

## Israel Centre Report

### Mancom August 2013

Israel Centre – Johannesburg Office:

Partnership2Gether:

#### **Aliyah2Gether:**

Rachel Reinfeld and Jeff Langford who are both Ex- South Africa and are currently living in Beit Shemesh and Mateh Yehudah Region came to be part of Aliyah2Gether delegation, held in South Africa, in May 2013.

They visited Cape Town 3 -5 June and Johannesburg 5-10 June 2013. Part of the purpose of this mission was to enlighten the South African community, with knowledge of the partnership region and what the partnership does. Their visit was also used as an opportunity for these two Olim to share their personal Aliyah stories with those individuals who are considering embarking on the same journey.

On Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of June was Johannesburg's Youth Event at Bnei akiva, The event was held at the 'Bnei Bayit'. This was especially suitable as Rachel and Jeff who both have very strong Youth Movement backgrounds.

Rachel and Jeff addressed the youth about their respective Aliyahs, and their current lives in Israel.

The youth had a lovely time and asked important questions to Rachel and Jeff.

The event went on late into the night as groups separated to chat with Rachel or Jeff directly about Israel, Beit Shemesh-Mateh Yehudah and Aliyah. The overall result was a successful event where ex-South African Olim were able to connect with the potential youth Olim.

On Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> June was our main event held at Beyachad in Johannesburg. Over 25 people attended this wonderful evening, eager to hear the stories of these two Olim. Both stories were truly inspirational. This evening provided a great opportunity for individuals to learn through the challenges and successes of Jeff and Rachel Aliyah.

During their visit, Jeff and Rachel were interviewed on ChaiFM, and they spoke to students at Yeshiva College Girls High School, Torah Academy Girls and Kind David Linsfield high school.

Jeff had an inspiring Friday night dinner at the Habonim Byit, where he spoke their top leadership, They also engaged with individuals during the kiddush at Sunny Road shul and Ohr Savoy over Shabbat,

It was a successful week, which concluded with the community feeling far more connected to the land and ready to begin their own individual processes.

### **Cycalive:**

The Cycalive mission will happen this year from the 2 August -12 August 2013, The mission will consist of four students from Israel accompanied by a chaperone. The boys are from our Partnership Region beit shemesh. Together with Torah Academy, Pace College and Moletsane High School they cycle together from Johannesburg to Durban. The kids also have the opportunity to learn about the Jewish community of South Africa and its Dynamics of its Youth, when arriving in Durban, the group a tremendous Shabbat with the Durban Community.

### **Artist Delegation:**

This year the Israel centre and Partnership2gether are bring out an multi cultural Environmental Art Delegation. The Delegation will be in South Africa the same time as the Israel Aliyah expo. The group consists of 2 photographers and 2 Environmental friendly artists. The mission will be working with Schools and students, the mission will be happening on the 16 August – 26 August 2013. Our mission to create multi cultural activities with educational Element.

### **Youth Movements**

In total, approximately 1500 channichim took part in the various summer camps in 2012. Over 20 young Jewish Agency shlichim came from Israel to enrich the educational programs at the camps. This group of shlichim included several P2G representatives. These madrichim brought a sense of Israel and an understanding of the Partnership region to the youth movements.

### **Encounter**

Approximately 200 grade 11 students took part in the Israel Encounter tour 2012/2013. This is an intensive 12 day program where the participants tour Israel from top to bottom and visit different educational centers such as universities and yeshiva's. Israel Encounter also allows them to see and feel firsthand the excitement and benefits that they can receive from living and studying in Israel. Whilst on Encounter, these students visited the P2G region where they took part in activities with children of their own age. Some of the students from CT spent a wonderful Shabbat in the P2G region and had the opportunity to bond with their fellow Israelis. Over the past few years we have seen more and more students who have taken part in Encounter making aliyah after high school.

