A MAN OF WORDS AND ACTION

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LEADERSHIP MISSION TO ISRAEL
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AMIT HIGHLIGHTS AND SUCCESSES
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2011 WALL OF REMEMBRANCE

Bequests were received from the following in 2011.

We mourn the loss of these philanthropic individuals and we honor them for their generosity and foresight in providing for future generations of Israeli children.

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A bequest of any size is welcome and important.
If you would like to include AMIT in your estate planning
or if you know of anyone who would be interested in our work
please contact Robin Rothbort at 212-477-4725 or 1-800-989-AMIT
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THE DICTIONARY DEFINES A PIONEER AS “a person or group that originates or helps open up a new line of thought or activity or a new method or technical development.” While I don’t think that our founder, Bessie Gotsfeld, and the other original leaders of AMIT thought of themselves as pioneers, they certainly were wonderfully original in their thinking and pioneered any number of new ideas in the care and education of children. Their vision and their courage remain the guiding spirit of AMIT today.

As Micha’el Tanchum points out in this issue of AMIT Magazine, Bessie and the other early halutzot put in place a foundation that would contribute, for years to come, to the development of a strong Jewish nation. While it is doubtful that she envisioned Israel as the technological leader and powerhouse it is today – who possibly could! – Bessie undoubtedly chartered an approach for AMIT that was bold, entrepreneurial and ahead of its time.

Bessie’s approach to education and programs designed to nurture Israel’s youth lives on in our programs today and informs the work of AMIT on a daily basis. Each year, as our network continues to grow, adding more schools and increasing our enrollment by hundreds, if not thousands, of children, we also continue to add unique and exciting programs that expand the frontier of educational innovation.

This fall, for example, we opened the new Ulpanat AMIT Givat Shmuel. It is the first fully computerized junior and senior high school for girls in Israel that offers both high level Judaic studies and advanced courses in science and computer technology. Every ulpana student has been provided with a personal tablet to use throughout the school year. The students save assignments, projects and homework on the school’s online network, so that these materials are accessible from home or just about anywhere. Additionally, the ulpana has been equipped with wireless internet connections, smart boards, projectors and other technological tools. Girls who wish to begin their BA studies at nearby Bar Ilan University eventually will be enrolled in special joint courses, and preparatory courses for this program have started this year for the seventh grade class.

Ulpanat AMIT Givat Shmuel is the beneficiary of the AMIT Top Tech Initiative, a new program which aims to bring the highest level of technology to all aspects of education. Other AMIT programs which have received national and international attention are our mishpachtonim, in which children in foster care live together with a married couple and their children as a family unit, receiving love, warmth and a sense of stability; and our Project 80 which has resulted in more than 70 percent of all AMIT students graduating high school with a full bagrut diploma, a percentage well above the average in Israel despite our disadvantaged population.

Is it any wonder that Dr. Amnon Eldar, director general of the AMIT Network, was named Person of the Year in education by Matzav HaRuah, a newspaper distributed in synagogues throughout Israel! Dr. Eldar was cited for the significant rise in Bagrut (matriculation) scores under his directorship, as well as student successes in national and international science competitions.

In praising our pioneers, I must mention our “pioneering” donors who have come forward as leaders of our fundraising efforts and who have allowed innovative programs and projects such as the Top Tech Initiative and our extremely successful Project 80 to develop and flourish. Our ability to bring our vision of education to reality is due in large part to their generosity.

I wish you and your loved ones a joyous holiday, and thank you for your support of AMIT.

A happy and kosher Pesach!
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AMIT, founded in 1925, has a proud history of service to Israel and the Jewish people. Our name, in English, stands for “AMericans for Israel and Torah.” In Hebrew, AMIT is an acronym for “Irgun Mitnadvot l’ma’an Yisrael v’Torata” (Organization of Volunteers for Israel and Her Torah).
Dear Honored Guests,

The Jewish People have always excelled because of the great investment in the education of their children. Throughout the generations education has been the top priority of the Jewish family. Our sages praise Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Gamla, who lived before the destruction of the Second Temple, for his establishment of an educational network for the children of Israel. As in the past, the strength of the State of Israel today depends, first and foremost, on the Torah, Jewish values and the education of its sons and daughters.

The educational accomplishments of the AMIT Network speak for themselves. Generations of alumni, who are involved in the public, cultural, and educational life of Israel, are a tribute to themselves and to the high quality education they received at AMIT.

My congratulations to the principals and faculties of the AMIT Nordlicht Religious Technological High School in Jerusalem, and the AMIT Netzach Israel Elementary School in Kiryat Malachi for their outstanding educational achievements.

With regards and appreciation,

Reuven (Rubi) Rivlin
Speaker of the Knesset
awakening the curiosity of children

By David Moss, Executive Vice President

THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION and Development (OECD) voted unanimously in 2010 to admit the State of Israel to its membership. The accession to the OECD signified a substantial achievement for the relatively young and small Jewish state.

The OECD's invitation of Israel took specific note of the country's achievements in the areas of science and technology. The country's prominence and leadership in these fields was reinforced for me this past December during the annual AMIT Leadership Mission to Israel. At the AMIT Anna Teich Ulpanat Haifa we were met by Rabbi Dr. Daniel Herskovitz, Israel's Minister of Science and Technology (and a parent of Anna Teich alumnai). The Minister highlighted the remarkable (and largely unknown) achievements of the Israel Space Program, which are the envy of the small handful of other countries with active space programs.

The spotlight shown on Israel by its admittance to the OECD, however, was not uniformly positive. There are areas where Israel's international ranking is poor. The rate of poverty in the country, especially of children, is too high. The educational level of Israeli students in math and science ranks Israel near the bottom of all OECD countries.

Obviously, Israel produces great scientists and mathematicians and AMIT's schools, especially those in the center of the country, contribute significantly to those success stories. But too many primary and secondary schools, especially those serving the peripheral areas of the country, are under-resourced and do a poor job providing quality educational opportunities.

A central theme of the Pesach Seder is education and the transmission of our traditions and heritage from one generation to the next. The Haggadah is a dialogue between parent and child and the purpose of many elements of the Seder, according to the Talmud, is to awaken the curiosity of the children and elicit their questions. Education and the transmission of values is not only, of course, a major motif of the Pesach holiday; it is a primary factor in our continuity and existence as a people.

AMIT has demonstrated its ability to transmit values to our students and to provide them with the tools necessary for academic success. Our schools are batei chinuch, places where values are discussed and taught – and modeled by our outstanding principals and educators. Nearly all of our graduates enlist in the Israel Defense Forces or perform National Service. Our Tochnit 80 program, launched several years ago, has been the catalyst for Bagrut (matriculation exam) passage rates approaching 80 percent throughout our network of high schools, even as passage rates at some of our schools exceed 90 percent.

Yet, we recognize that much remains to be done. The classroom, as experienced by our 25,000 students, needs to be as compelling and interesting as possible. At the Seder, we worry about our children and grandchildren and their engagement with the story and the text. The concerns we have for our children, in classrooms throughout the State of Israel, are similar. Our students' potential will not be fully realized unless their curiosity is awakened and their questions elicited. The world has changed and the technology available for use in the classroom – technology that can transform pedagogical methods and students' experiences and quality of learning – must be introduced and utilized effectively.

The management of Reshet AMIT, our network of schools and programs in Israel, is hard at work developing an exciting new initiative that will introduce more technology into our classrooms and transform the educational experience for our students and their instructors.

Thank you for joining AMIT in our historic and holy task of transmitting values to and educating the future of the State of Israel. Our work has never been more important or necessary.

Chag Kasher V'Sameach!

