with visits to WIZO projects as well as the Palmach and Yad Vashem Museums. An inspiring and uplifting message from the latter is that WIZO meetings were held at Terezienstadt. What a testament to the strength of those women and the importance of continuing this important work. This incredible act of resistance demonstrated such courage and optimism in the depths of despair.

Together we said Shehecheyanu on Mount Scopus and celebrated Rosh Chodesh at the Kotel. We were treated to a VIP tour of the Haifa Naval Base which included viewing security videos taken by patrols protecting Israel's sea borders which depicted the interception of merchant vessels attempting to smuggle guns and ammunition into Israel, and we planted trees in one of JNF's forests. We were fortunate to hear from Member of Knesset Orit Zuretz (Chairperson, Subcommittee on Trafficking in Women; Member, Committee on the Status of Women; Alternate Member, Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee), Brigadier General Gila Klifi Amir (Women's Affairs Advisor to the Chief of the General Staff) as well as a panel of women serving in the IDF. Despite all the combined knowledge that we have come here with we continue to learn more. For example, Israel is the only army in the WORLD that drafts women into compulsory army service. Not only this, but women serve in most capacities. Challenges faced by women in all facets of Israeli society were discussed candidly.

A particularly interesting seminar session dealt exclusively with branding Israel in a positive light. Ido Aharoni of the Foreign Ministry offered some valuable insight into the challenges facing Israel and strategies currently being used in response to the daily universal onslaught of negative PR.

Finally, on the closing day of the WIZO Seminar we heard an inspiring presentation by Avraham Infeld about the importance of Jewish Education and the meaning of Jewish Identity. This theme of reciprocal responsibility to the people and to the land was recurring and is the foundation upon which WIZO and CHW's work is based.

Despite being a member of CHW since 1994, it was an eye opening experience to become familiar with some of the current statistics. Of the 1,200,000 children in Israel, 30% live in Poverty, 16% are at risk, and 120,000 drop out of high school. 30% of immigrant youth live below the poverty line. In spite of these daunting statistics, 15,000 children have more secure lives because of WIZO which provides 800 institutions including 250 children's facilities. 30,000 children receive an education because of a WIZO institution.



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Women make up half of the population of Israel of whom 200,000 are abused. 89,000 are single parents. WIZO provides daycare facilities to allow children to have a safe environment while their mothers work. Of the 663,000 elderly in Israel, 30% live alone. Thousands find a sense of belonging in WIZO community centers.

We were fortunate to have the opportunity to visit WIZO and CHW projects where we witnessed firsthand the inspiring work being done and learned about the competing fundraising priorities

Netanya Technical High School

Netanya Technical High School is supported exclusively by CHW donations and hence is outside of the WIZO allocation of CHW funds raised. CHW began supporting this project in the 1970s. Netanya is a high crime area which struggles with organized crime. Netanya Technical High School is the last stop before jail for some of these kids and most of the students here come with a police file.

Because Netanya Technical High School is supported exclusively by CHW it is funded entirely by designated gifts and is not related to other CHW projects. These fundraising dollars are allocated toward the March of The Living program as well as transportation to and from school for the students. Special gifts have also been made such as the "Time Out" drop in center, staffed with teachers and moderators, which was funded by Past National CHW President Rochelle Levenson.

The high school offers technical programs to teach the students a skill which they can use upon graduation. Hotel Management is one of these departments. Initially this was a program for the lowest students from other schools. This developed into a culinary school which, thanks to CHW designated donations, has state-of-the-art equipment.

Another department is the Computer Department. CHW donations exclusively support this department. The classes are combined into one and include students in grades 10, 11 and 12. Each student has his own computer which they are responsible for. This fully equipped center is run under the Cisco base which is used in 150 countries around the world. Students in this program learn systems maintenance and graduate with a certificate in network administration. This is a four semester program leading to a certification pursuant to a five point matriculation process which is recognized by the government as being in the engineering field. The course is given in English and is a very demanding program. Those graduating from the program may continue to study math, computers, or English.

