

THE JERUSALEM HILLS

Therapeutic Centers

(formerly the J.W.I. Residential Treatment Center) R.A.

"הרי ירושלים"

מוסדות לטיפול פנימייתי

(לשעבר מוסד בני-ברית) (ע"ר)



NEWS FROM JERUSALEM HILLS

DECEMBER 7, 2017

Annual Fall School Trips

In the first few months of the school year each unit goes on a class trip whether a hike or an excursion to spend some time with their immediate staff outside the classroom. These trips serve as a way to re-connect within the group and with the staff after the long summer break and to strengthen these connections for the coming year.

This year the Einot Tzukim natural reserve near the Dead Sea was a great hit and more than half the groups went there. This is a wonderful setting for the staff and children to spend a relaxing day together thanks to the different natural swimming pools, picnic tables and abundance of trees and paths. The Ella group visited there a few weeks ago. Here is a summary of the trip by one of the teachers:

"On Tuesday we went to the Einot Tzukim reserve, and on the way we listened to a playlist of songs that we all compiled together and also played a rousing game of bingo. When we arrived we made breakfast together and met our tour guide Tzvi who took us for a walk through the "hidden reserve." We walked by a freshwater lake and reached the place where we could see the Dead Sea in the distance. After leaving the "hidden reserve" we arrived at the Ein Pashcha pools where the girls and the staff swam together, had lunch, ate ice cream and then headed back to the school. The trip was an excellent way for the staff and children to bond. We all had a wonderful time in the reserve, especially the pools."



Extra-curricular therapeutic activities

Our Children often exhibit a range of difficult symptoms including fear, rage, distrust of adults and destructive or violent behavior. Many of them do not benefit from conventional therapies alone. Alternative therapies enable them to explore difficult emotions in an intuitive, non-verbal way. Many of these therapies are offered during the afternoon hours as additional activities to free play and on days when a child's family is not on campus for their weekly visit.

Some of the children attend dog training therapy, while others have music therapy in the form of guitar lessons. We offer a therapeutic soccer program and a therapeutic photography workshop which takes place outside the Home. Like in previous years, the volunteers from Love 153 International provide Taekwondo and

sewing programs. The children in Taekwondo are provided with special uniforms and the sewing is done on sewing machines donated by Love 153 International. This year we started a new therapeutic basketball program for the boys in the junior unit. The program is run by the youth division of Hapoel Jerusalem in collaboration with the Bank of Jerusalem. The boys are especially excited as each one received a personalized Hapoel Jerusalem jersey, an individual Hapoel basketball and a workout bag.

In addition to these activities being therapeutic, it is important for us to provide the children with enriching and normative activities, like other kids their age. The extra-curricular activities provide the children with a sense of control and accomplishment. It gives them the tools to deal with difficult situations, to develop confidence in their ability to shape their experiences, and it teaches them to trust others. These are skills that will assist them as they re-enter normative society and begin to build fulfilling lives of their own.



Graduates

Over the past 70 years, close to 70% of the graduates of the Children's Home and the Kemper Group Home have gone on to lead productive lives in the greater community. They always remember the dedication, patience, care, and love that helped turn their nightmares into dreams and gave them the tools to rise above their painful beginnings. Some keep in touch and return to the Homes for a visit. An example of this is a recent visit by a graduate of the Kemper Group Home who will be enlisting in the Israeli army in a few weeks. M. spent 4 years at the Kemper Group Home, during which he underwent a significant process that prepared him for his upcoming army service. In the last two years at the Home, M. volunteered to help Holocaust survivors. He would visit a Holocaust survivor at least once a week and keep her company. He would bring her food from the Home and together they eat and talk about life. The treatment M. received at the Home helped him to be able to forge this unique connection with the holocaust survivor. M. will be serving in a special unit in the army which helps soldiers deal with the military system and provides them with a supportive and targeted framework that encourages them to serve in the army.

