

**NEVE HANNA
CHILDREN'S HOME**

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**AMERICAN FRIENDS OF
NEVE HANNA**

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Hannukah 2024

Dear Friends,

As always, it was a turbulent start into the routine of the new school year, which is hardly surprising given that there are over 100 children that NEVE HANNA cares for between ages 7 to 18. At the same time, it is fascinating how everything gets going again after the summer holidays, even with new children joining NEVE HANNA and new staff members. Getting back to routine after the summer break of course includes the therapy programs, the remedial teaching programs, and the enriching leisure time activities. **Part of the NEVE HANNA activities are also special programs to prepare our at-risk teenagers for their adult life.** This time we want to tell you a bit more about these programs which give the teens the skills "to spread their wings."

These programs try to ensure that teenagers residing at NEVE HANNA have the chance to deal adequately with their challenges, their developmental gaps and nevertheless **integrate into normative society instead of repeating the cycles of their parental homes.** Most of the participating 65 teenagers are in addition deeply traumatized due to the events of and after October 7, 2023, since they were home staying in the attacked area. Especially teenagers facing being drafted must deal with even more worrisome questions.



Some programs at Neve Hanna, such as **Bar/Bat Mitzvahs** and the maritime activities of the **Ziv Neurim** are familiar to you since American Friends support them. This school year they are implemented without any changes. However, here are changes to another program you are supporting, our youth movement, **Streetlight**. These 16 teens of NEVE HANNA engaging in good deeds for others, in giving and Tikkun Olam, carry on with their meetings twice a week, once for educational matters and once to collect donations, to pack food baskets and distribute them to families in need. Since fall 2024 there is a group of youngsters called "Keren Or" (Beam of Light) preparing children who want to join our Streetlight youth club at the age of 13. To our great delight, 13 children signed up for this educational journey.

Streetlight and Keren Or are both implemented by NEVE HANNA staff member Arbel, who from the fall of 2024 is no longer working as a house mother, but will solely take care of social projects. In this position, she oversees yet two other educational enterprises of NEVE HANNA striving for qualifying our teens on one hand by **sports activities** and on the other hand by raising **social awareness**. Arbel started to train a group of **7 teen girls**, who will participate in a five-kilometer-run. The other group also of **7 teens** are learning more about the Israeli police and the importance of police work by meeting key figures and visiting police facilities.



There are three additional teen projects with totally different aspects. In their free time, some of the teenagers voted to become **trustees of the Petting Zoo**. They help care for the animals, but also take responsibility to involve younger children in all activities of the Petting Zoo through enrichment and educational meetings, passing on what they themselves learned about specific animals — their way of life and their needs.



Furthermore, there is the **Yeladudes Baking School**. About 30 years ago, NEVE HANNA founded the Yeladudes bakery to introduce its children and teenagers to the working world. NEVE HANNA children can participate in the afternoons in the production process of our breads, cookies, and cakes. Last year, we started our **first class of the Yeladudes Baking school providing teens with a deeper insight** in the products, the ingredients, the nutrition details, and the production process, by teaching them how to repeat working processes in precise manners. This group of 8 teens already finished their first year. They are joined this school year by a second group of 10 teens for the weekly learning lessons.

And there are of course the youth meetings, NEVE HANNA arranges between Jewish teens residing at the children's home and Muslim-Bedouin teens from the nearby town of Rahat. They meet once every two weeks in Neve Hanna or in Rahat. They learn more about the other through playful and fun activities. They not only discover differences but find out about similarities and shared preferences, so walls of animosities and prejudice are torn down.

All these projects aim to help our teens to reduce development gaps in all spheres of life, to **increase self-confidence**, independence, and their sense of responsibility, to arouse interest in **volunteering and community awareness** and to **actively live Jewish and humanistic values**. By providing them with tools and skills, we try to contribute to their ability to overcome challenges they face now. When we are at their side, we can especially be helpful as they must deal with challenges as adults. But NEVE HANNA also strives for more: We want our children to have the chance to excel and we help them acquire young leadership qualities. Part of that vision is yet another teenager program: **Neve Hanna Children's Council**.



The council consists of 12 members elected by the community of the children of NEVE HANNA. Establishing a council a year ago was the next step to implement the educational approach of Janusz Korczak at NEVE HANNA. Itzik Bohadana, who has been NEVE HANNA's director for the last eight years elaborated on this subject: *"We do not make decisions over our children's heads, we decide together with them. Active participation is very important to us so that the children feel respected and valued and are also part of our community and the community outside of NEVE HANNA."*

Since four members of the Council recently graduated from NEVE HANNA, we hold elections, teaching the candidates as well as the voters vital lessons about democracy, participating in decision making, the influence they can have and responsibility. The members of the Children's Council meet once a week to plan activities for all of NEVE HANNA. As Itzik said, "They participate in the decision-making process of Neve Hanna and see to it, that the wishes of children are considered." This year they stated that the children wish to learn Hip-Hop in an organized and professional manner. So, NEVE HANNA is currently looking for a professional teacher.

All these activities will help our children to enjoy being young, and explore and blossom. In addition, this contributes to their growing up as educated, responsible and open-minded adults leading a productive life and at the same time contributing to society.



Listening to the pledges of the candidates



Standing in line to vote

Sincerely yours,

Dudu Weger
President

Itzik Bohadana
Director

Chaim Appel
Chairman of the Board