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PETACH TIKVA, Israel – Long before Ariel Horowitz, now 21, graduated from high school he knew he wanted to serve in the Israeli army and study Torah. So Horowitz began looking into hesder yeshivas – post-high school programs that enable religious students to serve their country and, when they’re not in the army, to engage in full-time Torah study.

While there are several hesder yeshivas in Israel to choose from, Horowitz, the Israeli-born son of immigrants from the U.S., didn’t want to live in an isolated place, removed from everyday life. “I couldn’t study in a yeshiva where the rosh yeshiva and students are disconnected from the world. There are places situated on a hill somewhere, but they weren’t for me,” Horowitz said.

With this in mind, the young man applied to the Yeshivat Hesder of Petach Tikva, which was founded 13 years ago by Rabbi Yuval Cherlow and other rabbis who believed that the Orthodox world and Israeli society have a great deal to learn from each other. At the beginning of 2012, Yeshivat Hesder Petach Tivka joined the AMIT education network. It is only the fifth post-high school program to be so honored.

Seated in the yeshiva’s Beit Midrash (study hall), which, on a chilly winter day was filled with floor-to-ceiling bookcases, desks and casually-dressed students learning in small groups, Horowitz – who recently completed his army service – said he “definitely” chose to learn at the right hesder yeshiva.

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A MAN OF WORDS AND ACTION

Rav Yuval Cherlow
“This is a very special, open-minded place of learning, a place where we’re encouraged to ask questions and develop ideas,” Horowitz said, making himself heard in the noisy Beit Midrash. The yeshiva, Horowitz said, “is an outgrowth of Rav Cherlow’s moral vision. He’s very involved in what happens to the country and educates us to be involved in what’s happening and not to be silent.”

A graduate of Yeshiva Har Etzion and a retired major in the Israel Defense Forces, Rabbi Cherlow is a man of words and action. He leads by example, infusing his students with the belief that they can change the world for the better. He is one of the founders of the Tzohar Foundation, a modern Orthodox foundation that works to build bridges between the religious and secular worlds.

A member of governmental ethical committees and the Presidential Press Council of Israel, Rabbi Cherlow often lectures on halacha and its stand on such controversial issues as surrogate motherhood and civil marriage—issues Israeli society is currently struggling with.

In his top-floor office, Rabbi Cherlow, who is the Rosh Yeshiva, said his long-time experience serving on AMIT’s Spiritual Leadership Committee prompted him to join the organization’s network. The partnership will provide a pool of potential students, Cherlow said, and, thanks to AMIT’s centralized system of administration, will enable the yeshiva to devote “almost 100 percent” of its resources to educating students.

The partnership is a good match in other ways, Rabbi Cherlow emphasized. “My ideology is exactly AMIT’s ideology. AMIT represents responsibility to the Jewish People. It gives opportunities to every child to be Jewish, to have at least a traditional Jewish education and to have the skills to succeed in life. It strives to contribute to society and the entire State of Israel.”

Students at the hesder yeshiva personify AMIT’s vision: They study Torah intensively for two years before entering the army for a minimum of 16 months (many serve longer). Once their service is completed, they study for another two years. Those who remain for the sixth and seventh years can earn a degree in education.

“We see ourselves as religious Zionists,” Rabbi Cherlow said as he entered the Beit Midrash, where the students stood and greeted him warmly before settling down for a study session. “We’re very strict with our observance of the Torah and at the same time accepting of the democratic system and the law. Serving in the army is the definition of religious Zionism, and we make no apologies,” he said, referring to those who believe Orthodox Jews should devote themselves solely to religious study and not serve in the military.

Although the Israeli government exempts full-time post-high school yeshiva students from military service, both AMIT and Rabbi Cherlow believe that all citizens should contribute to Israeli society, ideally through military service or National Service.

The fact that the yeshiva is in the heart of residential Petach Tikva, a city with religious, traditional and secular residents, is not a coincidence, Rabbi Cherlow said. “Being inclusive means first of all to live in the center of Israel, not an isolated hilltop. We invite yeshiva students with varying intellectual levels. Everyone is able and deserves the opportunity to study Torah.”

The hesder yeshiva’s students are reminded of AMIT’s commitment to inclusiveness the moment they enter the building, which it shares with Yeshivat AMIT Kfar Ganim High School and a program for more than 100 developmentally disabled children. There is also a new program for sixth grade boys of Ethiopian descent that is designed to prepare them for secondary school. “Several of our students tutor the high school students, while some of our graduates now teach in the high school,” Rabbi Cherlow said, clearly proud of his students.

Rabbi Cherlow said his goal has always been to motivate his students to “connect their Torah studies with their careers,” regardless of which careers they choose. “I hope we are educating them and giving them the tools to serve as a bridge. We’re proud that some of our graduates are civil servants of the State of Israel and really bring the ideology and messages they got in the yeshiva to the public sphere.”

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Rabbi Cherlow with students in the Beit Midrash

PHOTOS BY: ORNA ITAMAR

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Dr. Amnon Eldar, director general of the AMIT educational network, believes the hesder yeshiva’s inclusion in the network will strengthen the organization’s efforts to share its hashkafa, or outlook, in the classroom and beyond. AMIT’s hashkafa “believes in Klal Yisrael” and that the State of Israel “must be a Jewish and democratic state. And that there is no conflict between the two values,” Dr. Eldar insisted.

Dr. Eldar said welcoming Rabbi Cherlow’s yeshiva to the network was the “natural” thing to do. “Rabbi Cherlow has served on our Spiritual Leadership Committee for nine years. Furthermore, the fact that the Kfar Ganim middle/high school is in the same building as the hesder yeshiva “offers a unique opportunity,” Dr. Eldar said. “The hesder students are role models and some of our students will come to learn in this yeshiva after high school.”

On a national level, Eldar hopes the Torah-driven yet open-minded hesder students will also act as role models during their IDF service, and will share AMIT’s philosophy and values with soldiers who, for whatever reason, have negative feelings toward organized religion and religious people.

Like Rabbi Cherlow, Dr. Eldar would like the IDF and society as a whole to learn more about Torah Judaism and its values, and to incorporate them into the decision-making process and in their everyday lives.

“We know that there are other hesder yeshivas with a different hashkafa,” Dr. Eldar said, and mentioned nationalist yeshivas that instruct their students to refuse orders related to forcibly evacuating West Bank outposts or settlements. “AMIT is different.”

Rabbi Cherlow insists that the Torah is as relevant today as it was 3,000 years ago. “Torah should be at the center of the State of Israel, in all aspects of life. It’s about creating social justice. It’s about freedom of speech while recognizing the dangers of loshen hora (idle gossip). It’s about ethical issues that affect the entire society.”

Rabbi Cherlow traces his inclusive value system to his “open-minded” parents, who immigrated to Israel from the U.S before he was born. His mother is still an active member of AMIT.

Growing up, he said, “we went to concerts and operas and all kinds of cultural events. I played the piano and flute and read a lot of books.” It is this well-rounded approach to life, coupled with a deep knowledge of Jewish texts, that appeals to his students.

“He’s very out there. He talks about controversial things not many rabbis are comfortable talking about,” said Elihu Anouchi, a 20-year-old student from Cleveland, Ohio. Anouchi, who had planned to study in Israel just for a year, but who, after joining the yeshiva, decided to make aliya, said his teachers encourage inquisitiveness.

“I’ve learned that no topic is clear cut, and that I shouldn’t be afraid to discuss controversial things like genetics and controlling a baby’s gender.

“It’s exciting,” Anouchi said, “to be able to study things in the Talmud written more than 1,000 years ago that are still relevant today and that still contain the answers.”

