

The Military Yeshiva Academy of Israel
BNEI DAVID ELI

Rosh Hashanah 5771 Bulletin Elul 2010



Dedication ceremony for the Post-Army Yeshiva building

At an emotional event that included the memorialization of our fallen alumni, we dedicated the permanent home of the Post-Army Yeshiva. On the afternoon of Lag baOmer, students, alumni and friends of Bnei David arrived along with residents of Eli, to celebrate the dedication of the new building. The event began with the dedication of the five classrooms built in memory of the five Bnei David alumni who fell in recent wars and military operations: Major Benji Hillman, Major Roi Klein and Lieutenant Colonel Emanuel Moreno, who fell in the Second Lebanon War; Captain Yehonatan Netanel, who fell in Operation Cast Lead and Major Eliraz Peretz who fell during a military operation in Gaza. A family member affixed a mezuzah in a short ceremony at each classroom.

Following the dedication of the classrooms, the Torah scrolls were brought from the old Beit Midrash and were accompanied with singing and dancing to the Aron Kodosh in

the new building. The mezuzah at the entrance to the Beit Midrash was affixed by Henry Swieca, and his wife Esther unveiled the sign on the outside of the building, recognizing their donation to the Beit Midrash building.

Rav Eli Sadan, the head of Bnei David Institutions, began his address with the Shehecheyanu blessing and noted that this is the first Beit Midrash in 2,000 years in which all the students are IDF veterans and most continue to serve as commanding officers in the reserves.

"The need to stand facing the pictures of the alumni who fell sanctifying Hashem's name," added Rav Sadan, "requires that each of us live our lives on a different level. These men showed us how to learn Torah."

Mr. Natan Sharansky, chairman of the Jewish Agency, noted that the yeshiva's students were army veterans who "know the time to open a Torah to learn and the time to close it and go to war, and after the



We wish all our students and friends a good and sweet year.

Sometimes there is good that, although it is good, is accompanied by trials and tribulations, but we hope that the Kadosh Baruch Hu will send us good in sweetness and kindness. May we have a year of accomplishments and renewal, a year of prosperity and comfort for us and all Israel.

In appreciation and friendship,
Rav Eli Sadan



Bnei David goes green Re-cycled water system in the Post-Army Yeshiva building

A beautiful garden has been planted around the Post-Army Yeshiva and is watered by a special system installed in the building, for recycling water. The water from all of the sinks and air conditioners is channeled into a "green" filtration system and used to water the garden surrounding the building. We hope to use this model for all the new buildings in Bnei David's campus. ■



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The Post-Army Yeshiva building

war, to return to learning." He added that Bnei David, its students and graduates have become a symbol of heroism and dedication. "You give the whole Jewish people strength," he said.

Rav Shlomo Aviner said that it is not enough to learn Torah; one must also live and uphold it. "The only mitzvah that requires complete devotion is serving in the army, and is therefore the greatest fulfillment of the Torah," said Rav Aviner. "How fortunate we are to have a Beit Midrash for army veterans, who learn Torah and from learning Torah, go to the army, and from their army service, learn Torah better."

Head of Central Command, Avi Mizrahi said, "our generation has merited to be part of the return to Eretz Yisrael and we have



the obligation, each and every one of us, to safeguard this precious trust for future generations, and to pass on the State of Israel, its independence and wholeness from generation to generation." He also expressed his hope that Bnei David be able to open its doors to more and more students.

Shlomit Peretz, the widow of Eliraz Peretz, z"l, related in a film that was screened at the dedication event how the Post-Army Yeshiva had given Eliraz what he wanted most – to learn Torah and emunah. "I am sure that Eliraz is here, seeing this, and is happy," she said.

At the end of the event, thank yous and flowers were given to Rav Eli Sadan's father Mr. Irwin Sadan, the architect who designed the building and continues to volunteer his services for the growth of Bnei David, as well as to all the building planners, supervisors and contractors.

We would like to thank all our friends from Israel and around the world for helping us to reach this exciting moment. Without your support and encouragement we would not have arrived at this special day.

The students of the advanced yeshiva have also benefited from the move from a temporary caravan to the old Post-Army Yeshiva building. We wish all the students success in their studies. May the new Beit Midrash be full of students learning Torah in joy and contentment. ■



The first class of Chai Roi students completes the program and enters the work force

The students of first class of the Chai Roi Institute for Public and Civic Leadership have completed their academic studies and have begun to work in their chosen professions. At the graduation ceremonies the rabbis spoke of the importance of the continuing contribution to the State of Israel through work in the public sector. The program's graduates thanked the rabbis and the supporters whose generosity made the program's success possible. Each student received a diploma and the rabbi's blessings for success. All the speakers emphasized the importance of continuing the connection with the Torah world while they pursue their professional careers. During the past three years the students have combined academic studies at nearby colleges or universities with their Beit Midrash studies in the Post-Army Yeshiva. The students have also participated in special workshops on public and civic leadership and the various aspects of Israeli society. Some of the graduates have already found positions in the public sector and others are still looking for jobs. We wish all our graduates success and hope they will enjoy their work and have a positive influence and continue the path of Bnei David, as men of faith in the practical world. ■

Bnei David institutions begin 5771 -2010 school year with nearly 500 students!

