

Rising Lion Fund supports Israelis in crisis

By **Randy Sable**, *VP Fundraising*

On June 12, the Israeli government launched Operation Rising Lion in response to immediate and existential threats from the Jihadist country, Iran. For 12 days, Israelis took shelter from missiles and drones. Prompted by this emergency, NA'AMAT USA established

the Rising Lion Fund to respond swiftly and compassionately to the urgent needs of Israeli women, children and families from the impact of the ongoing war.

Since launching the fund, NA'AMAT has:

- Opened emergency daycare centers in hospital basements for children of

frontline workers during Operation Rising Lion

- Launched two new trauma hotlines serving more than 3,500 people
- Delivered food, supplies, and emotional support to families who lost everything

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NA'AMAT USA celebrates centennial with NA'AMAT Canada

By **Sharon Sutker McGowan**

For about 150 members of NA'AMAT USA and Canada, the gathering in Toronto to celebrate 100 years of supporting NA'AMAT's work in Israel was a magical time. From meeting like-minded women, to a panel discussion portraying a century of history, to a keynote address by NA'AMAT Israel President Hagit Pe'ér, to enthusiastic Israeli dancing with the Nirkoda Israeli Dancers, attendees came away inspired to do even more for women, children and families in Israel.

The joint Toronto celebration helped cement the relationship between the two national organizations, which were founded together in 1925 but later separated. "One hundred years ago we started as one," said Susan Inhaber, president of NA'AMAT Canada. "A lot of people don't know that. By working together, we have grown so much closer. In the end, we're one organization working toward the same cause of empowering women. Our relationships grew as a result of the



Centennial attendees celebrate by dancing with the Nirkoda Israeli Dancers.

centennial celebration," she added.

"It was like a wedding, with two families coming together to work out the plans," said NA'AMAT USA President Susan Miller. "It was a real collaborative effort as we shared ideas throughout 1½ years of planning." She noted that the two organizations have worked behind the scenes on projects over the past several years, "but we didn't have the opportunity to get to know each other in person. Being able to do that added to our feeling

of sisterhood."

Consistent with the event's theme, "Looking Back, Moving Forward Together," the organizers told the story of NA'AMAT through a series of panelists on a fictional television show called "What's Behind the Name." The audience was introduced to members portraying NA'AMAT's founders — including Rahel Yanait Ben-Zvi, Beba Idelson and Golda Meir — as well as former na-

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NA'AMAT Membership

A focus on growing our community

By Susan Isaacs, VP, Membership

Membership is the lifeblood of any successful organization—and NA'AMAT USA is energized and focused on growing ours! I'm honored to step into the role of Vice President of Membership and thrilled to be working alongside a dedicated committee: Esther Shapiro, Roz Porton, Stephanie Nygard (GLAR), and Selma Roffman (Rimonim Chapter, Philadelphia). Together, we're excited to brainstorm fresh, creative ideas to expand and strengthen our community.

We're hopeful that this will be the year that we launch vibrant new young chapters in Los Angeles and Tacoma, Washington and other parts of the U.S.—stay tuned!

Meanwhile, our annual members have received a series of renewal reminder emails. If your membership is due for renewal, we encourage you to do so easily and securely online at naamat.org.

Mark your calendars! The Greater Los Angeles Region will host its annual Membership Celebration on Oct. 12. Each GLAR (Greater Los Angeles Region) chapter will honor outstanding members who have made a meaningful impact. The event is expected to draw more than 100 guests. We encourage other regions to consider hosting similar celebrations to recognize their members.

For more information or to share ideas, feel free to reach out to me at 818-512-5950 or susan@sriadvertising.com.

NA'AMAT Publicity

Strategic marketing a priority

By Esther Friedberg, VP, Publicity

I am honored to take on the role of Vice President of Publicity. National board member Sharri Kornblum and Linda Kavalsky, president of Eilat and GLAR board member, will serve on the committee. Strategic marketing for NA'AMAT continues to be a top priority. I look forward to working with the national staff in promoting NA'AMAT.

After the successful Centennial Celebration in May, the Publicity committee sent a news release and photo of U.S. attendees to Jewish media. Members who attended the event received "Centennial" t-shirts that will continue to promote the 100-year anniversary. We also placed ads in the Cleveland Jewish News Guide and Philadelphia Guide to Jewish Life, and participated in the Orange County, Calif. Celebrate Israel Festival.

Due to the recent war in Iran, some publicity campaigns were postponed in order to prioritize the Rising Lion Fund. NA'AMAT USA has engaged a marketing firm to help with this campaign.

Tribute certificates and e-cards are offered online for publicity and marketing purposes as well as fundraising. NA'AMAT USA is imprinted on the front and back of such certificates and e-cards. Many times, publicity is tied into fundraising and programming projects. These beautiful certificates and e-cards can provide a significant benefit for NA'AMAT.

I look forward to a future when everyone knows our name!



Leaders in Los Angeles

The new Eilat Chapter Board members in the Greater Los Angeles Region wore masks when they were installed as Superheroes. From left: Sharri Kornblum, Rachael Issac, Esther Shapiro, Rene Peters, Linda Kavalsky (co-president), Esther Friedberg, Michelle Schwab, Gayle Moles, Betsy Rosner, Lea Templer, Rachel Kurtz, Susan J. Miller (co-president), Susan Isaacs (installing officer). (Missing: Roz Porton, Joyce Edelson, Jane Blitz and Miriam Brauner.)

Rising Lion Fund

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- Offered trauma counseling and hosted ongoing mental health workshops
- Reinforced facilities with critical security upgrades
- Continued paying salaries and stipends to dedicated staff during closures and displacement

The need hasn't stopped—and our work is far from over. Children across Israel are showing signs of trauma. Families continue to live in fear. NA'AMAT's daycare centers—lifelines for low-income families and single mothers—are at risk of closing without your support.