Michele Chabin began her career editing women’s magazines in New York. In 1987 she moved to Israel, and has been a reporter there ever since. An award-winning journalist, Michele frequently contributes to the New York Jewish Week, Religion News Service, USA Today and many other publications.
THE COUNTRY OF OUR FUTURE
“We cannot speak or write about Palestine of today without devoting a proper place to women’s activities and the role the woman is playing in the upbuilding process of modern Palestine. Whether it’s in the country participating in agriculture, industry, commerce, culture, civil service, social service. Women in kibbutzim, women on guard and women in politics.”

Bessie Gotsfeld, founder of AMIT
“From a 1939 speech”
“A people is not reborn in a single day,” remarked a young Rahel Yanait Ben-Zvi with determined sobriety. The idealistic, 23-year old woman who had arrived in the Land of Israel barely a year earlier in 1908 could have been speaking about her own astonishing life and career which would unfold over the course of the next seven decades. She was a member of Israel’s founding generation, a collection of brave and visionary men and women who connected their moral beliefs to political action. Because of the profound sense of purpose she found in the cause of Jewish national revival, Rahel Ben-Zvi realized her own potential and helped countless young women (and young men) realize theirs.

Rahel Yanait left her home in Russia and joined a special generation of young pioneers that became known as the Second Aliyah. Among her contemporaries were David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, whom she eventually married. Uncertain of what she would find when she arrived, Rahel Yanait Ben-Zvi was driven by her commitment, personal as well as political, to work for the restoration of the sovereign nation of Israel in its ancestral homeland. Of her first experiences traveling in the land with her fellow pioneer and future husband, she writes, “[We] hiked widely across the Judean mountains and desert. We went up to the Galilee, down to the Negev, roaming about for weeks in the desolate expanses, sleeping in the fields and filling our lungs with the air of the homeland … envisioning and dreaming about the future of our nation in the homeland. We prayed in our hearts that we would be entitled to revive it by working and protecting it.”

Rahel Ben-Zvi and her companions came of age during the era of social revolution in early twentieth century Eastern Europe, but they were inspired by a two thousand year old dream. “We were imbued with the revolutionary spirit then sweeping Russian Jewish youth,” Ben-Zvi explained in her autobiography, “but ours was an original concept - our own revolution in our own land.” These pioneers’ national vision for a new society was based on the ideals of the Prophets of Israel and the ethics of the Jewish tradition. “Was it not the echoing voices of the prophets which had brought us back to the Land?” observed Rahel Ben-Zvi. “They had kept our people alive in exile, guided them in their wanderings and beat in the hearts of Israel’s sons throughout the long, dark years. This was the spirit that now awakened us.”

Rahel Ben-Zvi knew that the realization of the pioneers’ collective vision of national revival depended on the personal development of each individual. “None of us really was satisfied with things as they were,” recalled Rahel Ben-Zvi. “Plunged in talk and thought, we were eager for deeds. And the true deed, the redeeming deed, was labor on the soil, the touch of the earth.” One of the first tasks for Israel’s founding generation was to make the barren land bloom – to reclaim the land and to restore the Jewish people to productive work on it. After examining the fledgling Jewish farms in the Galilee, Ben-Zvi decided to study modern agricultural science to contribute to the vital task. Her determination took her all the way to France to earn a degree in agricultural engineering. Adjusting to the new circumstances, she stayed true to her vision. “I was absorbed and intent on my work. Yet I never stopped seeing the bald, rocky hills of Judea in my mind’s eye … I watered the tender shoots in those forest-tree nurseries near Paris as if they were plants on the Jerusalem hillsides.”

The outbreak of World War I prompted Rahel Ben-Zvi to return to Israel, then under Ottoman control. While the Ottoman Empire’s entrance into the war on the side of the Central Powers

HaShomer’s motto: “In blood and fire, Judea fell; in blood and fire will Judea rise.”

against Britain and France created a new geo-strategic reality for the Zionist movement, the situation for the Jewish communities living in the Land of Israel became even more dangerous. In 1909,
Rahel Ben-Zvi had been one of the founding members of HaShomer, the first Jewish self-defense organization in the land of Israel. During WWI, while applying the knowledge she had gained in France to the farms around Zikhron Ya’akov, she resumed her activities with HaShomer and recruited Jewish pioneers to fight under the British army in the Jewish Legion. Both to inspire others and to muster her own courage, Rahel Ben-Zvi drew on examples of Jewish heroism from the Bible to Bar-Kochba. She had adopted the name Yanait, identifying with the Israelite king and grand-nephew of Judah Maccabee.

When WWI ended and a triumphant Britain replaced the defeated Ottomans as the rulers in the land, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi returned to Israel from his service with the Jewish Legion and the pioneering couple married. In 1922, the League of Nations conferred its mandate to Britain to rule over the territory. However, the British Mandate did not bring peace to the Jewish community. When it became clear that the British would not confront marauding Arab gangs which were attacking Jewish communities, Rahel Ben-Zvi helped to found the Haganah. The pre-state Haganah was the first Jewish army since the time of Maccabees and the woman who bore the name of the Maccabean king served as one of its heads in Jerusalem.

Rahel Ben-Zvi knew that ultimately Israel’s best defense was an educated and capable population. She worked unceasingly throughout her life as an educator and counselor, providing young people with the skills and the values to contribute to the building of Israel’s future and their own. She played a central role in establishing the Hebrew Gymnasium – the first modern, Hebrew high school in Jerusalem. She was dedicated to the cause of high quality, Hebrew instruction to educate the youth of the nation’s capital.

Rahel Ben-Zvi combined her expertise in agriculture with her dedication to education. She founded the first tree nursery in Jerusalem providing instruction for pioneer women in the techniques of reforestation. With a profound confidence in the ability of women to positively shape Israel’s future, Ben-Zvi mobilized working women in Israel in 1928 to establish the Meshek ha-Po’alot - the Working Women’s Farm, a training facility in the Talpiot section of Jerusalem. Immediately after the War of Independence, Ben-Zvi founded the agricultural youth village at Ein Kerem to absorb immigrant youth. The farmer turned teacher knew that the education of Israel’s youth would produce the most fruitful harvest.

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“With the added factor of spiritual guidance, which is always included in the academic curriculum, our children are being given inner strength, which prepares them for the leadership of our people.”

-Bessie Gotsfeld

Like her contemporary Rahel Ben-Zvi, Bessie Gotsfeld’s impressive achievements place her among the ranks of the outstanding halutzot (pioneering women) whose efforts contributed significantly to the development of Israeli society and culture. Gotsfeld was the driving force behind the formation of the Mizrachi Women of America (MWOA), known today as AMIT. A woman of purpose inspired by the Zionist vision, Gotsfeld declared, “It is only as a nation living in our land that we can understand our predecessors who labored and fought, suffered and sang and prophesied in the same land.” Translating her passion into action, she immigrated to the land of Israel with her husband in the late 1920s to assume the role of on-site supervisor for the building of the Beit Zeirat Mizrachi, a vocational school for poor girls. A pioneer also as one of the first powerful career women within Israeli Orthodox society, Gotsfeld was also a pioneer in the establishment of a series of schools and children’s villages. Just as Rahel Ben-Zvi converted the Meshek ha-Po’alot in Jerusalem into an agricultural school for young adult refugees escaping Nazi persecution, Gotsfeld similarly founded the Motza Children’s Home – a haven for children who escaped Eastern Europe via Teheran and the Mosad Aliyah Children’s Village for Holocaust refugees in Petach Tikva.

Following Israel’s independence, Rahel Ben-Zvi and Bessie Gotsfeld continued to work assiduously for the welfare of Israel and the Jewish people. Always sensitive to the human element, they were tireless in their efforts to provide Jews from all backgrounds, especially the young, with the skills and the values essential to building Israel’s future and their own. AMIT’s crucial work is carrying on the pioneering spirit that founded the modern State of Israel. As Rahel Ben-Zvi knew, “A people is not reborn in a single day.” With the help of AMIT, the rebirth and flourishing of the people of Israel occurs a little more every single day.