### **Israeli Elections**

In January a great initiative was undertaken by the Israel Centre to connect the South African Jewish community to the Israeli elections. The task was to educate the youth at King David Linksfield, King David Victory Park and Yeshiva as well as the general public about the different parties involved in the elections. Voting stations were held on the day of the elections at Kosher world, Sandton bagel, Sandringham Gardens and Yeshiva College, King David Linksfield, and King David Victory Park. Over 750 people voted in Johannesburg and over 250 people voted in Cape Town. That evening people

filled Mi Vami to hear the results of the mock elections as well as the real elections. The evening began with a speech by Avrom Krengal of the Zionist Federation, and then from Ambassador Dov-Segev Steinberg. The culmination of the South African side of the event was a lucky draw where the winner won a brand new Ipad. This was followed by a live broadcast of the Israeli channel 2 news, where they announced the results of the Israeli elections.

#### Hebrew Café:

Noa Shiponi, Wife of Habonim Shaliam and WZO representative – Yaron Shiponi, has been running an informal Hebrew course at the Israel Centre offices. Sessions took place weekly, on a Wednesday or Thursday evening, with a group of an average size of ten participants. The teaching method was in a conversational style with a focus on vocab improvement and extension. Classes started in February 2013 and pause, for NOA to PG give birth to a second, beautiful baby, in late June.

#### **Zionist Caravan:**

An extremely important element of Zionising in South African is not forgetting out rural brethren! The Zionist Caravan is our answer to the question of what happens to South African Jews who do not live within the mainstream hub of Johannesburg or Cape Town. From Thursday the 18th of April to Wednesday the 24th April Shlichim and representatives of the Israel Centre took to the road (literally) and visited South African Jews from far and wide (well, Durban, Swaziland and the beautiful Garden Route) to bring Eretz Yisroel one step closer to them.

The Johannesburg contingent started their informal education in Durban, on Motzei Shabbat, with Matric high school students. Shlichim ran a program devised for a mature audience, consisting of a brilliantly informative video on Israel called 'Israel Inside'; traditional Mediterranean food was then served at different "stations" for the Matrics to sample; and finally the e-mail ended with a "deap&meaningful" discussion about the State of Israel – resulting in many of the Matrics wanting to serve in the army or spend a year in Israel.

This same program was run on Sunday evening for the Adult contingent of the Durban community, whilst Sunday morning was spent with the youth of Jewish Durban labelling the Human map of Israel – Ori!

En route to their second destination our caravan stopped off in Umhlanga to spread some Zionism around. The new Jewish Day school was visited and kids enjoyed break time with an Israeli twist – mainly in the form of 'Bisli' and 'Bamba' treats.

Swaziland made for a more intimate setting for our JHB team – they were welcomed into a member of the Jewish community's home to enjoy a delicious home cooked meal with six families from the Swaziland Jewish community. Much discussion ensued about Aliyah potential and living in the State of Israel.

Ori Leizer (Betar shaliach) was thrilled to have officially interviewed several people from the three areas for Aliyah, Army service and Masa programs.

During all this excitement, The Cape Town caravan was making its merry way around this Dark Continent to find long lost Jewish Communities and bring Israel to them...

The CPT caravan went along the garden route, in the small Jewish communities - all the way to East London.

This caravan involved: 5 bachurim from the Yeshiva of Cape Town (Dovi Knohl, Daniel Levian, Ido Lifshitz, Avishi Levin and Dotan Farangi), the 2 Bnei Akiva shlichot (Malka Solomont and Shani Yedidovitz), Netzer shlichah (Mor Arbel), the president of WIZO SA (Tamar Lazarus) and Director of the Israel Centre Cape Town: Yaniv Nachmias.

Armed with a 65 minute presentation, called 65 minutes of pride (for 65 years) The Cape Town contingent made its way through the Garden Route. This video involved clips and discussion about various key events in Israel's amazing history. Among the events were: the declaration of independence and Aliyah, 1st Nobel prize, bombing the nuclear reactor in Iraq, 1st time participation in the world cup, winning the Eurovision, Ilan ramon the first Astronaut and much more...

In total this caravan visited 5 communities, having a total of 7 different events: George, Plett, Port Elisabeth, East London and Oudshoorn. The Jewish inhabitants of these remote communities were thrilled to have been visited and "Zionised"!

The Zionist Caravan week makes a huge impact for the people living in these communities who find it very difficult to stay in touch and connected to the greater Jewish Community within South Africa.

