



NEWSLETTER

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ROSH HASHANAH 5784/2023



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENTS Janet & Irwin Tobin

Dear Friends,

Now that we spend more time in Israel, we are invited to all the incredible programs and events at Neve Hanna.

On June 1st, we celebrated a very special event. Lili, a former child of



Neve Hanna who received financial aid from the American Friends of Neve Hanna Scholarship Fund, graduated from the Open University with a Bachelor degree in psychology. It

was a delightful celebration with Lili, her father and husband, *shepping nachas*. Lili is not stopping here; she is going on for a 2nd degree in Family Counseling. We are so proud of her.

Our many successes are due to the funding we receive from you, our valued partners. With your contributions, American Friends of Neve Hanna can be proud of the love and support we give our Neve Hanna family. Our Director, Itzik Bohadana, the staff and especially the children are most appreciative of all we do providing the programs we support: Ziv Neurim, the Library, the Playground, the therapies, extracurricular activities and remedial teaching – all projects that feed every child’s self-worth and need for creativity, freedom and fun.

May your families enjoy a safe, peaceful, healthy and joyful New Year.

Shanah Tova Tikateivu,

Janet and Irwin

MY RETURN TRIP TO NEVE HANNA Rabbi Jill Kreitman, Executive VP AFNH

As an RK (a rabbi’s kid) I am grateful that my father z’l passed down to me his most precious gift. The gift my father so cherished was his association with Neve Hanna. My father, Rabbi Benjamin Z. Kreitman z’l had an unbounding compassion for the children at Neve Hanna. As the founder of American Friends of Neve Hanna – my father looked to the future through the eyes of these children. My father was concerned with their well being both mental and physical and he insisted that these children of Neve Hanna prosper and succeed in life. Together, my father and I would visit Neve Hanna to see the development of the children. On one visit, a child of Neve Hanna ran to greet my father and held his hand as we walked around this magical place. It was at that moment that I began to see the future of these children through my father’s eyes. I made a vow that I would join my father on this mission and inherit from him a role in Neve Hanna.



See, I dance in two worlds. I am a reform rabbi, daughter of a conservative rabbi. I have a deep love for the conservative and Masorti movements, yet the path I chose for myself was the reform movement. Recently I visited Israel for the CCAR (The Central Conference of American Rabbis) convention. The convention was so meaningful yet I knew from the start that my mission was also to visit Neve Hanna. Yes, it was the first time I visited without my father, but I was able to behold his vision and see how Neve Hanna has grown. I felt a palpable closeness to my father as I wandered about the gardens of Neve Hanna.

To start, I was greeted at the gates by Janet and Irwin Tobin. How wonderful it was to see them so excited to share with me the development of Neve Hanna. We started our day by breaking bread with the leaders of Neve Hanna and then we toured the facility. Of course, we started at the synagogue, the spiritual home of these

children. We progressed to the homes of the children and went to the bakery. I couldn’t resist a visit to Pinat Chai (the zoo) on the property which teaches the values of compassion and helps the children learn to nurture another life. After leaving the zoo, I stood in the playground. I knew this playground had such potential but it desperately needed repair and revision. I know that Janet and Irwin have been working so hard on the campaign to upgrade the playground. What a worthy cause...Kol haKavod to Janet and Irwin for taking on this incredible drive to expand and repair the playground.

I cherished my visit to Neve Hanna...seeing the murals and structures that were home to these children. Yet, I saw so much more. I saw strength and levity in the eyes of the children. I saw hearts that were full of love for their fellow “family members”. The staff that nurtures these children was inspiring. As I look forward to the High Holidays, 5784, I myself have renewed and refreshed my sense of dedication to Neve Hanna. In the Talmud it states: “The world is sustained by the breath of children”. Certainly the breath of the children at Neve Hanna sustain me and my family...but more importantly, may their breath sustain the world. Shana Tova u’mitookah...May this year be a good one for all of us and may we in turn sweeten the lives of the children at Neve Hanna.