Dr. Micha’el Moshe Tanchum is a scholar of Zionist thought and the history of Israel’s founding period. He earned his doctorate at Harvard University and is a fellow at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem, where he is writing a book on the ideals of Israel’s leading founding father, David Ben Gurion. Dr. Tanchum would like to express his gratitude to Amy Gabriel, and especially to Malka Klein, for their assistance.
AMIT Thanks All Who Contributed to the Koplow Challenge Grant

This past November AMIT leaders Ellen and Meyer Koplow of New Rochelle, NY along with the Harvey Goodstein Foundation announced that they would match up to $200,000 in new and upgraded gifts to President’s Circle and Chai Society. The Koplow Challenge was put forth to all supporters of AMIT.

We salute the following who participated in the Challenge

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Sara Beren, OH
Beth and Reuben Blumenthal, NY
Ethlynne and Stephen Brickman, MA
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Rachel and David Vorchheimer, NY
Joseph Walder, IL
Gary Wayne – Wells Fargo Advisors, NY
Lillian and Sherwyn Weiss, FL
Sharon and Joseph Wiesel, NY
Helene and Gerald Zisholtz, NY
Steve Zuller, NY
AMIT young leaders

Elizabeth and Daniel Strauss
By Robert E. Sutton

Lizzy, tell us about growing up in an AMIT family.
One of the first memories I have of AMIT is of my grandmother, Gwendolyn Straus, being presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award. She dedicated her life to AMIT and shared with me many times that, to truly understand the wonderful work of AMIT, one needs to visit Beit Hayeled. AMIT was a common household name for me growing up. Everyone in my family has played an active role in the organization.

Young Leadership has had many fun-filled events. What have been your favorites?
One of my favorites was the one I co-chaired with Melanie Kollander. It took place in Central Park and was a huge success. It was the first event for Young Leadership.

What have you found most satisfying in your various leadership roles?
The fact that you can educate people on the importance of AMIT, the work it accomplishes, and how it changes the lives of children in Israel daily.

What do you find to be the most compelling aspect of the work?
For me, the tagline of AMIT says it all… “Building Israel. One child at a time.”

How would you suggest the organization reach out to get more young people involved?
I think that we need to maintain a consistent focus on creating events that are diverse enough to attract different groups to the organization.

Is your husband involved with your AMIT endeavors?
Yes. My husband has taken an active role in AMIT. We are co-chairs on the Young Leadership Board and he has worked on the annual AMIT Poker Night.

When not devoting time to your various causes, how do you like spending your time with your family?
My time with my family is my favorite time. We have a son named Jack, who keeps us on our toes and it is so much fun to watch him grow.

You are currently a chair for an upcoming New Generation event. Tell us how that came about and what your plans are to be part of New Gen?
I have always felt that it is very important for me to grow within the organization. I have spent a long time working for the Young Leadership of AMIT and I think that being able to be part of New Generation is exciting and I hope to be able to contribute to it in a meaningful way.
**GIFT OF LEARNING**

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OUR AMIT STUDENTS.**

Our Gift of Learning program gives donors the opportunity to sponsor a particular day of learning at an AMIT school in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one. On that day, the children will be notified whom they will be honoring or memorializing through their studies. A beautiful certificate will be sent to the donor or to those being honored, whichever is preferred.

**Keep the spark of learning alive in honor or in memory of someone special in your life.**

- **$5,000** . . . Sponsorship of a Day of Learning for Five Years at a Youth Village
- **$1,800** . . . Sponsorship of a Day of Learning at a Youth Village
- **$500** . . . . Sponsorship of a Day of Learning at a school
- **$360** . . . . Sponsorship of a Day of Learning for one class
- **$** . . . . . Make a general contribution to the Gift of Learning Initiative

For more information, contact robinr@amitchildren.org or call 212-477-4725 or info@amitchildren.org. Nechi Shudofsky, chairperson

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

**AMIT Israel Annual Dinner Please Join Us!**

**Wednesday, October 10, 2012 - Jerusalem**

Honoring AMIT Visionaries: Dr. Amnon & Michal Eldar Aharon and Nitzchia Eldar Maxine Miller

For more information please contact Yaffi Shmidman, Dinner Chair, at: 011-972-54-446-8804 or Shmidman@hotmail.com

**AFLI’s Fourth Annual Yom Ha’atzmaut Social**

**Wednesday, April 25, 2012**

Hudson Terrace
Hors d’oeuvres, Open Bar*, Raffle Drawing, Music, and so much more!

*Must be 21 or over to drink
THE NAOMI FOUNDATION

The Naomi Foundation™ is proud to collaborate with AMIT Children in its far-reaching commitment to the education and well-being of Israel's youth.

Established to preserve the legacy of Naomi Prawer Kadar, Ph.D. (1949-2010) z”l, the Naomi Foundation is devoted to supporting educational growth and empowering youth and students of all ages and backgrounds.

Naomi Prawer Kadar was an inspiring educator, dedicated scholar, and a true visionary. For the many students she taught, being in the classroom with Naomi was a tremendously enriching gift; her patient and calming energy turned her classroom into a space for communal learning, inquiry, and engagement. Naomi valued every learner and approached teaching with the belief that every student could succeed. She tailored her classes to include varied teaching modalities to foster each student’s unique strengths and encourage all students to achieve their potential.

With its support of the AMIT Kfar Ganim Yeshiva High School Program in Petach Tikva, which provides therapeutic treatment and individualized guidance for students with special needs, the Naomi Foundation helps students develop, broaden their sense of possibility, and contribute their talents to the world around them.

The Naomi Foundation and AMIT Children share an unwavering commitment to Israel’s next generation of students and achievers.

AMIT would like to thank The Naomi Foundation for their generous grant to the Special Needs Program at AMIT Kfar Ganim Yeshiva High School. This program positively impacts the lives of 129 children by providing a nurturing and developmentally appropriate educational environment based on the students’ individual needs.

Because of The Naomi Foundation grant, AMIT has been able to hire special education professionals and psychologists who work closely with the children and with our pedagogical staff. Kfar Ganim now has an extensive system of therapies in the school including a sensory stimulation room, a kitchen used in therapy, a work skills lab and drama, music and art rooms. And, this coming summer AMIT will once again provide therapy treatments including therapeutic horse riding and swimming.
This year, five graduates of the AMIT Gwen Straus Junior and Senior Science High School for Boys completed the Israeli Defense Force infantry officers' training course together. This is a remarkable achievement for these young men and illustrates how AMIT is a vital tool for the future of Israel. Located in the Kfar Batya section of Raanana, AMIT Straus melds high-level science studies with an intensive yeshiva track. Thanks to the education that they received, all five young men decided to go for the most rigorous army program that exists, combat service in the elite units and an infantry officers' training course. Rabbi Motti Deshe who taught these young men said that “at AMIT Straus, we focus on caring about being great people in all areas of life: spiritual and civilian. We provide a values-based education that emphasizes the society and not only the individual.”

FIVE AMIT STRAUS GRADUATES SERVE IN THE IDF TOGETHER

AMIT Student inspires Israel’s President to Write Poem

Israel’s President Shimon Peres visited the AMIT Reishit Yerushalyim Elementary School, known for its inclusive philosophy, to speak out against racial discrimination. President Peres was particularly inspired by a fourth grade student, the daughter of Ethiopian immigrants and a soloist in the school choir. The president said, “I cannot forget her beautiful and bright eyes. Those told of the hard journey and the eternal yearning of Ethiopian Jews for the Land of Israel.”

This meeting so moved the president that he decided to express his feelings in a poem. After composing the poem, he approached internationally renowned Israeli musician Idan Raichel and asked him to set the poem to music. The song was performed at one of Idan Raichel’s concerts in Jerusalem.