At a lovely reception we met the March of the Living (MOL) delegation and were presented with a cake made by the culinary school in honour of our visit. Yonatan, the Director of the high school, explained how he pushed for these kids to participate in the MOL when they were discouraged from doing so. This is the first school of its type that sent students to Poland when other similar schools did not. The March of the Living delegation has clearly brought pride to the school. In 1999 the school received a Yad Vashem award for being a pioneer in Juvenile Missions. Each student must pay a nominal amount in order to participate. There is a belief at the school that if you get something for nothing at all then you will not appreciate it as much.



The staff ratio at the school is one teacher for every five students. CHW support enables the staff to have access to the resources required to reach these students. For example – it costs 2,000 NIS per student to run a psycho-educational evaluation. A donation of “chai” x \$1,000 would subsidize the cost of these evaluations for the incoming students.

Another one of the areas that is desperately in need of funds is the library at the school. While we were surrounded by books, upon closer inspection it was clear that these editions were in a state of disrepair and some were very outdated.

One of the gifts of this school is that they are involved in writing training manuals describing how to teach this population of students. Involved in this project are four mental health professionals. Over the last 10 years the number of students with problems has increased. Individual counselors refer the more serious problems to agencies in the community.

The skills that the counselors try to convey to the students are:

- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Leadership
- Advocacy
- Assessment and use of data

In some cases, students represent the second generation of a family that has been deprived both on an academic and environmental level. Most of these students come from low socio-economic backgrounds. Some are orphans and some already have children of their own. Yet others come from families with criminal backgrounds. Due to the background that that many of these students come from, they are prone to be involved with risk taking. One of the examples described to us was something called PARKOR – otherwise known as roof jumping. In addition to this challenge, the counselors deal with students’ suicide attempts, eating disorders and unwanted pregnancies. Of the risky/problematic behaviours, we were shocked to learn that over 50% of the students at the high school have more than 2 of the characteristics described.

It is amazing to hear about the incredible gap between what these kids are like when they arrive at Netanya Technical High School and what they have achieved and acquired when they graduate.

Yonatan recounted how when he came to the school with experience as a principal in another high school that he didn’t think that he would last the year. That was 30 years ago.

The stigma that used to be associated with the school, that only kids in the worst circumstances attend, and that they do so simply to learn a trade, no longer applies. While it used to be hard to get teachers, now, the school has an excellent reputation and there is a waiting list of teachers who would like the opportunity to teach at the school. Yonatan had a dream to make this into a well respected high school. His dream has been achieved.



Nahalal Youth Village

The first thing that a visitor to Nahalal notices is the immense and beautiful grounds. But Nahalal is about far more than just beauty. This CHW funded project has much to be proud of. Nahalal boasts the highest percentage of graduates who end up serving in combat unit of the IDF. Unfortunately, this also means that Nahalal's graduates disproportionately represent those who have fallen in defense of Israel. A memorial stone stands at the entrance to the school inscribed with the names of graduates who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Among the names inscribed are Chana Senesh and Moshe Dayan.

Nahalal is located on the grounds of the first Israel Moshav (agricultural cooperative development) founded in Israel. The school started as a women's agricultural school, its first building pre-dating the establishment of the State of Israel, dating back to 1925. Nahalal is a regional public high school which has achieved the success that it has due to the generous donations it receives.

The school is built concentrically. A cluster of six buildings stand in a circle, each one housing a grade. Overall this school has 1,400 students in grades 6 through 12, approximately 200 of whom live in on site dorms. Those students who are housed onsite generally come from a different background than the students from the surrounding, more privileged, area. All students are integrated academically 100%. Despite the National average, Nahalal is proud of its students' 89% matriculation success rate. The school is known for its bio technology department which it runs in partnership with Technion University.

The computer class holds 20 computers in each of its labs. There are five such labs in the school. Among the classes here, students are taught graphic design. Examples of their work line the walls. We were able to visit robotics classes, chemistry labs as well as a beautiful library. One of the highlights of the tour included a very impressive 220 seat auditorium funded by CHW's Marla and Aubrey Dan. Plaques around the school illustrate the international WIZO partnership in funding this project together with CHW. In addition to the impressive academic facilities, the school also boasts contemporary soccer fields, basketball courts and a complete sports complex which seats 500 spectators.

Unlike the harsh sound of the school bell which rings at other schools to designate the end of the class, at Nahalal, the bell is to the tune of a lullaby.