### **Project TEN:**

The Jewish Agency for Israel's Project T.E.N. – the Tikkun Empowerment Network is a global effort to harness your good energy, and to make the world a better place.

If :

- Care about social justice
- Are highly motivated and work well in a team
- Are interested in learning about the Jewish values underlying social justice work
- Can communicate effectively, beyond any language you actually speak
- Are available to travel abroad for a period of three months
- Are 20 – 30 years old

Then:

Spend three months volunteering with like-minded peers in one of T.E.N.'s global onsite service learning projects in developing countries. Form lasting bonds with other young Jews from all over the world and from Israel while promoting sustainable development, and your own personal development.

There are 4 centres of the project:

- India (Hyderabad)
- Brazil (Rio de Janeiro)
- Ethiopia (Gondar)
- Israel (Tzfat)

### **Deputy Director of JAFI visits SA:**

In May 2013 The Israel Centre South Africa (both Johannesburg and Cape Town branches) had the privilege of hosting Shey Felber for his 5-day whirlwind visit.

We took Shay through all of the running of the Israel Centre: he met with all staff, got to know us and experienced each element of 'what we do' first hand. Shay was pleased with South Africa's contribution to the Zionist Ambitions of the Jewish Agency and had these parting words:

"We are proud of the work we are doing here in south Africa"  
– Shay Felber, Deputy head of the Jewish Agency

### **Higher Education Expo 2013:**

The options available to post-Matric South African youths, to spend time in Israel, are absolutely mind boggling. Everything from the highest levels of Academic study (at the Technion, Hebrew or Tel Aviv Universities, to name a few) to pure and unadulterated fun in a Gap-Year Program (through MASA, Aartvark or any of the amazing youth movements) can be accessed through The Israel Centre South Africa.

To this end we have just completed hosting our Higher Education and MASA Expo 2013. What a success it was – half our staff were ready to relive their youth and jump onto a plane straight to Eretz Israel.

We were grateful to have three international delegates join us: Kaylee Volpert (New York recruiter of Tel Aviv University), Michael Zollman (3rd year engineering student and representative of the Haifa Technion), and Liron ---- (AardVark gap year representative); as well as many Johannesburg based representatives of Israeli institutions and gap-year programs. Delegates and representatives spent a thrilling week addressing high school students and parents alike at various planned and one-on-one events; informing them of all their options and signing up many an excited teenager to spend a minimum of one year in Israel.

We were thrilled with the results and have faith we'll have less kids returning to SA than those who have left from Israel!

### **Walk the Land 65:**

In honour of Israel's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, and following on the Global Walk being organised by the Afikim Foundation in conjunction with the World Zionist Organization and the Israel Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs, the South African Zionist Federation and the Israel Centre hosted the Walk the Land – Celebrate Life! event, which highlights the contributions that Israel has made to the world, emanating from the profound value that it places upon "LIFE".

Across the world, in diaspora communities from China to Chile, from America to Australia, hundreds of thousands – and perhaps even millions – of Jews have celebrated and will celebrate this significant milestone in the growth and development of an astonishing little country.

On Sunday 2 June, in the beautiful grounds of Huddle Park, the 2 km **Walk the Land** event organised and arranged by the SA Zionist Federation took place from 11h00 till 13h00. In addition to the walk, there was enticing and appealing activities for everyone, especially the children: camel rides; a petting zoo; a martial arts demonstration; live music; a sports zone with facilities for volley ball and soccer; food on sale; a virtual tour of Israel; and a lucky draw of an Apple ipad 4.

### **Zionist Youth Conference**

The WZO and the Israel Centre together with the Jewish Agency Mishlachat led a Zionist Youth Conference in South Africa on 3 March. This was a seminar for young adults between the ages of 18-35. Approximately 60 people took part in this full day session at the Fire and Ice Hotel. Guest speaker Ben Dror Yamini a journalist from Israel attended the seminar to speak about the industry of lies. Many sessions were held throughout the day and ended with a fun party that evening. Participants included people from Johannesburg and Cape Town. Over 15 young adults from CT flew up to JHB to participate in this seminar.

