

Childcare worker pay crisis highlights need for general fund donations

By Sharon Sutker McGowan

In mid-March, as Jewish women throughout the world were beginning to prepare for Passover, NA'AMAT Israel sent an urgent message to its sister organizations, including NA'AMAT USA.

"All of our day care centers are closed due to the war with Iran. The caregivers at our day care centers earn minimum wage, and we cannot pay our share of their salaries without tuition from our families. We are worried about what they will do for Pesach," said Shirli Shavit, director of NA'AMAT's International Department, on March 19. "This is a call for action in an emergency. Please do whatever you can to help us."

The crisis exposed a need that the national board has been grappling with for some time: the ability to transmit funds quickly in an emergency and to build capital for multi-year projects. "We've decided that we need to have a fund set aside for emergency purposes so that we don't have to disrupt our routine fundraising with emergency fundraising efforts," said NA'AMAT USA President Susan Miller. "Unfortunately, there are always going to be emergencies."

The NA'AMAT USA board responded immediately to Shavit's request, according to Miller. Leaders throughout the country were asked to raise funds specifically to

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Leader Spotlight: Ivonne Rodriguez Mosquera

By Sharon Sutker McGowan

In January, a group of young Jewish leaders gathered in New York for the kickoff of a 13-month program to strengthen their leadership skills and foster respectful dialogue at a time of increased polarization within the Jewish community. NA'AMAT USA representative Ivonne Rodriguez Mosquera was one of 16 individuals selected to participate in the inaugural program, sponsored by the 51-member Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

The Ambassadors Program for Emerging Leaders brings together people from diverse Jewish organizations, including political, non-political, religious and non-religious groups. Meetings take place monthly via Zoom, and another

in-person gathering was scheduled for June. The ambassadorship will culminate in a weeklong trip with the Conference of Presidents to Israel next February.

At the kickoff, participants were asked to bring a personal object and tell its story. Mosquera brought a "sensory menorah" she created for her daughter Sarah, 12, who is on the autism spectrum and had just started at a new school. Mosquera used the menorah to demonstrate to Sarah's new classmates how she interacts with the world. The candle holders are filled with materials of varying textures, such as shiny, moist and soft. "Feeling the textures makes her happy," Mosquera explained.

The exercise was meaningful to Mosquera because it allowed ambassadors to learn about each other, creating a path to develop relationships. "When we shared personal objects and the stories behind

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Ivonne Rodriguez Mosquera

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NA'AMAT Reports



Programming can build community

By Sharri Kornblum, VP of Programming

As the new VP of Programming for NA'AMAT USA, I'd like to introduce myself. Previously, I was the programming chair of NA'AMAT's Eilat chapter in Los Angeles. I recently retired as a professor of mathematics in the engineering department of California State University, Los Angeles, and I am thrilled to begin my new role in NA'AMAT.

My goal is to establish collective efforts to coordinate, complement and enhance each chapter's programming.

Together we can create successful and engaging events throughout the clubs and chapters of NA'AMAT USA and build a collaborative community.

My experience as programming chair of the Eilat chapter makes me an excellent resource and point of contact for clubs and chapters throughout the country. By working together, we can increase their ability to achieve greater fundraising results.

In 2019, I attended NA'AMAT's leadership conference in Israel, where I learned that our organization's success can be attributed to unified fundraising. My time in Israel gave me a broader understanding of NA'AMAT's wonderful and important work, including creat-

ing safe spaces, education, research and building hope for an entire community.

In 2018, my husband, Oscar Kornblum, established a men's group within NA'AMAT USA, with a goal of getting men more involved in the experiences of NA'AMAT. The men's group has sponsored numerous events, including co-ed outings. We plan to establish similar groups within the various clubs and chapters in the U.S.

I am eager to bring my experience to support national programming and see our community come together, educate, and celebrate, and most importantly support Israel.

Please feel free to reach out. I would love to connect!

Leader Spotlight

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them, I realized how listening and vulnerability create trust," she said. "So later, when someone talks about their ideas, you know where they're coming from."

During the Ambassadors program participants completed an online three-part course on "constructive dialogue" — how to have complex conversations with people who have differing opinions. Participants were paired with a partner from another Jewish organization to discuss each lesson. Mosquera's partner was an Orthodox woman. "I thought she would be more conservative, but she was the opposite. It was another opportunity to learn about each other," she said.

Mosquera also appreciated a presentation by Daniel Taub, former Israeli ambassador to the United Kingdom, who discussed his involvement in peace talks. "It was very interesting to hear his perspective and to listen to someone with his experience," she said.

A native of Colombia who converted to Judaism, Mosquera is an active volunteer in the NA'AMAT Rimonim chapter in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania. She was introduced to NA'AMAT in an unusual way. When she came to



At the kickoff of the Ambassadors Program, Iyonne Rodriguez Mosquera shared why she created this sensory menorah.

the U.S. in 2003, she had not heard of the organization. She learned about NA'AMAT from her husband's cousin, who is active in NA'AMAT Uruguay. During the COVID pandemic, she searched for NA'AMAT USA on the Internet and found out about Rimonim, which she now serves as a board member and newsletter editor.

Mosquera, who has a background in architecture, also is a board member at Beth Sholom synagogue and chairs the committee that addresses the physical structure of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed building, a National Historic

Landmark. She also invests in real estate, managing a small portfolio of properties.

When the opportunity to participate in the Ambassadors program came up, she jumped at the opportunity. "I'm very happy to be part of this program. It will allow me to grow as a leader, but also to be the voice of NA'AMAT in constructive dialogue in a national network," Mosquera said. She added that she is excited to help build something with the participants from the other organizations.