Our facilities are under growing pressure and need critical maintenance and updates to stay open and continue to provide safe, caring spaces for children.

With your contribution to the Rising Lion Fund today, we can meet these urgent needs and help keep these vital centers open. Your gift helps provide trauma care, shelter, food and security—stability when it's needed most.

Message from the President



By Susan Miller

From May 16–18, NA'AMAT USA and NA'AMAT Canada united in Toronto for a historic Centennial Celebration—marking 100 years of advocacy, empowerment and solidarity. But beyond the milestone, the weekend served as a powerful reaffirmation of the organizations' enduring commitment to Israel, especially in a time of crisis.

Held at the Novotel Toronto North York, the three-day event brought together members, leaders and supporters from across North America. The celebration featured cultural programming, keynote speakers and heartfelt tributes to generations of women who have championed social justice and equality in Israel and beyond.

That commitment was further demonstrated in the weeks following the Centennial, when NA'AMAT USA launched the Rising Lion Fund in response to the devastating missile

attacks on Israel by Iran. The fund was created to provide both immediate and long-term support to Israeli communities affected by the strikes — delivering critical aid such as trauma counseling, emergency housing and fortified daycare centers for children of essential workers.

The Rising Lion Fund has since galvanized hundreds of donors and volunteers, uniting Jewish communities across borders in a shared mission of resilience and recovery. It stands as a living testament to NA'AMAT's century-long promise—to protect, to uplift and to never turn away.

As the Centennial weekend concluded with music, reflection and renewed purpose, one truth resonated above all: NA'AMAT's love for Israel is not just historical—it is active, urgent and unshakable.

As I write this, Israel and Iran are in a ceasefire - let us pray that permanent peace will be established, not only with Iran, but that the hostages will be returned from Gaza and peace will be restored there as well.

Centennial celebration

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tional presidents of NA'AMAT Canada and USA.

Yanait Ben-Zvi, played by Canadian member Linda Gutman, explained the origin of NA'AMAT, then called Pioneer Women. In 1925, Yanait Ben-Zvi established a tree nursery in Jerusalem to train young women in agricultural work. She turned to her friend Sophie Udin in America for help raising money to build a well. A group of seven women responded to her request by raising \$500, and the organization was born.

“It's important to recognize that we stand on the shoulders of forward-thinking women from the past, who understood that when women are empowered, it improves the lives of families and ultimately Israeli society,” said Miller.

Former USA and Canadian national presidents in attendance, or a family member, were presented with certificates in their honor at the celebration. A new playground paying tribute to the presidents is being constructed at the Frieda Leemon Day Care Center in Ramleh, which serves 67 toddlers from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In her keynote address, NA'AMAT



Melanie and Lydia Gladstone, a mother-daughter singing duo who are both active members of NA'AMAT, performed during the celebrations.

Israel and International President Hagit Pe'er stated, “This is more than a celebration. It is a powerful reminder of what women can achieve when we come together with shared purpose, with courage and with love.”

Pe'er spoke eloquently about the re-

cent challenges facing Israel since the terrorist attack in 2023. “As we gather here, we cannot ignore the reality that Israel has been engaged in a war for over a year and a half. The trauma of Oct. 7 weighs heavily on us every day. We are a nation

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/naamatusa; Instagram: @naamatusa

naamat@naamat.org

(818) 431-2200

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Centennial celebration

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in ongoing trauma, and we will not heal until all the hostages, the living and the fallen, return home," she said.

A NA'AMAT Emergency Fund created after Oct. 7 raised money to build safe rooms, distribute care kits to women soldiers, and provide food, clothing and programming for about 20,000 Israelis who were displaced from their homes, among other efforts.

In the past few years, NA'AMAT USA and NA'AMAT Canada have raised the funds to renovate playgrounds at day care centers at Moshav Ezer, Yavne, Haifa, Ofakim, Tiberias and Holon. They also raised money to build a new middle school at Kanot Youth Village, which will open in September, and construct safe rooms at Kanot, Petach Tikva and Holon. Shirli Shavit, director of NA'AMAT's International Department, presented the projects and thanked the North American organizations for their "devotion and commitment to NA'AMAT and the State of Israel," noting that "your efforts impact lives across Israel every single day."

NA'AMAT USA and NA'AMAT Canada also support college and post-graduate scholarships for women. In a typical year, NA'AMAT awards 180 scholarships for students pursuing bache-



Susan Isaacs portrayed Golda Meir in a skit about NA'AMAT's history, and Esther Friedberg portrayed one of the organization's founders, Sophie Udin.

lor's and master's degrees, as well as eight research grants for doctoral students in gender studies and science.

Other highlights of the gathering included performances by Melanie and Lydia Gladstone, a mother-daughter singing duo who are both active members of NA'AMAT, comedienne Judy Gold and Yiddish entertainer Janie Respitz. The celebration concluded with attendees joining in as they watched a recording of Barbra Streisand singing Hatikvah on Israel's 30th anniversary.

During her speech on Shabbat morn-

ing, Pe'er declared, "Our supreme mission today, as a powerful answer to all our enemies, is to increase our circles of solidarity, to take a stand and to declare loudly that we are here to stay."

As if to reinforce those words, a few hours later Israeli singer Yuval Raphael completed her blockbuster performance of "New Day Will Rise" at Eurovision 2025 declaring loudly, "Am Yisrael Chai." Her very presence, as someone who survived the Nova music festival massacre, was a powerful answer to Israel's enemies and a moving moment at a historic celebration.