A SUMMER TRIP TO NEVE HANNA Rabbi Jonathan Lubliner, AFNH Board

Neve Hanna has never felt like an institution to me. Yes, there are offices, daycare rooms, and residential cottages, an artisanal bakery, and a miniature zoo, but the campus has a *haimish* feel to it, much like an extended family living in adjacent homes.



This past June I spent several days visiting Neve Hanna. The highlight for me was sharing lunches and dinners with different youngsters each day. Because Neve Hanna seeks to cultivate a sense of organic family,

each housing group consists of both boys and girls of different ages. Sitting down to eat – the appropriate *berakhot* are recited before and after each meal and boys wear *kippot* – the kids made me feel welcome immediately. As we sat around the table they peppered me with questions about my home, community, family, and hobbies. Since everyone is assigned household chores, those who helped prepare the food wanted to know if I liked what they made. I assured them truthfully that the falafel and shakshuka were very tasty!

Because my stay came a few days after Neve Hanna's annual *bar/bat mitzvah* celebration, I had the good fortune to attend a post-*b'nai mitzvah* musical program led by former staffer, Rabbi Deborah Sacks Mintz, now Director of Tefillah and Music for the Hadar Institute. Working in pairs and then as a group, the children wrote a song about the process of becoming *bar/bat mitzvah* and its meaning to them.

Earlier that day, I joined Antje Naujoks and a group of young German volunteers on a visit to Rahat, a neighboring municipality of Kiryat Gat and the world's largest Bedouin city. Because Rahat is home to the Bedouin children of Neve Hanna's interfaith/intercultural day care program, it is important for the volunteers to better understand the unique dimensions of Bedouin life in Israel. The trip to Rahat was a reminder of Neve Hanna's commitment to building bridges between communities and fostering a greater respect for diversity among all who call Israel home.

The staff of Neve Hanna is responsible for its success. Visit any of the residential groups and you will meet house parents for whom their role is a calling, not simply a job. From the legacy of Founder Hanni Ullman *z"l* to the devotion of its leaders – each with many years of service to the organization; from the therapists and employees to the volunteers, the adults of Neve Hanna are as inspiring as the children they serve. It's hardly surprising that a significant number of graduates return to Kiryat Gat as adults to give back the love and care they received as children at Neve Hanna.

The great Polish Jewish educator who tragically perished in the *Shoah*, Dr. Janusz Korczak, once observed, "Children are not the people of tomorrow, but people today. They are entitled to be taken seriously and treated by adults with tenderness and respect as equals. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be – the unknown person inside each of

them is the hope for the future." Nearly a century after Korczak wrote these words, Neve Hanna lives them each day. Come December, I look forward to bringing a group of visitors from my community to witness the wonder of this special place.

OUR FIRST VISIT TO NH Allan Gottesman, AFNH Board



Allan is not only a board member of NH, he is also a past president of Federation of Jewish Men's Club and one of

the creators of the International Kiddush Club. IKC supplies Tefillin for the NH Bar Mitzvah boys each year.

Caren and I were in Israel in mid-June and we were able to visit Neve Hanna. Caren has heard me talk about Neve Hanna, but neither of us had visited. Now, we cannot stop talking and sharing about our visit.

Antje Naujoks, PR Director, met us at the gate and sat us down for nosh and drink while telling us all about all the happenings at Neve Hanna. The first stop on our tour was the amazing Yeladudes Bakery. Dror, Head Chef, explained how the bakery works and informed us that the children can work at the bakery to earn some extra money. Of course, we left with delicious and easy to carry cookies.

The next stop was the new library. This library has a truly remarkable impact on the children – they are reading books, improving their reading scores and enjoying the space.