"We're all working to serve the Jewish community, here and in Israel. We're the leaders of tomorrow."

Message from the President



By Susan Miller

Two days. Box after box. Photographs, letters, files — a century of women who showed up.

I sat with it all, and I was undone.

In the 1940s and 1950s, our founders filled convention halls with more than a thousand women at a time. They danced at Purim celebrations. They modeled in fashion shows. They laughed, they organized, they *gave* — and in doing so, helped build a state. Not with wealth handed down to them, but with warm hands and fierce hearts.

And then they did something even more remarkable: they thought about *us*.

They didn't just raise money. They established endowments — deliberate, visionary acts of love for women they would never meet. For daughters and granddaughters of a movement they were determined to protect. Today, NA'AMAT USA stands on the foundation they laid. Roughly 75% of the funding we send to Israel for its programs and facilities comes from endowments those women created. We are living inside their foresight.

Now I ask you: *What will we leave behind?*

The work in Israel is urgent and alive — lifting the voices of women in society, championing dignity for all women, educating communities and fighting to end domestic violence and abuse. This work does not pause. It cannot.

But we must ask ourselves honestly: who will fund it when we are gone?

NA'AMAT USA has established the Pioneer Legacy Society to answer that question — to make sure the shoulders of those who built this organization never sag under the weight of an uncertain future. To make sure our children and grandchildren inherit not just our values, but the resources to act on them.

The Pioneer Legacy Society honors NA'AMAT USA members or friends who choose to include NA'AMAT USA in their estate plans. Pioneer Legacy Society membership is open to all — there is no minimum gift required. What matters is not the size of the commitment, but the intention behind it: to ensure that this movement endures.

Ways to Create Your Legacy

A legacy gift is more than a financial decision. It is a statement of who you are and what you believe. There are many meaningful ways to become a member of the Pioneer Legacy Society:

- A bequest in your will
- Naming NA'AMAT USA as a beneficiary of a retirement account (IRA, 401(k)) or life insurance policy
- Establishing a Charitable Remainder Trust or Annuity Trust
- Creating a Living Trust designation
- Establishing an endowment fund in your name or in honor of a loved one

Many legacy gifts cost nothing during your lifetime and are simple to arrange. A helpful way to think about impact: multiply your annual gift by 20 to estimate the endowment needed to sustain that contribution in perpetuity. An annual gift of \$1,000, for example, can be sustained through a \$20,000 endowment — and your legacy can grow over time.

Creating a legacy gift begins with a conversation about what matters most to you. What kind of future do you hope to strengthen? What values do you wish to pass forward?

Our founders looked forward. They saw us.

Now it's our turn to look forward — and see the next generation.

Long Island Queens Seder focuses on women in Passover story

A few weeks before Passover, NA'AMAT Long Island Queens Council gathered for their annual Women's Seder. Hosted at the home of Maddy Berger, 20 NA'AMAT members and friends brought items for the seder meal, shared stories and focused on the women who are usually not mentioned in the Passover story. Pictured: (clockwise from left, standing) Maddy Berger, Nadine Simon, Florence Lefkowitz, Diane Hershkowitz, Yafa Aranowitz, Zelda Pulafsky, Toby Silberstein, Doris Shinnars, Jill Gedanken and Jody Bennet. Not pictured: Marge Becker, Elinore Blackman, Lisa Jacknow, Ange Nadel and Sharon Silver.



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<https://naamat.org>

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

naamat@naamat.org

(818) 431-2200

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General fund donations

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support caregivers through their clubs and chapters, personal outreach and community networks. In total, NA'AMAT USA sent \$302,763 for the Emergency Caregiver Relief Fund, Miller said. About \$236,000 was from

their own Seders, to set their own tables, and to celebrate Passover with the dignity they deserve."

NA'AMAT's 125 day care centers closed on Feb. 28, the day Israel and the U.S. launched wide-ranging strikes on Iran, killing the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran responded with attacks on Israel and U.S.-allied

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— NA'AMAT USA President Susan Miller

the endowment fund, which can be used at the board's discretion.

In a Passover message to members, Miller and Executive Director Kim Marks wrote: "When we learned that our sisters in Israel, daycare center caregivers left without wages due to the ongoing war, were facing this holiday season in real hardship, you answered the call. Because of your generosity, emergency stipends are reaching those women in time for them to prepare

states in the Gulf regions. The centers re-opened on April 12 during a ceasefire.

The day care centers serve more than 8,000 children, and tuition covers about 30 percent of the cost of providing care. Most of the 3,000 caregivers at the centers earn minimum wage, which is about \$2,150 per month. Some are single parents, or have husbands serving in the reserves.

While it's important to raise funds for emergencies and for particular

facilities in Israel, a gift to the general fund makes it possible for NA'AMAT USA to use donations where the need is greatest, noted Executive Director Kim Marks. "We need to shift the way donors think about giving," she added.

"When a donor gives to the general fund, the board can pool those donations and put them toward an emergency or to something aligned with our community's values," Marks said. For example, the board is exploring the possibility of funding a second domestic violence shelter in Israel, added Miller.

Deb Kolodner, treasurer and an active member of the Cherry Hill South Jersey chapter, agreed that it's important to make sure that there are funds available to be used at the discretion of the national board. "We, as individuals making decisions about donations, don't know the whole picture of what is needed," she said. Kolodner, who works for the federal government, said she feels a deep connection to NA'AMAT's work for women's rights.

NA'AMAT USA has transmitted \$1.6 million to Israel so far this fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2025), most of which was raised to respond to emergencies such as Operation Rising Lion, the 12-day war with Iran in June 2025 and the caregiver stipends.