NEW LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AT AMIT HATZOR HGILIL

This innovative track will be operated in collaboration with IDF combat brigades, the AMIT Network and the Ministry of Education. The purpose of the track, as defined by school principal Avihai Golan, a lieutenant colonel in the IDF reserves, is “developing and nurturing leadership in students to facilitate their taking on leadership roles in the army and in Israeli society.”

Israel Social Justice Protest Leader Visits Yeshivat AMIT Kfar Ganim

Itzik Shmuli, one of the leaders of the Israel Social Justice Protest, visited with students of Yeshivat AMIT Kfar Ganim in Petach Tikvah. His visit was part of the yeshiva’s guest lecture program that is aimed at hosting diverse figures in Israeli society.

Mr. Shmuli met with students in the yeshiva’s Beit Midrash and discussed the motives of the social justice protest this past summer, insights gained from the protest and the current situation. On the topic of the role of young people, Mr. Shumli told students that, “a large part of the change is incumbent on us, the young people. We need to be part of the change...” Mr. Shmuli also said that there is much to learn from religious Zionism about community involvement and mutual responsibility.
IDF COMMANDER IN CHIEF PRAISES YESHIVAT AMIT NACHSHON STUDENTS

The Commander-in-Chief of the Israel Defense Forces, Benny Gantz, sent a letter to AMIT Nachshon Yeshiva High School students praising them for their unequivocal support of IDF soldiers. This letter referred to the AMIT students’ public support of soldiers in light of a recent attack on a military base, the Ephraim brigade headquarters, and on IDF soldiers by right wing Jewish extremists. Nachshon students initiated a petition and Facebook page in support of IDF soldiers, which quickly caught on among yeshiva and ulpana students in Israel.

“The entire nation must stand up for soldiers and officers who toil day and night in the persistent struggle for Israel’s security,” said Commander in Chief Gantz. “As an army and as a society we must do whatever we can to prevent these extremists from dragging the IDF into a political debate and diverting its primary mission: defending our security. I am sure that each and every one of AMIT Nachshon’s students will enlist and contribute to the security effort.”

AMIT Nachshon’s Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Tzvi Koren, is proud of his students. “Violence is not the way of the Torah or the way of religious Zionism. I am happy the students decided to take initiative and protest, and not remain silent about these disgraceful actions.”

92% BAGRUT SUCCESS AT AMIT JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

AMIT Ma’ale Adumim Junior and Senior High School for Boys has achieved unprecedented success in its Bagrut scores for the 2010-2011 school year - 92%. This is a dramatic increase over past years, and the school, led by Principal Rabbi Avigdor Weitzman, is taking steps to continue this academic momentum. Starting this past school year with tenth graders, the school is implementing a special program in conjunction with Machon Lev of the Jerusalem College of Technology. Machon Lev prepares young men for science and technology careers in Israel.

The school’s goal in working with Machon Lev is to enrich subject-area academic learning in preparation for Bagrut exams.

AMIT MODI’IN’S LEADERSHIP ON WHEELS PROGRAM

AMIT Modi’in, a new school in the AMIT network, offers a unique program called Leadership on Wheels. The program is led by Aharon Karish who serves as chief of staff of the AMIT network and completed the Iron Man Triathlon this year. The idea behind the program is to nurture personal empowerment, strengthen interpersonal communications skills and instill leadership qualities in students through challenging cycling. This elective program takes place in the Modi’in forest and is the first of its kind in the Network. The school hopes to expand this program to include physically challenged students who will be equipped with special bicycles.

FIVE AMIT TEACHERS HONORED BY MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Five AMIT teachers were among the 100 best teachers of the year chosen by the Ministry of Education’s Religious Education Administration. This special annual recognition goes to teachers who have incorporated innovation and originality in their teaching.

- Karmit Tuviana of AMIT Honi HaMe’agel Elementary School for Girls
- Inbal Hazazi of AMIT Honi HaMeagel Elementary School for Girls
- Sagit Elmaliah of AMIT Eisenberg Junior and Senior High School for Girls
- Dikla Eliasaf of AMIT Wasserman Torah, Arts and Sciences Junior and Senior High School for Girls
- Pinchas Finian of AMIT Gruss Agriculture and Technological High School Kfar Batya
Each year the students at AMIT schools elect leaders from among their peers to champion the AMIT National Youth Leadership Project. The elected leaders direct community service programs in their schools, communities and on a national level. The programs encourage AMIT students throughout the Reshet (Network) to become volunteers and raise awareness on a host of issues including the environment, assisting the underprivileged and caring for senior citizens. Students who participate in the AMIT National Leadership Project help improve the quality of life in their communities and Israeli society.

AMIT NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT
Expressing the Democratic Values of Israel and AMIT
Kol HaKavod to Beverly Bloom and Francine Katz, our inaugural honorees.

By Dawn Sherry

Beverly Bloom has set an example through her dedication to AMIT and acts of chesed. A Life Member since 1984, she became the treasurer of the Pearl Schwartz Houston Chapter in 1998, and has not stopped since. Beverly, a dynamo of a woman, submits the most accurate financial allocation sheets, clearly accounting for every penny. She has been a member of the National Board and the Board of Directors.

Beverly’s dedication to AMIT is evident. She often speaks of a visit to Israel that afforded her the opportunity to see the AMIT Kfar Batya Youth village in Ra’anana. “The children prepared lunch for us and it just warmed my heart. What a beautiful experience. AMIT is a wonderful organization and I am so proud to be a part of it.”

Harry, Beverly’s husband, is also a Life Member. He still rolls the coins collected from their pushke containers, and attends all of the meetings. During their 63-year marriage, the Blooms have been blessed with two children, four grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

“My whole life is my children and AMIT is second,” said Beverly.

Francine Katz’s commitment to AMIT began in 1958, and she has been a charter member of the Geula Chapter in Florida since its inception in 1969. Francine has been married to Dr. Aaron Katz for 55 years. They have four sons, 17 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Francine has been council president, sat on the National Board, the Board of Directors, and the Board of Governors. Every year, Mr. and Mrs. Katz spend a month in Israel visiting AMIT schools. She speaks proudly of her experiences meeting the children and dedicated staff, and remarks on the special connection between teachers and their students. In the AMIT Nordlicht Religious Technological High School in Jerusalem, there is a garden in memory of her beloved daughter-in-law Esther Malkah, z”l.

Believing that every Israeli child is precious, Francine has been recognized throughout her 50 years of dedication to AMIT with the Golda Meir Award in 1976, Woman of Valor Award in 1977, and the Ahavat Yisroel award in 2005. Francine has also received awards from the Florida Regional Council.

Francine along with her husband writes and prints her chapter’s newsletter the Geula-Shalvah Gazette and the journal for the Chapter’s Annual Luncheon.

If you would like to suggest an Eshet Chayil please email Dawn Sherry at DawnS@amitchildren.org.

NEW SECTION!

With this issue, AMIT Magazine is introducing a new feature, Eshet Chayil. We will be spotlighting women from around the country who have been devoted members of AMIT and who deserve recognition.
This past December, AMIT leaders from across the country had the opportunity to get a firsthand look at the impact AMIT has on the children of Israel. This year’s Leadership Mission was both educational and enriching, and it provided our leaders greater insight into the vital role AMIT plays in Israeli society. The 2011 Mission was themed around the central area of the country, making it possible for the delegation to visit the network’s newest schools in Givat Shmuel, Or Akiva (near Caesarea), as well as schools in Rehovot, Beit Shemesh, Mateh Yehudah and Haifa.

The delegation met with officials from various towns and cities as well as with principals, students and AMIT graduates - all of whom demonstrated their dedication and gratitude for the work AMIT does for the children of Israel.