Chaim Appel, Chairman of the NH Board, joined us as we continued to a building where groups of children live as a family. Each flat, averaging 12 children, is staffed with an "Emma" and "Abba." They eat together, enjoy time together, do homework, watching TV etc. Each child has their own space which gives them privacy. What a concept.

Our last stop was the former field of the playground, torn down for safety issues. American Friends of Neve Hanna has an ongoing campaign to raise money to build a new, modern and safe playground. Please help them build the playground.

We were extremely impressed with the facility and the people that help to raise these children in safety and with love. It truly draws on your heart strings. We have been back in Florida for a few weeks and have not stopped telling everyone (even if

they do not want to listen) about the important work being done at Neve Hanna. We are so happy that we went to visit. It was a truly incredible day. We cannot stress enough that if you are in Israel you must go to Neve Hanna. Bring tissues.



Additional board members who visited NH last Spring, with Rabba Liron Levy (middle): Debbi Kaner Goldich, Janet Tobin, Rabbi Ellen Wolintz-Fields and Deborah Bruce.

MY NH BAT MITZVAH PROJECT

Miri Schwab

My name is Miri Schwab, I'm 12 years old and live in Chicago, IL. When it came time for my Bat Mitzvah, I wanted to do a

mitzvah project to help young people have a more enriched life. I searched

online and learned about Neve Hanna. I was interested in this organization because it helps provide a home, food, family, and other opportunities to children and teens who otherwise may not have these necessities. These are things that I feel grateful for and value and wanted to help provide these things for others. I raised and donated \$11,000 to Neve Hanna for the new playground that they are building. I did this so I could help people have a happier and better experience at Neve Hanna.

In December, I was fortunate to be able to visit Israel and Neve Hanna Children's Home. I had an amazing experience there. I met many kids and learned about their experience and the support that they are



given. I was amazed by how many kids live there and the connections they have made with one another. It was very cool to meet and sit with other kids who were also preparing to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah. I thought it was incredible to see how independent everybody was. I especially enjoyed touring the bakery and learning about how the entire community comes together to help run the bakery. I also like that it helps teach about working and providing jobs for those who need it.

I look forward to seeing the completed playground. I really hope that everyone there enjoys it and has fun. I am proud to have donated to this great organization and am appreciative of all those who helped support my project. I had an amazing experience and I am really happy that I donated to Neve Hanna Children's Home.

**"Come my beloved
to welcome the bride;
Let us greet Shabbat as she arrives."**
Rabba Liron Levy

When you enter Neve Hanna on Erev

Shabbat there is a special feeling. Quiet and peaceful vibes are taking their place replacing the rush, excitement and noise of the day-to-day routine.



In their groups, the children are preparing for Shabbat, taking a shower, wearing their Shabbat clothes and setting the table with a white tablecloth, nice dishes and decoration.

In the afternoon, each group begins the Shabbat with a family gathering sharing experiences from the past week, making a conversation about their relationship as a family and the ways they enjoy each other's company during the week. The staff discusses the TORAH weekly portion and the afternoon concludes with juice and homemade cake.

After we light the candles, all of the children and the staff are gathering in the synagogue for "Kabbalat Shabbat" and Arvit service. Each Kabbalat Shabbat begins with "Shir Shel Yom" (The daily psalm), a modern

Israeli song and a short explanation of an actual figure or event related to the week. It could be a yahrzeit of a poet, author or an important leader, a special event in the past



or in the present. I find this part of Shabbat very important. I think it gives the children a better understanding that Jewish tradition is vivid and relevant to their everyday life. In addition, in my opinion the "Shir Shel Yom" programs a bridge between the old traditional Jewish literature and the modern Jewish and Israeli literature.