The Children's Home also had a visit from a graduate who left the Home 8 years ago. He came with his wife and son and told us excitedly all about his life and what he has gone through since he left until today. From the interview with P.:

"At first it was difficult here. It was hard to adjust... I wasn't used to being with a lot of people in a big group. I got used to it, opened up to the counselors... from here I went to the Hana Hostel [Kemper Group Home], I was there a year, I adjusted to the Home, went to a school outside the Home, I'd come and go. Then my brother died... so I decided to return home. He was my older brother so I took upon myself the paternal role. We lived in Tel Aviv in the Shapira neighborhood. Shapira was a slum with a lot of crime. I deteriorated, I went in and out of jail, I went through some not so good phases. It was difficult... But I learnt a lot [at the Children's Home]. I cooked; I knew how to cook at the Home. Sometimes when I needed to stop I would stop. I would always remember that I was good, and sometimes I was strong and sometimes weak and I would cry. At first when I went out into the real world I didn't really understand myself, I wanted to show everyone who I was. When I was here at the Home I didn't know people on the outside. [When I got out] I wanted people to know me, know who I was. It was a little hard. And then I started working. I've been working for 5 years... I slowly climbed up the ladder, like I was taught. At first I wanted to jump to the top of the ladder but I understood that that's wrong and I slowly got to where I want to be. I have a kid, I have a wife, thank G-d."



The staff that taught and cared for him while he was here was greatly moved to see how he's grown up and started a family. The encounter was inspirational and reinforced in everyone the importance of the work that is done here at the Children's Home.

Annual Fall Seminar Hosts Professionals from all Over Israel

Our annual Fall Seminar "Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy for Children and Youth" was held this year for the 19th time in the "Jerusalem Hills" children's home. The seminar was attended by more than 160 psychologists, social workers and therapists from all over the country. This long standing tradition began in 1997 to mark the retirement of Dr. Yehezkel Cohen, in recognition of his 35 years as executive director of the Children's Home and for his many professional achievements over the years, including the development and implementation of a unique and effective treatment program for children suffering from severe emotional disorders under our auspices "Therapy in Life Space", which has become a role model for similar facilities in Israel and abroad.

The two-day seminar has become an established tradition, which many professionals expect year after year.

This is an opportunity for therapists, social workers and psychologists from all over the country to be part of an intensive and unique learning experience. In one-and-a-half hour study groups, led by one of 13 senior psychotherapists, among them Dr. Yehezkel Cohen, the participants are exposed to a clinical case that challenges one of the participants. The group discusses the case and analysis it. During the two-day seminar, each participant moves from one workshop to another at each of the five sessions. Thus, he or she is exposed to the individual insight and professional methodology of each of the renowned teachers supervising the sessions. This setting facilitates a special atmosphere of openness and sharing, enabling participants and moderators to reach a level of depth and creativity seldom reached in group supervision. This year the participants had the unique opportunity of hearing therapeutic approaches from abroad thanks to Ms. Beate Schumacher from the UK who honored us by coming to Israel for the seminar and being one of the moderators.



Following the success of the Fall Seminar for psychologists, social workers and therapists, this year a Winter Seminar will be held for all those involved in the direct treatment of children in residential frameworks: counselors, teachers, house mothers, coordinators and all those who work with children in the framework of a boarding school or therapeutic system in the community.

Focus on the JHTC Special Education School

Children with emotional difficulties which manifest in behavioral disorders, anxiety attacks, and attachment problems need an environment that allows corrective and constructive experiences, and a living space that provides meaningful contact with positive caregivers. Their emotional disorders often affect the child's cognitive abilities which are in turn reflected in learning difficulties.

"The intense emotional activity typical of students with these disorders - due to constant preoccupation with suspicion and disappointment - affects their thinking processes and falsifies them. This will be reflected in the difficulty to comprehend emotionally neutral learning content, while emotionally charged educational content will immediately provoke their aggression." (Dr. Yehezkel Cohen)

Therefore, the children in our care cannot attend mainstream schools and we provide an on campus Special Education School which caters to their unique needs. This allows the teachers to be in daily contact with the children's care-workers and psychologists. This constant communication is necessary to realize our treatment philosophy which integrates therapy into every aspect of a child's care.

Each unit of 15 children has three specially trained teachers who accompany the unit during the four-year period in which the children stay in the home, thus providing them with the necessary stability to develop a relationship with the teachers and lead to successful learning skills. Each group is also assigned a teaching assistant. The high staff to pupil ratio means that the children can receive the individual attention they so desperately need. Each group has three classrooms, meaning that the teachers can teach the entire class together or split off into small groups. The children's curriculum, approved by the Ministry of Education's Curriculum for Special Education, allows for each student to follow a personally tailored program in which various disciplines are adjusted to suit his or her chronological age as well as emotional and mental needs.



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JHTC is committed to restoring to each at-risk boy and girl under our care their faith in themselves and their belief that the world is meant for them as well. The success of our highly personalized long term treatment program depends to a large extent on the generosity and support of our friends and supporters all over the world. Your support will make a real difference and a lasting impact

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