Unique to this year’s mission was a two-night stay in Tel Aviv that included a tour of Jaffa, with visits to famous art galleries, boutiques, cafes and restaurants. The delegation also enjoyed a wonderful meal at Hatachana, an early twentieth century railroad station that has recently been transformed into one of Israel’s hottest attractions.

AMIT would like to thank Joyce Straus, mission chair and vice president, Israel Programming and Rahel Rogers, vice chair, Israel Amutah and all those who participated in this year’s mission, as we feel that each one of you contributed to its success, and is instrumental to the continuous growth of AMIT and the Reshet.
THE SEDER.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SEQUENCE.
The Seder night is a time of order, the word seder means order, and on this night everything is ordered. We begin the night with the declaration of the stages of the meal, kadesh, urchatz, karpas, yachatz, etc., the focus being that each step has its own name and its own moment. Why is this night so regimented? Why so structured? Why didn’t our law allow for more subjective choice, why not give principles and allow for each of us to apply them differently?

The Maharal of Prague teaches that there is a deep lesson to the order of the Seder. Order as a prime feature of Exodus commemoration seems ironic. We actually left Egypt in a state of disorder. The verses in Shemot describe the chapazon, the hurried rush to get out of Egypt. In fact, the miracles of the ten plagues were themselves, in a certain measure, a reversal of normal order. Nature has its rules. The plagues broke those rules. The wild beasts entered civilized areas, the dust turned to lice, and the waters of river Nile became blood. The whole episode of leaving Egypt was disorder. It seems striking to focus Seder night on order.

The Maharal comments that leaving Egypt was not only a moment of liberation, it was a moment of internalizing faith and belief. The purpose of the Exodus was to teach us and the world that the Almighty is managing His creation and is continually watching and guiding all that occurs in our world. The lesson of leaving Egypt was that even where we perceive disorder, in truth there is a cosmic order. Everything has its place and He is managing all according to His plan.

Seder night is a night to sit with our children and impart to them the sense of trust, which comes from having a Father in Heaven who is running all affairs and managing all events. The stories of the Haggadah are all amplifications of the theme of faith. Telling ourselves and our children of exile and redemption is intended to strengthen our faith to the point that it becomes tangible, so that we will feel tranquil and safe in His hands.

In light of this theme we can understand a very unsettling feature upon the conclusion of the Seder. The last song is Chad Gadyah, One Goat. In it a story is told of a goat that father purchased for two zuzim. It was bitten by the cat, the dog then bit the cat, the stick hit the dog, the fire burnt the stick, the water put out the fire, the ox drank the water, the shochet slaughtered the ox, the angel of death killed the slaughterer, and the Almighty killed the angel of death. The song seems very difficult to comprehend. The goat is seemingly the Jewish nation that the Almighty, our Father, acquired with two zuzim, the two Tablets of the Law. Yet if we follow this line of logic the song makes no sense at all. The goat is good, the cat who bites the goat would be an enemy of the Jews, a force for evil. Then the dog that bites the cat would be good. The stick who hits the dog bad, the fire that burns the stick good, the water that puts out the fire bad, the ox who drinks the water good, the slaughterer who kills the ox bad, but then the angel of death who kills the ox is good? And, what about G-d who kills the angel of death?

The answer to this question was suggested by Rav Moshe Wolfson. Since the Seder night taught us to have faith in the Almighty, we can live with questions. We now feel with all of our being that our Father in heaven is taking care and running affairs. Once we have faith we can live with questions.

Seder night is a time to renew our sense of trust in the Almighty. The AMIT Reshet (network) in Israel is imbuing Israel’s young with that faith. The sense that there is order in the chaos of life is the greatest gift one can give to children.

Rabbi Zev Reichman is spiritual leader of the East Hill Synagogue of Englewood, New Jersey and a teacher at Yeshiva University. He is the author of two books, “Remove Anger from Your Heart,” and “Flames of Faith: An Introduction to Chassidic Thought.”
On Monday evening February 20th, members of AMIT’s President’s Circle in Florida gathered at the home of Sarah and Ronald Gottlieb of Miami Beach. A special connection for AMIT is that our host’s daughter-in-law Ilana Gottlieb is the Director of Midreshet AMIT in Israel, a post high school program for women from the Diaspora.

The evening began with Debbie Moed, vice president of financial resource development, welcoming guests from near and far. Brenda Kalter, co-chair of the Presidents Circle thanked attendees for their accumulated $1.6 million dollars of donations for 2011. This exclusive annual event was a great opportunity for donors to meet David Moss, executive vice president of AMIT. David spoke about the many success stories of our AMIT programs in Israel and indicated that none of our accomplishments would have been possible without the support of our dedicated friends.

Guest speaker Rabbi Haskel Lookstein shared many wonderful stories about his families’ personal Midreshet AMIT connections. Rabbi Lookstein spoke about a recent symposium in Jerusalem and AMIT’s unique approach to educating children with love of Eretz Yisrael and the totality of B’nai Yisrael.
AMIT israel campaign
2012 kick-off event
by ellen hellman

This past February, the 2012 Israel region’s Annual Campaign kickoff dinner took place at the home of Karen and Billy Levine. Co-chaired by Ellen Hellman and Diane Field, there was a warm atmosphere and a buffet prepared by volunteers who were led by Hindy Walfi of the AMIT Israel Executive Committee.

AMIT supporters gathered to make their pledges to the annual fundraising campaign, and over 25% of the Israel fundraising office’s annual campaign funds were raised just one month into the year. With inspiring words from AMIT Director General Dr. Amnon Eldar, a fascinating discussion with Drora Gopas, principal of the AMIT Junior and Senior High School in Beersheva, and a bold call-to-action by AMIT’s Director of Development for Israel and Europe, Judith Schwed-Lion, donors were moved and responded generously.

Now the real work begins, and our solicitors are back at it, contacting and meeting with AMIT Israel donors. The campaign will culminate with the Annual Dinner on October 10, honoring AMIT Israel Visionaries: Dr. Amnon and Michal Eldar, and Amnon’s parents Aharon and Nitzchia Eldar, and Maxine Miller former chair of the Israel Executive Committee.

women in theater delights AMIT audiences in israel
by lori gerson and randi gelman

This past February, AMIT’s New Generation group in Israel hosted “Modern (Jewish) Family” presented by the Women in Theater (WIT) troupe from Modi’in. This original show drew hundreds of women at sold-out performances in Beit Shemesh and Ra’anana. Directed by Pnina Fredman-Schechter (daughter-in-law of AMIT Honorary President Jan Schechter) and Ninoska Ravid, the show delighted audiences with a combination of comedy, song, dance, poetry and visual media that reflects on the lives of modern Jewish women and their relationships with family and friends.

In 2011, WIT began donating a portion of their proceeds to AMIT, because they feel that AMIT is like a “modern Jewish family.” AMIT is grateful to WIT, and we look forward to many more successful performances.
beit hayeled celebrates thanksgiving with rabbi arnold and zipporah marans
by chava ashkenazi

Thanksgiving has a new meaning for the children of the AMIT Frisch Beit Hayeled in Jerusalem. This year Rabbi Arnold and Zipporah Marans chose to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary with a traditional Thanksgiving dinner in honor of their dedication of a newly renovated kitchen at Beit Hayeled. The Marans were joined by family and friends, as well as Midreshet AMIT students to celebrate this joyous occasion.

The party was preceded by a formal dedication ceremony. Dr. Amnon Eldar, director general of AMIT and Judith Schwed-Lion, director of development in Israel and Europe, expressed thanks to the Marans on behalf of AMIT. Rabbi Marans spoke movingly about Dr. Irving J. Benveniste, z”l, whose generosity made it possible to renovate the kitchen.