We pray using the Masorti Siddur "Va'Ani Tffilati." After each service, I deliver a "Dvar Torah." My sermon is based upon the Jewish life, the Jewish laws and philosophy and its relevance to the children's life. One of the most moving moments during Shabbat is when Itzik, NH's director, is blessing all of the children with "Birkat Kohanim" (Priestly Blessing), just like the parents recite to their children at home, and then he chooses a leader from each group. The leaders are children who did something unique in the group or at school – children who volunteer or showed special initiative and deserve recognition and applause. As the children and the staff are leaving the synagogue, each one receives a sweet candy for Shabbat.

When we get back to the groups, we make Kiddush and enjoy a wonderful meal with Challah and delicious dishes. The highlight of dinner is the "Oneg Shabbat" when we sit around the table and accept the Shabbat with special Zmirot (Jewish songs). In order to enlarge the children's song arsenal, each year I create a new short songbook for their use.

Shabbat morning begins with "Ha'Chavaya Ha'Yehudit" (the Jewish experience). Every Shabbat morning the children can participate in a special activity. During the activity, we pray parts from the Shacharit service, play a game, sing songs and have an active quiz on the weekly portion. Each activity ends with Kiddush and something sweet. During the day the children enjoy a sport's tournament, social activity led by one of the groups, fun games and free time to play outside, talking with a friend or napping after a long week.

Finally, when Shabbat has ended we gather for a musical Havdalah, depart from the holy day and welcome the new week.

AFNH GUESTS at FJMC and WLCJ CONVENTIONS

Lisa Pollack, AFNH Executive Director

This summer, Janet Tobin, AFNH Co-President, Joan Kase, AFNH Board Secretary and I attended the FJMC Convention in Philadelphia and WLCJ Convention in Chicago. We had the incredible opportunity

to meet, network, learn and celebrate, daven and break bread together with our FJMC brothers and WLCJ sisters. The guest speakers and programming were outstanding. There was plenty of camaraderie and Ruach to go around!

Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) and giving *tzedakah* (charity) to those in need is not just something we do, but is central to who we are as Jews. American Friends of Neve Hanna (AFNH), The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs (FJMC) and Women's League for Conservative Judaism (WLCJ) understand the value of Tikkun Olam. Many of our AFNH board members are part of the FJMC and WLCJ community.



The Program Fair is an opportunity for Convention delegates to learn about award winning programs, organizations and interact one-on-one with its members and guests. Joan and I spoke with fellow delegates, leaders and rabbis and forged new friendships.

Allan Gottesman, Past International President of FJMC, Co-Founder of the FJMC International Kiddish Club (IKC) and AFNH Board Member recently visited Neve Hanna with his wife Caren. Allan spoke about their experience at Neve Hanna.

We graciously thank the IKC for gifting Tefillin to the Neve Hanna Bar Mitzvah boys every year. Allan introduced us to the Regional Presidents and explained the importance of supporting our unique children's home through Tikkun Olam programming. "We as a Jewish community need to do more for the children." I agree with Allan – we certainly can do more.

Thank you, FJMC and WLCJ for inviting us to be part of your Conventions and helping us to inspire the regions to promote Tikkun Olam programs that will help the Neve Hanna children.

It is our objective to inspire involvement for all FJMC and WLCJ regions to join the Neve Hanna Family. We need every Sisterhood and Men's Club to come on board. Please connect with us on your next mitzvah project.

www.afnevehanna.org/mitzvah-projects

RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS OUTREACH

Joan Kase, Secretary, AFNH Bd of Directors

Lisa Pollack and I have been reaching out to the synagogues and Religious Schools in New York to introduce B'nai Mitzvot and Hebrew High School students to Neve Hanna Children's Home. Our efforts have begun yielding a few productive connections. We met with Temple Chaverim in Plainview, NY. They were enthusiastic about having the students contribute tzedakah for NH fostering a connection to Israel. We received their first contribution in June.

We then met with Community Engagement and Development and the Religious School Assistant Principal/B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator at the Religious School at Temple Beth Shalom in Roslyn, NY. They were so interested in formulating a connection for their students to NH that they are determined to plan a trip to Israel with a visit to NH. There was much interest in promoting mitzvah projects for the students, so we were asked to deliver a presentation about NH to B'nai Mitzvot students in the upcoming new school year.