### **Shlichim Seminar**

The Shlichim seminar for 2013 was held from 10-12 March. This seminar brought together all shlichim from across South Africa and was led by Shimon Shamila, Director of the Israel Centre and head of the Jewish Agency Mishlachat. The weekend consisted of a number of sessions in which they could learn from one another. It also provided the time and context for this dynamic group to share their ideas, their goals and their challenges and to speak about the various projects planned for 2013. Special guest, Yehuda Setton, head of long term shlichut at the Jewish Agency joined the Shlichim Seminar for the weekend.

### **Maoz**

The Israel Centre together with the South African Zionist Federation have initiated an educational program called Maoz. Maoz aims to enhance the education of the SA Jewish Community in terms of Zionism. It is crucial, living in a country which is openly anti-Israel that we equip the community with the tools needed to defend and promote our homeland. To date we have had a fortnightly program, run by Ori Leizer, to a group of 20 committed Zionists; a weekly slot at King David Victory Park; and, a three-session program with parents of the King David Linksfield students. Planned for the June, July and August are a series of informative docu-style movie screenings; a program of Shiurim to be hosted for the Charedi community of Johannesburg on the Hallachot around Aliyah as well as an informative curriculum to be presented within various Shuls by key members within said Shuls.

### *Aliyah*

Since November 2012 approximately 110 people have made aliyah. The Israel Centre has seen a large influx of people wanting to making aliyah since January 2013. Figures for 2013 are looking a lot higher than they were in 2012, and we expect more South Africans to have made aliyah by May 2013 than the number of people that made aliyah throughout the whole of 2012. We have also seen more and more young people making aliyah, especially from Cape Town. Aliyah is up a startling 19% in this quarter compared with last year.

### **Israel Quiz**

The Israel Quiz has been launched throughout South Africa. Two new books have been printed for this year's Quiz and have been distributed around South Africa. We encourage all Mancom members to promote this Quiz throughout the community. The first and second rounds of the quiz have taken pace and we are anxiously awaiting the results at the gala event to host the third and final round. The winner will win a trip to Israel!

### **Masa**

The number of individuals from South Africa taking part in Masa programs has continued to increase over the last three years, by 10% every year. We currently have approximately 140 individuals taking part in Masa programs in Israel. Tanya, the Masa representative at the Israel Centre just returned from Israel, where she took part in an extensive week of training. We hope that the numbers will continue to increase in the future.

#### **ISRAEL CENTRE CAPE TOWN:**

Israeli Mock Elections (January) - On January 22nd 2013, the elections for the 19th Knesset took place in Israel. On the exact same day Herzlia High School voted in our own Cape Town "Israeli Elections" event and the results were released on the same day. Prior to the event the Israeli Mishlachat went into every classroom in the High school educating the pupils about the elections process in Israel and the different parties contesting the elections. At the end of each class – the students cast their own ballots for the "Israeli Election".

In the Herzlia elections, unlike the real elections in Israel, Kadima remained the largest party in the Knesset, followed by Likkud-Beitenu.

Tu B'shvat (January) – Activities conducted in the Herzlia Schools in conjunction with SAZF and JNF. Each pupil from the pre-primary and from grade 1-3 learnt about Tu Bishvat, about the different blessing and the fruits of Israel and made a personal flowerpot. Pupils from grades 4-5 made a patches quilt: each pupil received a 12cmX12cm piece of cloth to decorate, and all the pieces were put together to make a colourful quilt.

Mishloach Manot (February) – pupils from Herzlia Constantia primary school made Mishloach Manot for Purim. The mishlochei manot were given to an under privileged school nearby.

Mishlachat Seminar (March) – In March the Shlichim of Cape Town and Johannesburg gathered in Cape Town to meet, get to know each other, discover the unique challenges of Shlichut in South Africa and to plan for the events of the upcoming year. There were special addresses by Yehuda Setton of the Jewish Agency (who flew in from Israel), Naomi Hadar of the IUA-UCF, Stephanie Miller of the IDC and representatives and Directors of the various communal organisations. The seminar included workshops and presentations by each of the Shlichim and there were numerous fun and team building activities. One of the seminars' highlights was going to UCT on the opening day of IAW to strengthen the Israeli tent that was put there and to counter the BDS activities. The Seminar facilitated a greater closeness and working relationship between all the Shlichim.