Motti Asraf, director of Beit Hayeled, led the guests on a tour of the new kitchen and the mishpachtonim (family units). Rahel Rogers, chair of the Israel Executive Committee, and expressed appreciation from the AMIT members in Israel.

AMIT invites you to extend your generosity into the lives of those less fortunate by participating in the AMIT Mitzvah Program. Our Mitzvah Program gives young people the opportunity to grow in character and spirit through the act of tzedakah (charitable giving).

AMIT’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah Twinning Program offers your family the opportunity to lead and help others by profoundly impacting the life of a young Israeli student, while at the same time enriching the experience of your own family’s simcha.

For more information on ways to get involved in the AMIT Mitzvah Program please contact Leora Gurevich at 212.792.5690 or e-mail LeoraG@amitchildren.org.
In preparing for her Bat Mitzvah, Dara Doft realized that she wanted more than just a party. She wanted to do something that would have an impact on Israel and the children of AMIT. She also wanted to combine her love of sports and the outdoors. Dara and her family decided that the gifts she received for her Bat Mitzvah would be used to create an outdoor gym at the AMIT Karmiel Junior and Senior High School. Outdoor gyms are very popular in Israel, allowing students to stay fit, blow off some steam and get into an exercise routine.

Dara travelled with thirteen members of her family to AMIT Karmiel Junior and Senior High School on an AMIT chesed mission over the Thanksgiving holiday to “break in the new outdoor gym”. When they arrived, they were excited to see that the entire school was eagerly awaiting their arrival to celebrate Dara’s Bat Mitzvah. Dara got to meet her Bat Mitzvah twin and the students of AMIT Karmiel and learned about life is like in this peripheral city. “I was excited to meet girls and boys my age who will benefit from my Bat Mitzvah,” said Dara. According to her mother Suzanne Doft, AMIT vice president, strategic planning, “Dara truly learned that taking on responsibility of Bat Mitzvah is not just observing the laws of man to god, but man to man. The biggest one is chesed, and that was why this was the first and foremost mitzvah she took on becoming a Bat Mitzvah.”

To celebrate, the AMIT students made special tee-shirts and everyone participated in a wilderness survival activity that included zip lining. After the visit, the group went to the AMIT Beatrice and Irving Stone Meysharim School in Shoham for developmentally challenged children. Together they baked challah for Shabbat.

The Bat Mitzvah celebration continued with a visit to AMIT Kiryat Malachi Junior and Senior High School where the AMIT students and the Doft family painted a fence and benches to help beautify the school. “Watching all our kids interact seamlessly with Israeli kids showed us that we all look out for each other,” said Suzanne. “It was truly a fabulous experience!” The day ended with a ribbon cutting ceremony, dancing and music and the students asked the Dofts to come and visit again.

Are you interested in celebrating your upcoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah simcha in an extraordinary way? Please contact Liz Klibanoff at 212-477-4737 or at lizk@amitchildren.org for more information.
southeast region celebrates 70 years and honors its pioneers
by judy aronson and elaine brief

This past December, the AMIT Southeast Region celebrated its 70th year with a gala luncheon to recognize the women of this active and devoted region.

This landmark luncheon was held at Congregation B’nai Torah in Boca Raton. The luncheon featured scrumptious food, soft music and an innovative program. One of the highlights of the afternoon was a video presentation by Robert M. Krakow, author of the acclaimed play, “The Trial of FDR.” A special presentation was made by Elaine Brief to her regional co-president Judy Aronson. Judy and her husband Ronald made aliyah in February.

Debbie Isaac, AMIT president, and Chaim Shacham, Israel’s consul general for Florida and Puerto Rico, completed the afternoon’s program with remarks about AMIT’s outstanding contribution to Israeli youth.

Carol Kahn and the centerpiece committee made table decorations highlighting Israeli inventions and achievements. They also featured roses made out of Kassam rockets by Israeli artist Yaron Bob.

new generation sobe schmoozes with shmuley

Dr. David and Arline Reinhard hosted the New Generation SOBE (South Beach) group for Schmoozes with Shmuley, an evening with celebrity Rabbi, Shmuley Boteach. Headed up by Ateret Diveroli and Randi Gordon, New Generation SOBE and a standing room only audience from throughout the southeast region, were challenged and inspired to ponder the often troubled relationship between Israel and American youth. Rabbi Boteach’s mix of humor, warmth, and insight gave everyone something to reflect upon.

Rabbi Boteach concluded his remarks with sincere praise for AMIT and the wonderful work it does for the children in Israel. He also implored the audience to continue its strong support for AMIT.
four honored at philadelphia scholarship event

The Annual Philadelphia Council/Shira Chapter Scholarship Event was held at the Merion Tribute House in Merion Station, Pennsylvania this past November. The event honored longtime leaders, Tybie & Ted Resnick and Young Leaders, Eve & David Kovsky.

A lavish smorgasbord was enjoyed by all at this warm event. The special guest speaker was David Moss, AMIT executive vice president and musical entertainment was provided by Under the Sun.

Honorees: Tybie and Ted Resnick

baltimore sip, dip & nosh

A superb evening was enjoyed by sixty people at the AMIT Baltimore New Generation chapter’s inaugural event, “Sip, Dip & Nosh.” Warmed by a cozy fireplace in the lovely Quarry Lake Clubhouse, attendees enjoyed an elegant selection of wines from Israel, Australia, Argentina and the US, as well as delectable soups, dips and desserts donated by Hoffman & Company Caterers. Robbie Pearlstein, Mid Atlantic Regional Director, and Ellyn Dannenbaum, event chair, spoke to the crowd about the crucial work AMIT does, and showed the heartwarming movie, “Tal Avitan Comes Home,” a documentary by and about AMIT graduate Tal Avitan.

Ellyn & David Dannenbaum, Event Chairs

Irina Diamond, David Dannenbaum, Ellyn Dannenbaum, Abby Sattell-Berman, Marc Berman and Aaron Shiller.
According to Susan Levin of the Lone Tree Brewery, the two things her family missed most when they made aliyah were Sundays and good beer. While they haven’t solved the Sunday issue, they are improving the beer offerings, having partnered with olim from Scotland to establish a microbrewery in Gush Etzion.

On Saturday evening, December 3, 2011, at the rustic Al Derech Burma Hall near Beit Shemesh, Levin took over fifty couples on a multi-sensory journey through the history of beer making. Guests dined on Israeli barbeque as Levin presented a visual slide show. Guests were offered tastes of as much beer as their spouses would allow them to imbibe.

The evening also featured entertainment by AMIT graduates Chaim Sitton and Romi Berlin. Besides their musical performance, the duo spoke personally and emotionally of how the AMIT Bienenfeld Hevruta Yeshiva and Kollel, Kfar Batya changed their lives. AMIT Bienenfeld helped Sitton and Berlin see past their difficult academic beginnings and nurtured their musical and leadership skills to allow them to become the positive, productive and observant individuals that they are today.

Kol Hakavod to AMIT New Generation Chairs, Mia and Herman Weiss and Yaffi and Yoseph Shmidman, and to the entire events committee and AMIT staff.

(Left to right): Lara Rachlin, Eilat & Danny Kaufman, Moshe & Vivian Schechter, Yossi & Sharon Glustein, Claire Hershkowitz

AMIT israel new generation **beer tasting**
by minna felig

SAVE THE DATE
Wednesday, May 30, 2012
Caesarea Golf Course, Israel

- Shacharit @ Golf Course beginning at 8:30AM
- Shotgun start at 10:00AM
- 18 holes of golf on an award winning course
- Putting Contest- Prizes- Give-aways
- Food and beverage will be served during the day
- Award Ceremony
- Club Members welcome
- Dan Caesarea Spa option for non-golfers
- Transportation available
- Individual hole and other sponsorship options

To sponsor and to reserve your spot now, email Golfisrael@AMIT.org.il or contact co-chairmen:
Herman Weiss - hweissmd@yahoo.com - +972 52 724 9300
Joseph Shmidman - jshmidman@gmail.com - +972 54 485 8929
Alan Gelman - goodhumorag@gmail.com - +972 50 481 5950
a day for dedications

On Sunday, November 6, 2011 Lee and Lou Benjamin of West Hempstead, NY, were joined by friends and family at the AMIT Beatrice and Irving Stone Meysharim School for the dedication of an art therapy room in memory of their dear friend Marie Rose Adler, z”l. The school located in Shoham, is for teenagers and young adults who are emotionally and behaviorally challenged. The ceremony also marked the generous dedication of the Benjamin Family Library in the AMIT Dyckman Ulpana in Beersheva.