On Wednesday, Rosh Chodesh Elul (August 11) the new school year began at the Bnei David Institutions. There are 130 students in the one-year pre-army mechina program, now in its 23rd year, and over 100 students from last year's mechina class are continuing their studies for several more months before being inducted into the IDF. The new class at the Advanced Yeshiva has more than 30 students this year, bringing the total number of students in the Beit Midrash at the Advanced Yeshiva to over a hundred. The Post-Army Yeshiva will open the school year with over 150 students, including the fourth class of the Chai Roi Institute for Public and Civic Leadership.

The many students from all around the world and from all socioeconomic sectors of the population, including a new student, this year from Washington, D.C. and three from Ethiopian immigrant families, are an illustration of Bnei David's unique position as a major institution in the education of young men to take responsibility in shaping the future of Israel. With the help of our friends in Israel and around the world, Bnei David is once again able to award scholarships to students who would otherwise be unable to afford tuition. The Scholarship Committee considers all requests and awards scholarships to ensure that economic hardship does not prevent anyone from studying at Bnei David. We are grateful to our friends who assist the scholarship fund and to the parents of our alumni who continue to "adopt" and support new Bnei David students. ■

By their death, they bequeathed us life

A few days before Pesach, Bnei David alumnus **Major Eliraz Peretz z"l**, a deputy battalion commander in the Golani Brigade, was killed while leading his soldiers in battle in Gaza. Eliraz lived in HaYovel neighborhood in Eli, with his wife Shlomit and their four children. He studied for two years at the Post-Army Yeshiva, and even after he returned to his career army position, he returned to the Beit Midrash to study Torah whenever he was home on leave. **Eliraz's brother Uriel z"l** was killed in Lebanon and Eliraz followed in his brother's footsteps, enlisting in the Golani brigade, where he, too, was killed in battle.



May his memory be for a blessing!

On March 22, while serving in the army, **Sergeant Dan Schneidman** accompanied a fellow soldier to a medical clinic during a training exercise in the Golan Heights. While returning from the clinic, he was killed in a traffic accident.



May his memory be for a blessing!



Mechana deans visit the Beit HaNasi

Israeli president Shimon Peres invited the deans of all of the mechana programs in Israel to his official residence to express his appreciation and support for the pre-army academies. The President praised the mechana graduates who are making a significant contribution in the IDF and lauded the mechana deans who are working tirelessly to educate Israel's exemplary youth to serve their people and their homeland. ■



"In those days, at this time" Class reunions at Bnei David

With God's blessings the Bnei David family keeps growing from year to year, as one class graduates and a new class begins. As part of our practice of strengthening the ties between Bnei David and our alumni, class reunion Shabbat programs are held throughout the year, mainly for the classes that are serving in the IDF. Now we are planning reunion Shabbat programs for alumni who have not visited Eli since they completed their studies here. During the summer two such reunions were held, for the classes of 1998 and 1999. Each Shabbat reunion was attended by over 40 families who enjoyed the special atmosphere of meeting with friends and rekindling the connection with the ideas Bnei David is spearheading in Israeli society. These Shabbat programs were organized jointly with the alumni, who took care of contacting all their former classmates, while Bnei David arranged everything for the families, including babysitting for the children, so that the parents could enjoy the reunion events. The positive feedback we received from the alumni encourages us to continue planning such reunions for the other classes. There are many other ideas for strengthening our connection with Bnei David alumni, and we are working on making them a reality. ■



"Rejoice, all who love Jerusalem"

As is our custom every year, the mechana students went to Jerusalem for a three-day field trip including Jerusalem Day. They toured all parts of the city and learned its history; participated in the Flag Parade through the capital's streets on Jerusalem Day, and spent Shabbat in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, close to the Kotel. One of the highlights was a walking tour, led by Elyada Bar-Shaul, the expert tour guide who accompanies us each year, in the footsteps of the tzaddik, Rav Aryeh Levin, z"l, the prison rabbi of the Jewish underground members jailed during the British Mandate Period. ■



A facelift for the living areas

Over the past year significant time and energy have been invested in improving the appearance of the caravans where the students live. The students cleaned up the surrounding area and volcanic tufa gravel has been spread in front of the caravans. Over the summer, the students brought in large planters and filled them with flowers. These beautiful splashes of color decorate the front of the caravans and give the living quarters a pleasant and colorful atmosphere.

