



NA'AMAT Now!

A publication of NA'AMAT USA

Winter 2022

Jerusalem community center to house new NA'AMAT Visitors Center

By Sharon Sutker McGowan

Every Wednesday, a group of women who recently gave birth stretch and bend while holding their babies and chatting about their lives. They are on a three-month maternity leave, which gives them time to bond with their newborn but also can be isolating and lonely. The wellness program for young mothers originated at NA'AMAT's Beit Hahavera Community Center in Jerusalem but was so popular that it was expanded to a municipal center that can accommodate 150 women each week. While at the center, they also can attend lectures on motherhood and other topics of interest.

This is just one example of the creative programs developed at Beit Hahavera, one of NA'AMAT's most active community centers in Israel. "We're proud that small programs we start here later become part of the municipality activities," said Liora Ayalon, NA'AMAT's deputy regional chairperson for Jerusalem. "The programs we do here have an impact on everyone in Jerusalem."

Another program for government social workers provides full-day week-



Beit Hahavera is one of NA'AMAT's most active community centers in Israel.

ly workshops on topics ranging from the difference between women's and men's health to how to achieve change in the workplace. Participants have led efforts to offer healthier snacks at meetings in the Knesset and to provide 10-minute breaks for physical exercise during the workday.

Last year, Beit Hahavera initiated a campaign with several municipalities to combat sexual violence among teenagers. "We hired animators to make 10 short films, which were shared on Instagram," explained

Meital Abas, director of Beit Hahavera. "We do as much as we can to get to as many people as we can."

Erected in the 1960s, the 4,300 square-foot one-story building serves about 1,000 people every year from all socio-economic backgrounds. It is located near the landmark windmill built by Moses Montefiore in 1857. Beit Hahavera currently has two large meeting rooms, offices and a big kitchen. By next summer, the building will be renovated to house

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Let's all work to spread the word about NA'AMAT

Susan Isaacs, VP, PR and Publicity

Are you on the board of your local chapter or club – maybe even president? Or perhaps you sit on the national board? Or have you been a devoted member for many years? If you are, you must know a lot about NA'AMAT, right? Therefore, in 2022, let's commit to spreading the word about the wonderful work of NA'AMAT.

What does that require from you? Well, I see so many of you on social media, such as Facebook or Instagram, and you have a following! Can you post a call-out about NA'AMAT sometimes? Take a picture of a Zoom meeting or an in-person meeting and post it on your Facebook page. This will help tremendously with our PR efforts!

During the last quarter we have created beautiful fabric "welcome" banners for chapters in the Western Area. These banners were displayed at Sukkot parties, at in-person chapter meetings, and as backdrops at various Zoom meetings. Contact me at susan@sriadvertising.com if you would like one for your club. The cost for a banner is under \$100, and it goes a long way to promote "chapter pride." It's a great way to greet new and potential members at meetings, too.

We also ran ads in Jewish newspapers in various parts of the country wishing the community a Happy Chanukah. We concentrated on the Southeast Area this time, as many "snowbirds" migrate to Florida during the winter months.

I had the opportunity to again be interviewed by Batiya Cohen on T.L.A radio, a Hebrew-speaking radio program in Los Angeles. Our conversation was to promote a national Zoom program that was scheduled about the Ritchie Boys, a group of young men who fled

Nazi Germany and returned to Europe as soldiers in U.S. uniforms. They knew the psychology and the language of the enemy better than anybody else. At Camp Ritchie, MD, they were trained in intelligence and psychological warfare. Batiya's audience seemed very interested to hear about this NA'AMAT program and other programs that were in the works. A good PR moment!

Join me and Esther Friedberg, my PR committee of one, to help promote the great work of NA'AMAT.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." – Helen Keller

Here's to a great 2022!



The power of women's voices

Selma Roffman, VP, Membership

Throughout Jewish history, we hear stories of heroic Jewish male leaders in Torah, Talmud and holiday narratives. Female voices are often in the background. Our accomplishments are frequently understated. Today, the times are changing with women globally speaking out and effecting change.

In the 21st century, women are using their voices and knowledge in powerful ways to break down walls – even at the Kotel in Jerusalem. They are on the front lines of technical innovations, combating climate change and social justice. Women are making the difference. For members of NA'AMAT, supporting women's voices has been an important part of our mission since 1925.

If you are passionate about an issue, if you want to have an impact, NA'AMAT membership provides a home for your energies and efforts. Recently, the membership committee asked members to share why they belong to NA'AMAT. Here are some responses:

"NA'AMAT connects me to Israel and other women"

"I get to engage with members who speak Hebrew"

"NA'AMAT helps those in need from cradle to school and college – and then addresses women's health issues"

"NA'AMAT offers friendship...seminars...great programs...and opportunities to benefit others"

"As a member, I am continuing a family tradition; my mother made me a member and her mother was a life member before that in Pioneer Women"

"It gives me a chance to leave the world a little better than I found it"

"If we are not moving to Israel, joining NA'AMAT lets us do something for Israel"

"I met a 'new family' – my NA'AMAT friends"

"NA'AMAT stands for Women's Rights and equality in the family and workplace"

"My family dedicated the Day Care Center in Rishon LeZion"

"Two of its goals are important to me: helping less advantaged women overcome obstacles and assisting youth forge forward to a productive and successful future."

Membership is important. Add your voice and those of your friends and relatives to the NA'AMAT family. Inspire others by starting a new chapter or encouraging a new member in your community to join us. Whatever stage of life you are in, there is a place for you and "your voice" in NA'AMAT!