Yom Hazikaron (April) – The Cape Town Jewish Community commemorated Yom Hazikaron in a communal ceremony on the evening of Sunday 14 April 2013 at the Herzlia High School Hall held by the Israel Centre Cape Town in conjunction with the SAZF Cape Council Youth Council. A large number of people attended the sombre and moving service to show their support for Israel's Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terror. The evening began with the kindling of the Yartzheit candles by relatives of fallen soldiers and Machalniks, followed by Yizkor and Kadish. Israelis told the tragic stories of fallen soldiers who had been their friends, young men taken in the prime of life defending their fellow soldiers and their Homeland, all of whom are heroes but are missed everyday by those beloved family and friends left behind. Members of the Youth Movements and Student Organisations read out poetry and passages written for Fallen Soldiers by loved ones. Those assembled sat in the black draped hall surrounded by words and images

commemorating those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and were moved by the loss and heroism being shared. As the community stood to sing a determined though grave Hatikvah, everyone could not help but feel fierce pride in Israel but immense sadness at the cost to defend her safety.

Yom Hazikaron commemorations were also held for school pupils in the Herzlia High School Hall on Monday 15 April 2013. The Grades 7 through 12 all participated in ceremonies to remember Israel's Fallen Soldiers and terror victims, ensuring that the loss was memorialised in a personal manner.

Yom Haatzmaut (April) – A massive celebration for Israel's 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday was held in the Ratanga Junction theme park in Century City, Cape Town on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013. The fun and rides were enjoyed by children of all ages and the young at heart. There was delicious food of all kinds, lovely crafts and lots of interesting stalls throughout Ratanga for everyone to partake in. Despite some miserable weather with cold wind and rain, the Cape Town Jewish Community came out strongly in support of Israel and to have a fantastic time.

The Israel Centre Cape Town ran a stall offering MASA programmes and other information on Israel while also selling photo magnets. The photo magnets were made with personalised photographs taken of the people which were then put into an Israeli frame and placed on magnets. The reception was enthusiastic from one and all and the personalised Israeli themed magnets were a hit and the perfect way to remember celebrating Israel's 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

The Zionist Caravan (April) – The Cape Town 2013 Zionist Caravan went along the Garden Route to the smaller Jewish Communities in the area and went as far as East London. The aim of the Zionist Caravan is to reconnect with the beautiful side of Israel that isn't necessarily portrayed in some of the media.

The 2013 Caravan included Yaniv Nachmias (Aliyah, Community and Habonim Dror Shaliach), Tamar Lazarus President of WIZO South Africa, two Bnei Akiva Shlichot (Malka Solomont and Shani Yedidovich), Netzer Shlichah (Mor Arbel) and five Bachurim from the Yeshiva of Cape Town (Dovi Knohl, Daniel Levian, Ido Lifshitz, Avishi Levin and Dotan Farangi).

The Caravan visited five communities and had seven exciting different events in George, Plettenberg Bay, Port Elizabeth, Oudtshoorn and East London. This included visiting these small Jewish Communities and Christian Zionists in these cities and towns and an event in Theodor Herzl School in Port Elizabeth. In total the Caravan met with more than 200 people.

Israel Quiz Round 1 (April) – The first round of the Israel Quiz was held at Herzlia High School on the 18th April 2013. Pupils from Herzlia Middle School and Herzlia High School took part. Some participants did sufficiently well to advance to the second round being held in August.

Higher Education Expo (May) – The Israel Centre Cape Town hosted delegates Kaylee Volpert from Tel Aviv University, Liron Milbar representing Aardvark Israel MASA Programme and Micael Zollmann, a South African currently studying at the Technion, representing their Engineering Programme. They met with interested parties on the evening of Thursday 23 May 2013 at Herzlia High School, met with students between exams on Friday 24 May and presented to attendees at a pizza evening held at the Bnei Akiva Bayit.

Aliyah2Gether (June) – Rachel Reinfeld and Jeff Langford came to South Africa in June as part of the 2013 Aliyah2Gether delegation from the Partnership2Gether region of Beit Shemesh-Mateh Yehudah where they both reside. Rachel made Aliyah from Johannesburg and was a former member of Bnei Akiva, while Jeff made Aliyah from Cape Town and was a former member of Habonim Dror.

