



Friends of Yemin Orde
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YEMIN ORDE GRADUATE, OMER SISAI, HELPS AT-RISK CHILDREN SEE THE WORLD CLEARLY

Sisai is an optometrist who understands, first hand, the challenges of Israel's immigrant youth population

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 10, 2013, Washington, DC -- The young adults who graduate Yemin Orde Youth Village, south of Haifa, go on to become productive citizens of Israel and positive role models for their younger peers. The concepts of "paying it forward," and helping others is deeply-rooted in their education and important to their personal growth at the Village. Friends of Yemin Orde is the U.S. based fundraising arm of Yemin Orde Youth Village and Yemin Orde Educational Initiatives, and provides support that enables vulnerable children in Israel to

receive high quality education programs and activities. Visit www.yeminorde.org or call 202.237.0286 for information.



Omer Sisai, an optometrist based in Jerusalem, is one such graduate who is helping others at Yemin Orde - one smile and one eye exam at a time. Today, Sisai works for an optical company that helps provide eyeglasses to those who suffer financial hardship. He intentionally decided to direct his career toward working to serve people in need.

Sisai recently spent time at Yemin Orde providing eye exams to each and every child living at the Village. He also arranged for children to receive eyeglasses, if necessary. While at the Village, Sisai often spends time talking with the children, encouraging them to study hard and urging them hold fast to their dreams.

"I remember when I was in my senior year at Yemin Orde High School, I wrote in our yearbook that in a few years, I want to return to the Village as a donor," said Omer. "Today, I know that I can also donate my knowledge and expertise – not just money. I enjoy spending time in conversation with the children, giving them encouragement and modeling for them the kind of life they can have. I feel as though I have come full circle."



Sisai moved to Israel from Ethiopia in 1990 with his parents and nine siblings. Soon after his family arrived, he was welcomed at Yemin Orde. Sisai worked hard to adapt to a new language, a new culture and new friends; he soon excelled in his studies at the Village. After graduating high school, Omer attended the Yemin Orde Pre-Military Young Leadership Program for Immigrant Youth, also called *Mechina* which prepared him for meaningful and successful military service. He served three years in the Israel Defense Force.

Omer studied optometry because he was interested in a career in medicine and had worn eyeglasses since he was a child. –MORE–

The young adults who graduate Yemin Orde become accomplished and productive citizens of Israel. They have careers in Israel's high tech and health care industries and are successful as leaders in the military, the law, community service positions, the arts, politics and more. In January 2013, a Yemin Orde graduate, Shimon Solomon, was elected to Israel's Parliament (Yesh Atid party).

After suffering neglect and abandonment as youngsters and teens, these formerly at-risk children are healthy, capable and strong thanks to the Village's dedicated team of educators and professionals and its highly-acclaimed Village Way methodology. This methodology, which is currently implemented in many other youth villages and public high schools in Israel, provides the framework to transform the lives of vulnerable children through quality education, strong cultural identity, leadership skills and the comfort of a supportive community.

The Graduate Mentor Program at Yemin Orde provides graduates with networking and referral opportunities by matching them with older Village alumni. These older graduates serve as mentors for the younger graduates and provide guidance through army service, higher education options and careers.

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Yemin Orde Youth Village and Yemin Orde Educational Initiatives (YOEI)

Yemin Orde Youth Village is located in the Carmel Forest region of northern Israel, just outside Haifa. It is home, school and safe haven to hundreds of at-risk immigrant youth from all over the world, including Ethiopia, the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Brazil. The children at Yemin Orde have all experienced trauma: from abandonment and isolation to loss and extreme poverty. With the help of the Village's dedicated staff, educators and professionals, they cultivate self-esteem, leadership skills, strong cultural identity and a positive outlook on life. The promise that "Yemin Orde is always there for you" is not an empty statement to its graduates, teens and children. Graduates receive a wide range of services including scholarships and emergency financial support. The Village's "Home Away From Home" Graduate House is available for short or lengthy stays. At Yemin Orde, the children find a family and a future.

Yemin Orde Educational Initiatives (YOEI) extends Yemin Orde's unique methodology, called "the Village Way", to other youth villages and schools in Israel by providing workshops, teacher training and interventions, thereby reaching hundreds more at-risk children. By 2017, YOEI will be partnered with a total of five therapeutic residential communities and ten schools for at-risk youth in Israel. Today, YOEI and its resources are credited with transforming education for at-risk youth in Israel.

Visit www.yeminorde.org for more information, email info@yeminorde.org, or call 202-237-0286.