The festivities began with a performance by the student choir. Then, the principal of the school, Michal Klil HaHoresh, and two students, led the group on a tour and unveiled the dedication plaque. After lunch in Shoham, the Benjamins traveled to Beersheva for a tour of the Dina and Moses Dyckman Ulpanat AMIT where the Benjamin Family Library was dedicated.

are you ready for some football?
by zeva epstein

On a sunny day this past December, AMIT Future Leaders Initiative (AFLI) held the First Annual AFLI Bowl. This fundraising flag football tournament was co-chaired by AFLI president Talia Thurm and Rafi Haramati and took place in Chelsea Park in New York. There were a total of twelve teams each consisting of about ten people all wearing shirts sponsored by Successories. Many spectators arrived bundled up and ready to watch exciting games, enjoy coffee and hot chocolate, and eat bagels and pastries donated by The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf. Each team raised $500, and raffle tickets were sold for the chance to win a Kindle Fire; Julia Straus was the winner. The final game came down to two teams: The Bruschies and TBMF, with TBMF ultimately prevailing. Everyone left smiling and over $7,000 was raised to help AMIT children through the raffle, ticket fees, t-shirt sales, and sponsorships. We cannot wait for next year’s event, when we’ll strive to double our earnings.
On Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Skokie, IL., AMIT's Chicago Midwest Council honored Lynne Erenberg with the Bessie Gotsfeld Service Award and Ilene Cutler with the New Generation Community Award. AMIT executive vice president David Moss was the guest speaker at the dinner. The event was chaired by Debbi and Marc Geller and Shana and Steve Erenberg.

Celebrating a special birthday or anniversary, Bar/Bat Mitzvah or other milestone occasion?

Looking for a gift that is timeless and has true meaning?

Struggling with what to give the person who has everything?

Consider making a dedication to benefit the children of AMIT!

Classrooms, laboratories, computer rooms and many other options can be dedicated to mark any significant event.

For more information please email Liz Klibanoff, Associate Director of Development, Major Gifts & Annual Campaign, at lizk@amitchildren.org or call 212-477-4737.
spanning AMIT world

AMIT Birah Chapter Enjoys Private Screening and Buffet Dinner

On Sunday evening, December 18, 2011, over sixty guests attended the AMIT Birah Chapter of Washington DC’s “Meat at the Movies” at the AFI Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, MD.

Rachel and Ari Daniel Pinchot, Producer and Co-Director of “Follow Me”

Southern California Welcomes Amnon Eldar at Two Events

Dr. Amnon Eldar, director general of AMIT, visited the San Diego and Los Angeles areas in early November. During his time in San Diego, he visited a number of schools that are utilizing education and technology in new and innovative ways. In addition, Anne Bernstein a longtime leader and supporter of AMIT and the LA council, hosted Dr. Eldar at a brunch with over 50 attendees. Dr. Eldar discussed how AMIT is revolutionizing education in Israel. Dr. Eldar was also hosted by the Los Angeles New Generation group at the Terrell Moore Gallery. The event was chaired by Karnite and Michael Braun and Joy and Michael Volk, and attracted new faces to AMIT many of whom would like to be more involved in the future.

Pictured (l to r): Dr. Amnon Eldar, Anne Bernstein, Gitta Nagel and Debbie Isaac

New Computers Donated in honor of Esther and Jonah Loewenthal’s 50th Anniversary

Esther and Jonah Loewenthal of Staten Island, NY met at an AMIT function 55 years ago. Now celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary, they have asked friends and family to donate to AMIT instead of giving them gifts. The Loewenthals also contributed funds and were able to dedicate new computers at the AMIT Or Hammer Elementary School. At this school in Beersheva, there is a lively arts program: there are art and dance classes, and each student learns to play an instrument. This past November the Loewenthals visited Or Hammer with their daughter, Judith Ziegler, who lives in Israel. They met with the vice principal, toured the school, and saw the new computers and the commemorative plaque.

What’s the Price of a Sandwich?

Hungry children – especially teenagers in high school – cannot learn and cannot thrive. At AMIT it is our mission to provide our students with whatever special services – be it extra tutorials, counseling or sandwiches – they need to succeed academically. But to continue to maintain these services, we need your help.

Please support the AMIT Sandwich Program. Your gift of $50, $25 or even $10 will go to support a program that is helping some of our poorest students succeed in school and begin to forge a productive and meaningful life.

The price of a sandwich is small. But to our AMIT students it can mean everything. Please call Dawn Sherry at 212.477.4461 to find out more about the AMIT Sandwich Program and to make your donation today.
As a parent and a long time devoted AMIT donor, I know how important a good education is to the development of children. Many of the 25,000 students at AMIT in Israel do not have the advantages that our own children enjoy and which we may easily take for granted.

President’s Circle gifts provide the foundation upon which our network of schools is built. These annual gifts are sustaining funds that we rely on to support our excellent programs. In order to guarantee the continuation of programs which nurture Israel’s children and instill within them strong values and academic excellence, we rely on our members whose annual donation ensure Israel’s future by providing these opportunities.

All successful endeavors require a strong foundation. Please join me. The circle will not be complete without you.

Co-Chairs: Brenda Kalter and Deena Shiff

For further information regarding President’s Circle, please contact Robin Rothbort at 212-477-4725, 1-800-989-AMIT (2647), or email robinr@amitchildren.org.

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Robyn Price Stonehill and David Stonehill, NY
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An Invitation To Join Me In

President’s Circle

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AMIT is offering dedication opportunities to donors interested in funding the next stage of educational development in the Negev.

DEDICATION OPPORTUNITIES

CAMPUS NAMING
JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
$3,000,000

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NAMINGS
$1,000,000

LIBRARY:
JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
$600,000

BUILDINGS
$100,000 - $500,000
Education Centers
Amphitheater
Science Centers

LIBRARIES
$75,000 - $100,000

SYNAGOGUES/BEIT MIDRASHIM
$50,000 - $250,000

SPECIALTY CLASSROOMS
$50,000 - $100,000
Woodshop, Fashion Design, Computer Graphics & Electronics

CLASSROOMS
$18,000 - $36,000
Science & Computer Labs
English, Literature, History, Math & Music Rooms

RECREATION AREAS
$10,000 - $50,000
Playgrounds, School Yards
Basketball Courts, Soccer Fields

GARDENS
$5,000 - $25,000

AMIT is strongly invested in the future of the Negev with schools in Beersheva, Sderot and Yerucham which educate over 7,000 children from kindergarten through high school. AMIT is uniquely positioned and singularly qualified to offer the children of the Negev educational continuity, academic excellence and strong Jewish values.

AMIT attracts and retains exceptional teachers and staff and provides outstanding programs that help make AMIT the most sought after educational network in Israel.

JOYCE & DANIEL STRAUS, CHAIRS

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DONATING TO THE AMIT NEGEV INITIATIVE PLEASE EMAIL Liz Klibanoff, Associate Director of Development, Major Gifts & Annual Campaign, at lizk@amitchildren.org or call 212-477-4737.