While in Cape Town Rachel and Jeff participated in several events and activities to strengthen the bonds with the partnership and to explain and promote Aliyah to Israel and the region and give a personal side to the story of making Aliyah from South Africa. An activity was run in Phyllis Jowell Jewish Day School and Herzlia Constantia Primary which are two of the schools which are twinned with other schools in the partnership region – in fact Rachel is a teacher in Haela which is Phyllis Jowell's twin school. The pupils in the partnership school created riddle cards in Hebrew of places in Israel, with clues in Hebrew for the Cape Town pupils to guess the answers. The Cape Town pupils created similar riddle cards in English with either the South African flag, a map of South Africa, Table Mountain, the Cape Peninsula, the Big Five or Nelson Mandela as the answer to their riddle, with accompanying pictures. The pupils had a wonderful time, showed off their creative flair in designing and decorating their riddle cards and cleverness in devising the clues. The end results were impressive and beautiful while these riddles will bring the schools closer together with their twins as the pupils signed the cards they created, meaning a personal connection with whoever receives it.

The flagship event of Aliyah2Gether 2013 was a gathering held at the Bnei Akiva Bayit in Sea Point subtitled "Israel – A Homeland for all Youth", this was especially apt as Rachel and Jeff both have very strong Youth Movement backgrounds. Rachel and Jeff addressed the big crowd about their respective Aliyahs, of their first years in Israel and the current lives they lead. The audience was fascinated by their stories. It was gratifying to see the response of the Jewish Community to these two ex-South Africans and the vast demographic that the audience represented, from those young adults in Youth Movements right up to families with children looking to make a future for themselves in Israel. The atmosphere was friendly and engaging, with delicious pizzas, juice and cool drinks to accompany the interesting information on offer. The attendees had a lovely time and asked many insightful and important questions of Rachel and Jeff. The event went on late into the night as groups separated to chat with Rachel or Jeff directly about Israel, Beit Shemesh-Mateh Yehudah and Aliyah. The overall result was a successful event where ex-South African Olim were able to connect with the Jewish Community of Cape Town.

Rachel and Jeff also addressed the Claremont Hadar branch of Bnoth Zion WIZO. This was an intimate event in which Rachel and Jeff shared their stories with the Hadar Branch members. Most of the Bnoth Zion WIZO members having children and grandchildren in Israel, and were thus able to identify with the stories through their own children and grandchildren's stories. All the event were very successful, and presented not only the beauty of the region, but also the beauty (and sometime complex) sides of Israel through personal touching stories.

Israel Quiz Round 2 (August) – Qualifying students will write the second round of the Israel Quiz on the 1st August 2013 at Herzlia School.

Aliyah Now Expo & P2G Delegation (August) – Delegates representing various organisations will be in Cape Town for the Aliyah NOW Expo from 22 to 25 August 2013, included will be the Jewish Agency, Telfed, various regions in Israel which offer Olim extra benefits, Misrad Haklithah,

Naale, ConnecTLV, real estate agents and more (all to be confirmed). They will present at a communal event and meet with Olim in individual appointments, all of which will be held at the Sephardi Shul Hall in Sea Point. Artists and photographers from the Partnership2Gether region will also be present. They will run activities in the various schools creating "green" art and "green" permanent structures with the students. The photographers will run a photo exhibition and there will be a photographic competition which will be judged by the P2G photographers. Also, all to be confirmed.

Israeli Museum - A "travelling" museum of photos as videos regarding different places in Israel. the museum was shown to all grades 4-6 in all Jewish primary schools in Cape Town. The museum was built of 8 different stations, each one of them represented a city/area in Israel. The kids started with Eilat in the South and "travelled" all through Israel to Mt. Hermon and the Golan heights, watching photos and videos and listening to interesting stories and facts.

Zionising with Photos – together with GIPSY, we've decided to decorate all Herzlia schools with beautiful photos of Israel. Each school choose 10 photos out of hundreds. The photos were printed in A0 size and mounted in an aluminium frames,

Shimon would like to remind everyone that our ultimate goal is to *Zionize* the entire South African community.