

Chanukah, December 2010



Passover, April 2011



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My Very Dear Friends - Shalom ,

Trauma, by definition, occurs when one is exposed to intense fear, horror or helplessness- events that are outside the range of usual human experience. Since last

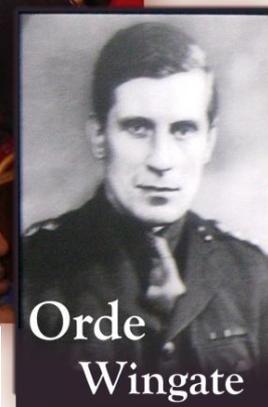
Chanukah, our village has definitely been through this. Now with spring and Passover at our gates, how relieved we are to share with you, our friends, that life is starting to get back on track. The enormous task of cleaning the Village of debris and clearing away all signs of destruction is well on its way. Temporary prefab homes, replacing each and every home that burnt down, have been installed by the State of Israel. They will serve us until the permanent houses have been rebuilt.



New arrivals: The first children to join us after the fire were 24 adolescents from Brazil. For each one of these girls and boys, a new phase of life begins. Over the years, the presence of South American Jewish kids who have found a home here has added a unique flavor to the multi-cultural blend of our community. Yuri, who arrived here 5 years ago from Recife, north-eastern Brazil, took time off from his tour of duty to welcome his younger sister, Hannah. Following her older brother's path to our Village, her happiness could not be contained.

The American WWII Veterans Association in Israel has a special connection with our Village, as it bears the name of Major Gen. Orde Wingate, whose last resting place is Arlington, VA. (Literally, Yemin Orde translates to "a *Memorial for Orde* "). After the fire, these impressive seniors insisted on holding the annual

Memorial Day for Orde Wingate ("Lawrence of Judea") at our Village. This great man's heritage was brought to life by the veterans, walking legends, who definitely found their way to the children's hearts.



The Passover Hagaddah is really a compilation of texts from which we are expected to derive meaning. In the 5 Villages which now follow our educational initiative, this approach is creatively put into practice. Educators study together and discuss thought provoking texts in what we call "battery recharging" workshops. These interactive sessions call educators to rethink and discover alternative avenues to reach out to children at risk.

The presence of graduates plays the crucial role of elder brothers and sisters in the lives of our kids. Recently, in one of our graduate gatherings, Raffi and Erez, the two smiling Navy officers in the picture (not brothers...), were amongst the many to share their stories. They came here as children without families, crossing treacherous routes from the mid-Eastern country where they were born. Their message is: "We made it, and so can you".



From survival to leadership: The pioneers of early Israel were young immigrants driven by idealism. Likewise, today's young newcomers can make a difference if only they can uncover their inner strengths. The Mechina character-building leadership program is there just for that. The youngsters in the picture, immigrant youth from all over Israel, have completed the grueling pre-Passover

survival trek. After a week of navigating their way alone through the Negev desert in small units, carrying limited provisions, they find each other. The circle they create in the middle of nowhere marks their journey to a fresh start in the Promised Land.



Kids...and kids: In the picture are Israeli born at-risk youth, serial school dropouts, that both families and the educational system have given up on. Yemin Orde continues to spearhead innovation in education, with Dr. Benny Fisher's new pilot program aimed to rebuild their faith in society, ability to succeed, and values. After a difficult start, their integration at Yemin Orde is proving to be a tremendous success. They even founded a small-scale dairy farm, producing delicious goat cheese and yogurt. These, they proudly share with our community.

"And the brightness of day shall shine in the darkness of night" (Haggadah Song)

On the festive night of Passover, while you read from the ancient texts at the Seder table, your care and support continue to compose a contemporary Hagaddah – one of exodus and redemption, the story of children emerging from darkness to light. May this be a source of blessing, spiritual fulfillment and joy to you and your loved ones.

as ever - Chaim Peri

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Photo: Elie Zouta