We visited the horse stables where in the morning students work with the horses as part of animal therapy, and in the afternoon the stables are open to the public and riding lessons are offered for a fee. Of the 15 horses currently at the school, 5 were purchased by WIZO funds. Of the total students at the school, approximately 100 matriculate in animal therapy.



Hadassim Youth Village

Hadassim is perhaps the most famous of the WIZO CHW projects and the only WIZO project funded exclusively by CHW. Built in the 1940's, the school currently has approximately 1,200 students from grades 7 to 12. Many come from extremely difficult circumstances.

Children whose families cannot care for them stay on campus in "family units". Each family unit can accommodate up to 12 children ranging in age from 6 to 18 years old. In one such unit we met Nicole, who has been a foster parent at Hadassim for the past 9 years. She and her husband currently have eleven girls and two boys, in addition to their own three children, living in their family unit. Waking at 5:30 AM daily, Nicole busies herself taking care of all of their needs until late into the night. Aside from the regular challenges that any parent faces, Nicole and her husband often have to help the children face some that are unique, such as not hoarding food, as there will be enough to eat the next day. For some children, especially those from difficult circumstances and those newly arrived from Ethiopia, this is a recurring challenge.

In addition to these units, there are two units specifically for girls at risk. Visiting the dorm, it was hard to believe that these girls, some as young as 14, have come to Hadassim from life on the streets involving drug trafficking and prostitution. Hadassim offers them a second chance. Each unit houses ten girls who are fully integrated into the school at Hadassim.

Finally, at Hadassim, there is, the Children's Emergency Center which opened three years ago and can accommodate a maximum of 15 children at a time. There are ten such centers in all of Israel. Here, children who have been removed from their homes by court order can stay for up to a year until the courts determine where they will go next.

Their stories are incredibly painful to hear. When I visited, our guide pointed out a three year old boy playing in the yard who came to Hadassim after being found beaten in a nearby market. Domestic violence is a real concern. In 2009, 15 Israeli women were murdered by their husbands. According to the manager of Hadassim, they are currently trying to raise money for two more family units to be designated as "post emergency centre" residences.

The study center, where students come after classes to do their homework under the watchful eye of teachers to assist them, is open 3-7 PM, five days a week and students are only dismissed when they have obtained a certificate that all of their assigned homework has been completed. Here students work 1:1 or in 1:5 groups. The study center is also equipped with a computer lab. Two to three teachers work exclusively with special needs children. Here at Hadassim a high percentage of the students have some form of learning disability. Next to the study center there is a leadership workshop being held for older students to teach them the skills to help the younger weaker students. Hadassim is all about giving back and creating an infrastructure of helping each other.

As we walk around the grounds we see that the playgrounds are still filled with sand, despite the government mandate that all playgrounds should be changed to rubber matting for sanitary reasons. At Hadassim, there are simply too many competing needs, and the playground cannot be done this year.



Jerusalem – Ein Kerem Hadassah Hospital

Hadassah Hospital, located just on the outskirts of Jerusalem, is currently undergoing a \$300-million dollar renovation which will add 500 beds to its current capacity. The renovation will include a new campus center and tower. World Hadassah has lost approximately \$95 million as a result of the Madoff scandal, and funds are desperately needed.

Hadassah hospital is used as an example the world over of what a cutting edge hospital and trauma center should be. Hadassah hospital was nominated two years ago for a Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its treatment of each patient, regardless of religion, colour or creed. Patients at Hadassah Hospital are treated according to their priority as assigned in triage. Practically, this means that sometimes, a terrorist who just perpetrated an attack yet is still alive, is treated before his intended victims. What other country in the world can make such a claim?

