



## NEVE HANNA CHILDREN'S HOME

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### 2022-2023 Highlights

The Jewish High Holidays generally coincide with the beginning school year and are extensively celebrated in the children's home, which is affiliated with the Masorti Movement. Neve Hanna employs its own rabbi. Neve Hanna celebrates the Jewish New Year, Rosh HaShana, the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur and the Feast of Tabernacles, Sukkot, as well as the Sigd holiday, the central holiday of Ethiopian-born Beta Israel. In 2008 Sigd, was declared a holiday in Israel. Neve Hanna is proud to celebrate this holiday. It allows us to cherish the cultural heritage of our children of Ethiopian descent and gives the other children the opportunity to learn more about other cultures.

Many holidays are celebrated at Neve Hanna. Most liked are Hanukkah in winter and Purim in spring. Purim is especially festive since it was also the favorite festival of our founder, Hanni Ullmann, who died in 2002. It is celebrated with an extraordinary deal of effort at Neve Hanna. The children love to dress in costumes and celebrate it with a carnival. Neve Hanna is by no means just about festivals and holiday celebrations. Our everyday life follows a fixed pattern. In the mornings, the children go to school. If they are back at noon, there will be lunch followed by free time. Then it's homework time and time for special remedial teaching programs. At the beginning of the last school year, American Friends established a library, which many children visit weekly. After just a few months we noticed that their reading skills were beginning to improve.



After homework time, there are various meetings: therapeutic intervention meetings help our children to deal with their personal challenges arising from the trauma inflicted on them at a young age; animal-assisted therapy at the in-house petting zoo; therapeutic horseback riding at a nearby horse farm; occupational therapy at our in-house bakery Yeladudes, along with play, garden, music, dance and movement therapy. The professional staff members (among them a psychologist, a psychiatrist, social workers and therapists) work out an individual therapy plan for each child, which includes short-term and long-term goals.

Psychodrama which just started last year and resulted in a theater group during the last school year. The participating children are proud to have performed for all at NH and on the commemoration days for the Shoah victims, the fallen soldiers and victims of Israel's terror attacks.

Since Neve Hanna sees itself as a family, all groups come together once a week for a joint activity. Tournaments are often held and take place on the weekends when everyone is at NH. Each month another family group is responsible to organize these leisure activities: a cooking tournament, a juggling competition, watching the soccer World Cup together on TV, and a corresponding NH children's tournament and much more. Neve Hanna promotes creativity, but sports also play an important role in our lives, including, among other things, continued training for children who are struggling with weight problems.



The children visit their families every other weekend. We encourage contact as much as possible. Children who cannot visit their family unsupervised go to our holiday home in the north. Parents also visit Neve Hanna and this year, Family Day was a great success. It's always a nail-biter for the children to see if their parents are really coming. This year, we too feared that we might have to comfort many children if their parents did not come. Exactly the opposite happened. An unusual number of parents showed up, visited their children's group, took part in activities, saw the prepared performances and stayed to have supper together which resulted in a nice family day.

As a family, together we also work on the beautification of our premises. We finally have a permanent, stable stage and new animal character statues throughout our campus. Our entrance and some elements at our Petting Zoo have been redesigned.



As a family, we are also concerned with the well-being of the community that we are part. We care for some Shoah survivors living in Kiryat Gat and deliver Mishloach Manot on Purim to many in our city. Neve Hanna is particularly proud of our youth welfare club "Streetlight", which children from the age of 13 can join. The children try to do a good deed every day, meeting twice a week as a group for an educational activity in their club room. They invest a lot of energy in collecting in-kind and money donations in order to be able to put a box of groceries on the doorstep of needy families in Kiryat Gat. On Rosh HaShana and Passover and every week between all at Neve Hanna, children, staff and team, pack 120 food parcels that go to families in-need our donations are anonymous.

This year we learned more about cooking with the help of the sun from a professor from Ben-Gurion University. Each group made their own solar cooker and was tried out. There was also additional training for young people and the team in other areas. For example: on the subject of drugs, sexual assaults at work, anger management and relaxation training and much more.

We had the pleasure of welcoming many visitors. The institution for international kindergartens in Hamburg, Germany, came with a delegation of employees to celebrate ten years of educator exchange with us. The participants of the VHT (Video Home Training) carried out by the association "Fobi aktiv e.V." in Esslingen, Germany, visited us to complete the three-year joint training of their participants and three team members from Neve Hanna. On this occasion, professional contacts with Ben-Gurion University as well as Sapir College in the Negev were strengthened. The International Birthright Taglit groups were also our guests, as was a girl and her family from Chicago, who chose Neve Hanna as her Bat Mitzvah project.

"Clowns Without Borders" visited us to make the children laugh with a wonderful performance. We had a remarkable visit from three former volunteers who, 30 years after their service, felt it was high time they finally came back to see us. During their stay, we celebrated yet another special event in which the American Friends were involved years ago: Lili, a former child of Neve Hanna, received help with her academic tuition fee for her bachelor studies. She received her certificate on successfully completing her studies and Janet and Irwin honored her and her family by attending the ceremony.

We encourage our teenagers to continue advanced studies. Some take part in the course "Young Business Leadership" which is mainly held in Tel Aviv by well-known companies. Other teenagers continued to be involved in our Ziv Neurim program, which teaches them personal and social skills through beach and sea activities. Such activities for teenagers also include our youth exchange with a school in Wiesbaden, Germany, which we were able to resume this year.



Throughout the year, the actions of our children's advisory board were always sensational. They not only wish every child a happy birthday with special surprises, but also advocate for improvements, run activities for everyone and have represented the children's home at national conferences. The teenagers involved in the decision-making processes in the children's home according to Janusz Korczak's pedagogical concept, had the privilege of visiting an Israeli court to learn more about the judiciary system, and were able to speak at a session of the Social Committee of the Knesset about the reality of children who grow up in a children's home.

Highlights of the last few months were the 75th Independence Day of the State of Israel which was celebrated with a dance party and the next day the celebration was continued with an activity organized by our Israeli volunteers about the creation of the Jewish state. All this culminated with a big barbecue.



One more annual highlight which we must mention is our Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration for five boys and five girls this year. Although it was not possible to go to Jerusalem due to the political situation, we celebrated a boisterous three-day party at our home. The focus was on the Aliyah LaTorah, which was attended by the families of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah children. For the first time, we were able to use the Torah scroll written especially for Neve Hanna. Thanks to the American Friends, Torah Project, last fall, we were able to celebrate its completion. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah was not just about celebration, it was also a celebration of the completion of a ten-month educational program that included learning about Jewish values, Jewish history, and educational trips, as well as volunteering by each child for a project in Kiryat Gat.

**We thank you for your support and wish you Shana Tova!**