Janet Tobin and Lisa Pollack met with the rabbi of Temple Israel in Great Neck, New York. The rabbi was very interested in tzedakah projects for the Hebrew School, B'nai Mitzvot and the Streetlight program for the Hebrew High School all of which would serve as a connection for their students to Israel. Subsequently, the rabbi introduced us to the Director of Congregational Schools. We look forward to our next meeting.

If you have a particular connection to a synagogue that has a Religious School, please let us know. It has been quite exciting to finally start meeting with some synagogues. The number of synagogues we still have to reach out to is overwhelming and we would be so grateful if you would

help us in this endeavor. If out of our area, we can always have a Zoom meeting.

Contact our office at 347-836-8118 or info@afnevehanna.org

KEHILLAH TZEDAKAH

Lisa Pollack, AFNH Executive Director

In March 2023, American Friends of Neve Hanna was cordially invited by Educational Director Marcia Kagedan of the Community Hebrew School of Bergen County in New Jersey to participate in their Kehillah Tzedakah Program.

The students were broken up into groups and learned about six non-profit organizations, including Neve Hanna Children's Home and discussed the meaning of Tzedakah and Chesed. The students had an opportunity to work on fun and meaningful projects to send back to each of the organizations. Every child was sent home with a packet of informational materials on all of the represented organizations including Neve Hanna. One of the many objectives was to inspire the kids to create a meaningful Mitzvah project for their upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.



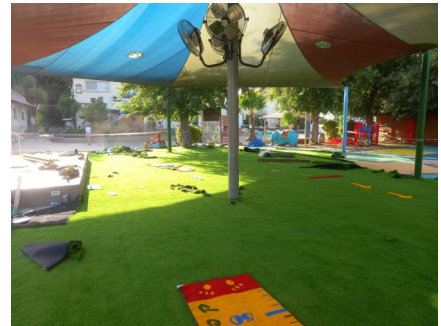
PLAYGROUND PROJECT CONSTRUCTION HAS KICKED OFF!

The entire unsafe old playground was torn down. This area was prepared by a company specializing in the basic work of the underground-foundation for playgrounds.

Special carpet preventing injuries was installed and this huge area is now covered with synthetic grass material. The equipment and work expenses for building of the new playground are

estimated higher than we originally expected.

Now that the entire area is off limits, Neve Hanna Director, Itzik Bohadana took care that the kids would have outdoor recreational games and activities, by purchasing ping-pong tables and paddles and other fun items.



Our goal is to raise the necessary funds needed to build an incredible playground for the children to enjoy. A place where they can play, climb, hide and seek, explore and learn. With your help, we can do it! **Let's build a playground!**

Please consider making a [donation](#).

Shanah Tova to all

Your **LEGACY and ESTATE PLANNING** is easier to create than you may think. You can have a lasting impact on the lives of these youngsters through long range financial planning in one of these ways:

- **Through Your Will**
- **Through Your Retirement Plan**
- **Through Your Life Insurance.**

To discuss any of these options please contact us.

AMERICANS FRIENDS of NEVE HANNA

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PROGRAMS FUNDED BY AMERICAN FRIENDS

Health and Physical Fitness
Teenager Empowerment Program
STREETLIGHT
Ziv Neurim
Rabba Liron Levy Rosensaft
Library

Playground
Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program
Masorti Noam Youth Movement Activities
Holiday celebrations
Gardening Therapy/Sandy's Greenhouse

In addition: Horseback Riding Therapy, Petting Zoo Animal Therapy, Summer Camp allocations, Remedial teaching and tutoring teenagers for high school exams, Tallis and Tefillin for B'nai Mitzvah children and Scholarships for former children of Neve Hanna pursuing academic studies

Follow us on:      