As we walk into the trauma unit we pass through a two foot wide steel entrance which closes automatically in the event of a terrorist attack creating a sealed off unit from the outside. There is enough clean air, water etc... for those inside the unit to live for up to three weeks. But this just begins to describe what differentiates this trauma unit from emergency rooms. Here there are six identical units, placed side by side each with identical supplies placed in precisely the same configuration to enable doctors and nurses to find what they need without additional delay. There are no military hospitals in Israel, so soldiers who are wounded are treated here alongside civilians. Unfortunately, due to the threat of terrorist attacks that Israelis live with, often civilian casualties can be equally horrendous. Of course, like elsewhere, here is where severe car trauma victims will also be treated. In the trauma unit, all equipment is attached to the ceiling to free up floor space and allow the maximum number of doctors and nurses to have access to a patient. Even the X-Ray machine is located under the bed to enable pictures to be taken without transporting a patient who often is too weak to be moved. Also unique to Hadassah hospital is that there are trained trauma doctors and nurses throughout the hospital, an unfortunately necessary measure. Finally, inside the trauma unit there is a VIP area where the doors can be closed to protect the privacy of a well known patient. This is where Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was treated.

After the trauma unit we visited the Mother and Child unit. Here a colourful train runs along the upper perimeter of the first floor. The warm and colourful layout and design are specifically meant to make visitors feels at home and forget that they are in a hospital environment.

Any visit to Hadassah hospital would be incomplete without a tour of the Chagall windows. Commissioned in 1959, these famous windows are designed in the theme of the 12 sons of Jacob and are meant to symbolize the blessings bestowed upon them. The windows were first exhibited in the Louvre then the MOMA in New York City and were finally dedicated at Hadassah in front of the artist in 1962.



Ramat Hasharon – Sandy Martin Daycare Center

In contrast to Hadassim youth village and Netanya Technical High School, this school caters to mostly middle class children from average homes. In 2009, CHW ran a national campaign to install rubberized matting on the ground surface of all playgrounds in compliance with new Israeli governmental requirements. This center is completely renovated with a new kitchen, classrooms etc....

Assaf Harofeh Hospital/Clara Balinsky Daycare Center

The hospital serves the middle and lower classes. We visited the Ophthalmology and Cardiology departments and were impressed with the modern cutting edge facilities. The hospital is located on the Tzrifim military base and barracks are visible from the hospital parking lot. Plaques literally put up everywhere speak to the deep reliance of the hospital on donations and the incredible connection that they have with donors, evident from the significant gifts that they have received.

Inside the grounds of the hospital, we tour the Clara Balinsky daycare center. Here the children of the doctors, nurses and staff of Assaf Harofeh are cared for. In addition to these children, the center also caters to children from welfare families and children with special needs. The center has a list of maintenance needs which include the playground, bathrooms... The kitchen is renovated but the playground is all sand and in need of renovation. There are 55 kids in the daycare facility. To maximize the use of space, the bomb shelter doubles as a gymnasium. Our Israeli guide is completely shocked that we do not have bomb shelters in our homes, schools and, at the very least, communities in Canada.

The playground still has a sand surface and as a result is at risk of being closed down should there be a random government inspection detecting bacteria.

The Cardiology Department workout room looks like any other busy gym with people occupying all of the equipment and fully engaged in their workout. What distinguishes these exercise enthusiasts is that they are all post op and this is part of their rehabilitation. As impressive as the setup is, plans are currently underway to expand the facility twofold as there is currently a six month waiting list to get into the post op rehabilitation program.

Once again we are amazed to learn about yet another feature that distinguishes this facility from others around the world. Assaf Harofeh Hospital contains a Hotel onsite to accommodate both families of patients being treated there as well as the general public. There is a sense of community in Israel which goes above and beyond what one would find elsewhere to ensure that everyone in the family is thought of.

It is worth noting that this hospital, as is the case with all hospitals in Israel, treats Muslim, Christian and Jewish patients alike. Our tour closed with a visit to the Emergency and Trauma rooms.



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One of the overwhelming challenges facing WIZO, and CHW by extension is membership. Having enough members enables WIZO to have consultative status at the United Nations. Currently, WIZO has representation in both New York and Geneva. It is essential to maintain this Zionist voice. At present, the UN Security Council meets three times per year and is comprised of two committees. The first deals with all human rights abuses worldwide and the second looks exclusively at Israel. Currently, many anti-Zionist forces are trying to delegitimize WIZO and remove their status internationally. It is incumbent upon each of us to redeem this vision.

Hopefully, by continuing to spread the word about the important work being done by the recipients of our fundraising dollars, we will be able to expand our membership and ensure the future and continued success of this most worthwhile organization.

May CHW and WIZO continue to go from strength to strength.

Sincerely,

Marla Goodwin-Zipper