Did You Know?

... NA'AMAT Israel grants 200 scholarships to female bachelor's and master's degree students and eight to Ph.D. students each year. This year, four doctoral students are focusing on gender studies and four on virology and public health.

Message from the President

By Jan Gurvitch



As I write this article, I'm getting ready for my annual family Thanksgiving dinner, writing and rewriting menus and posting shopping lists on my refrigerator. I'm also reflecting on the meaning of Thanksgiving, a time to remember to be thankful for what we have and to listen to our inner voice that urges us to share it forward.

As NA'AMAT members we volunteer time and money as a labor of love. This year NA'AMAT USA was able to contribute to our outstanding daycare facilities, the growing network of technological high schools and our domestic violence program, which serves both men and women. In addition, we continue to provide legal aid to women and professional scholarships in the fields of STEM and gender studies. We are so proud of our PhD recipients who have gone on to great achievements in their fields.

We are proud to say that our programs keep evolving to address the needs of our community. For example, Abba —The NA'AMAT Center for Fathers grew out of the recognition that men who have a history of abusive behavior or witnessed family violence need support to become the parents they would like to be. Recently, nine fathers who experienced the tragedy of a stillbirth took part in a unique hike-workshop on grieving, organized by Abba.

All our work is made possible by our amazing volunteers, led by Susan Isaacs, Vice President of Public Relations, Selma Roffman, Vice President of Membership, Doris Katz, Vice President of Leadership and Judith Shamir, our program chair. I would like to introduce the newest member of our National Board, Susan Miller. Susan will be our new National Fundraising Vice-President. She is a member of the Rimomim Chapter of Elkins Park, PA and is presently a valued member of the membership and program committees.

As we begin the year 2022, there is no better way to re-energize than by taking a NA'AMAT-sponsored virtual Mediterranean cruise scheduled to leave port on Jan. 23. Watch your email for more details.

On Feb. 27 we will be celebrating Women's International Day with our wonderful sisters in NA'AMAT Canada. Our keynote speaker will be Anita Diamant, the well-known author of books such as "The Red Tent" and, most recently, "Period, End of Sentence." She will share her impassioned views on women's ongoing battle for gender equality.

On July 31, NA'AMAT will convene our virtual National Convention in Los Angeles. Although we won't be there physically, we promise to bring the sights and sounds of a wonderful red carpet experience straight to your home.

In the spirit of giving with a warm and generous hand, please use the enclosed envelope to make a donation to NA'AMAT in honor of the work we do and the dreams we make possible.

Visitors Center

Continued from first page

the NA'AMAT Visitors Center, an interactive space that will reflect the international organization's 100-year history of promoting women's rights and gender equality.

"We want to give visitors an experience. You don't have to know what NA'AMAT is, or what equality is — when you finish the visit, you'll know and understand why (equality) has to happen," said Abas. "We want everyone to see why this is important and why it matters."

The Visitors Center is a work in progress. NA'AMAT Israel will hire contractors who can translate NA'AMAT's story into exhibits, videos and tours that will allow attendees

to "see, read and feel," according to Abas. The plan is to use NA'AMAT's history to highlight the challenges women still struggle with today. For example, in the 1920s NA'AMAT (then called Moetzet Hapoalot) fought for equal salaries for the women who built roads in Palestine. "We are still fighting for the same thing," noted Ayalon.

Renovation is expected to begin in February, and a formal groundbreaking ceremony will take place in April. The Visitors Center is expected to open in August. Beit Hahavera will be closed for two months during the building phase of the renovation. However, activities will continue on Zoom and at nearby locations, Abas said.

NA'AMAT USA and NA'AMAT Canada raised nearly \$2,500 for the

renovation at a virtual fundraiser in October featuring Sarit Yishai Levi, the author of "The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem."

After the Visitors Center opens, most of Beit Hahavera's in-person programs will resume after 5 p.m. "We are not stopping our activities; they are very important to us," said Ayalon. "As more people learn about NA'AMAT and its history through the new center, Beit Hahavera is expected to attract even more people to its workshops, classes and other programming.

"When all the renovation is done, the community will serve thousands of men, women and children every year," said Shirli Shavit, director of NA'AMAT's International Department.



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Annual conference focuses on violence against women

The home should be a safe space where children can develop and flourish so that they can grow to be well adjusted and fulfilled adults. Unfortunately, for hundreds of thousands of children in Israel, home is a threatening and toxic place, leaving many of them traumatized throughout their lives, said NA'AMAT Israel President Hagit Pe'er at the annual conference marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on Nov. 25.

The conference took place at NA'AMAT's Ayanot Youth Village and focused on domestic violence and its impact on children. Pe'er and Michal Shir, chairperson of the Knesset's Committee for Children's Rights, together with law, social work and criminology experts, spoke about the effect of domestic violence on children. Participants also discussed a bill initiated by NA'AMAT that recognizes children who witness violence as victims of abuse.

In addition, NA'AMAT Israel held a ceremony commemorating victims and celebrating survivors of gender-based violence

at the Keren Kayemet forest. Participants included representatives of NA'AMAT, the JNF and other women's organizations. Liron Dror shared her painful story of how she and her daughters were attacked by their father with a knife, killing her youngest daughter, who was 10 months old. Dror and her older daughter survived the attack.



Liron Dror (left, pictured with NA'AMAT Israel President Hagit Pe'er) shared her personal story about domestic violence.

