

YEMIN ORDE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

YEMIN ORDE EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

D.N. Hof HaCarmel 30895, ISRAEL

September 2010, Elul 5770

My Very Dear Friends - Shalom ,

Family ties come in many ways. It's even possible to live in America and raise children in Israel - with partners whose own children grow hand in hand with kids that others have brought to the world. I've always felt that is what the extended family of Yemin Orde is all about. Just seeing Addis, 17, and baby girl No'ah - daughter of his mentor Shimon - captured in a moment of simple and pure joy, gives us all a good reason for optimism and hope.



New beginnings



August 3rd, 2010 was the first day at Yemin Orde for a special group of 81 youngsters who originated from Russia and Eastern Europe. They begin a journey not only to a new life, but more so, to a broad and inclusive Jewish identity. Dressed in Village T-shirts for the first time, they listen to Dr. Benny Fisher, Village Director, warmly welcoming them.

'Fiddler on the Roof'

Internationally renowned Israeli star, Chaim Topol, joined our annual educational symposium. He witnessed the groundswell of support for the grassroots movement of educators generated by Yemin Orde Initiatives. We seek to transform educational institutions into environments whose very structure is imbued with meaning. Overwhelmed by the spirit of the day, Topol saluted the hundreds of educators present from our five sister Villages with a completely unexpected gesture - a song carrying a message of moral support that came from the depths of his heart.



Safe and sheltered

Our graduate Colonel (Res.) Isachar Mekonen is one of many role models who always share their time and life experience with our younger ones. The graduate connection is coordinated by a special team, which operates from the alumni center. This center has been named in honor of **Emma Lazarus**, whose vision for a sovereign Jewish state preceded Herzl, the father of Zionism. A quote from her most famous poem inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty, is the motto of our graduate program and has been engraved at the center's entrance.



מדור בוגרי הכפר ע"ש
המשוררת ואשת החזון
אָמָה לְרוּם
*"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses
yearning to breathe free.
Send these, the homeless,
tempest-tost to me"*

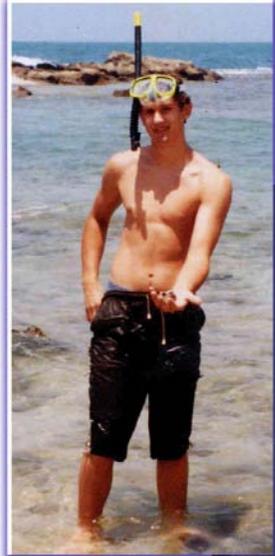
Busy as a beehive

This summer we hosted young foster home children in need of a normal holiday; foreign laborers' kids who took a break from impoverished Tel Aviv neighborhoods; and African-American adolescents of the Baltimore Cummings Leadership Program, who were introduced to Israel through Yemin Orde. Meanwhile, a few of our own kids got to meet new friends thanks to outreach programs across the ocean. Less than 3 years ago, Daniel was a lonely orphan in Ethiopia. This summer, he found out what the greater Jewish family is all about. He joined the 'Genesis' summer program in Boston for worldwide young Jewish boys and girls at Brandeis. The genuine love he shared with faculty and peers encapsulates the essence of Jewish solidarity.



Defining an identity through Hexaplex Trunculus...

On this side of the ocean, it's sometimes hard to speak about Jewish solidarity in the face of religious divisions. Mitya is the grandchild of a Holocaust survivor in the Ukraine, who followed his Jewish roots to Israel. For his belated Bar-Mitzvah project, as part of his conversion here at Yemin Orde, he chose to seek out the Hexaplex trunculus sea snail said to be the source of the original biblical blue dye of the *Tallit* fringes...



Although he never found it, he discovered the joys of Judaism. His journey of thought provoking research and emotional growth has no doubt built up his self-perception as human being, Israeli and Jew. The "snail story" represents in a nutshell the Yemin Orde way of breaking through stagnation and divisions – against all odds. As to Mitya, he graduated, received honors as exemplary leader and role model in the IDF (right), and now begins his first year of studies at Haifa Tech.

The High Holiday Season offers an amazing opportunity to instill in our children illuminating experiences, which will accompany them for the rest of their lives. It is about faith, which is meaningless without love for each other. When the Ark of the Torah opens wide, I feel that the bright lights along with the children's voices are meant for all of us – close and distant, who give so much to make it possible. Thank you.

Shanah Tovah,

as ever - Chaim Peir