Institute for Teacher Training visits to the Yemin Orde Youth Village

As part of their studies, the students in Bnei David's teacher training program visited Yemin Orde religious youth village south of Haifa. Yemin Orde's programs serve as a model for the education of immigrant youths from the former Soviet Union, Ethiopia, South America and other countries, and specialize in helping at-risk youth. During their visit, Bnei David's students learned about the great challenge in educating and the advancing youth from various troubled backgrounds. Dr. Chaim Peri, one of the founders of Yemin Orde and its director for 30 years, spoke about the vision behind Yemin Orde and his philosophy of education. Later, Dr. Benny Fisher, the current director of the youth village, spoke about the complex educational and managerial issues that the Youth Village faces today. After touring the youth village and meeting some of the students, the Bnei David students ended their tour with a discussion led by David Konotofski, a Bnei David alumnus from the class of 1994, who is now director of the dormitories at Yemin Orde, who spoke about the religious, values and ethics dilemmas that arise in his work with the students.

The Yemin Orde visit was an important part of Bnei David's teacher training program and offered significant insights into the different student populations the program's graduates will encounter when they take their place among Israel's educators.

The "Lamed Vav Tzaddikim" for the southern dormitory wing

With the increase in student enrollment, Bnei David decided to proceed with building the southern wing of the dormitories. We announced our intention to look for 36 (Lamed Vav) donors who would each give \$10,000, enabling us to complete the project. With Hashem's help, we found partners and successfully raised most of the money needed for this project. After making some minor interior improvements in the plans (which were first drawn up 11 years ago), we began construction. The new plans include a section suitable for students with disabilities. Our contractor, Tzvika Fuchs; completed construction of the wing in 8 months and on Rosh Chodesh Elul, the students moved in. The southern wing has 50 beds and we hope that the students will enjoy the few hours a day they spend in their rooms. Changes in fire safety regulations necessitated the installation of automated sprinklers in all the dormitories. The father of one of our alumni works in this industry and helped us with both the financing and the installation of sprinkler systems in all of the permanent dormitory buildings at a low cost. Now the dorms are safer for all our students. We hope that as work progresses on the planning and development of Bnei David, we will be able to ensure that all the buildings have proper safety and security systems.

The Advanced Yeshiva – Ending one school year and beginning the next

Towards the end of the summer session, the rabbis and students of the Advanced Yeshiva traveled to the Golan Heights, where they enjoyed kayaking and wading in the chilly waters of the Golan rivers. The rabbis and their families spent Shabbat with the students in Moshav Keshet. Rav Yaakov Feigenbaum, director of the mechina in Keshet, addressed the students on Shabbat, and helped them sum up the year from the perspective of the yeshiva and individually.

As soon as Shabbat ended, the students returned to Eli ready to continue their Torah studies in earnest during the weeks prior to the Fast of the Ninth of Av (and the beginning of the three-week summer vacation), to get ready to begin the new school year full of energy and motivation. On Shabbat Parshat Pinchas, at the end of July, a get-acquainted Shabbat program was held for the wonderful group of new students in the Advanced Yeshiva. The students heard Torah insights from Rav Eli Sadan and the Rosh Kollel, Rav Yehuda Sadan. With Hashem's help, this new class of students will join the other Advanced Yeshiva students and the sounds of Torah learning will fill the Beit Midrash.



Baruch Hashem, Bnei David institutions are growing and we have begun planning more permanent buildings. Our goal is to expand the campus around the existing Advanced Yeshiva and Post-Army Yeshiva buildings, with permanent buildings for the mechina, dining hall, kitchen and administration offices.

At present, we are planning the campus grounds and basic layout, and will soon begin detailed plans for the buildings. At the same time, we are preparing for the fundraising necessary to implement these plans. We hope that the planning stage will soon be finished and that we can begin to gather the resources necessary to begin construction.

"Sing to us songs of Zion" – Rav Eli Sadan visits Mizrahi LA

Every year on the Shabbat before Israel's Independence Day, the Los Angeles Mizrahi movement hosts rabbis from Israel who speak at all of the community's synagogues. This year, Rav Eli Sadan was invited, along with Rav Carmel, Rav Cherlow and Rav Yitzchak Neria. Rav Sadan met with students at the YULA School on Friday and on Shabbat. He and Bnei David Director Lior Shtul were the guests of Rabbi Daniel Korobkin and his Hancock Park community. Rav Sadan gave several talks to community members over Shabbat and on Saturday evening there was a panel discussion with all the rabbis. The visit was organized by Mr. Steven Berger, chairman of Mizrahi LA and Bnei David graduate Shlomo Mirvis, now serving as Bnei Akiva and Aliyah shaliach in Los Angeles. Many new friends joined our Bnei David family during that weekend, and one of them decided to make a generous donation toward the completion of the post-Army yeshiva building.



End of the year trip for the class of 2009

The class of 2009, the largest ever since the mechina's founding, completed its first year of studies. About 30 graduates were inducted into the army over the summer, and over 100 are continuing for a second year of studies. The class went on a trip to the north, where they built rafts, decorated the sails with their drawings, and sailed across Lake Kinneret. We wish our new soldiers all the best in the army and those who are returning to the Beit Midrash, a fruitful and successful year of studies.

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