

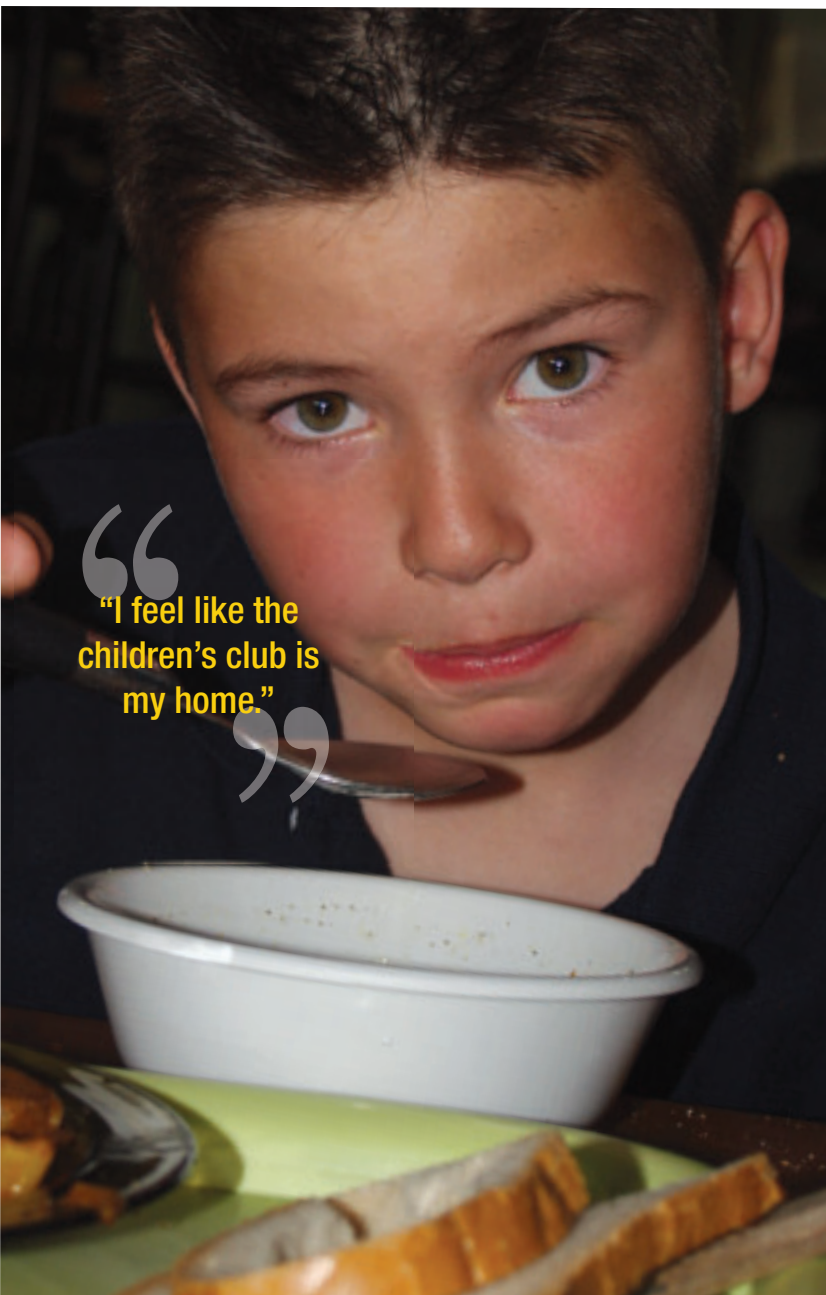
Meir Panim Relief Centers...



Front Line Report

People for People

SPRING 2007



“
“I feel like the children’s club is my home.”
”

Kids at Risk: Prevention that Works

Helna... Batya... Michael... Shira... Avigail...



These are not just any names. These are the names of my students. And there is a story behind every name, behind every child. I stand here on behalf of these children and the other two hundred and fifty students at an elementary school located about thirty miles south of Tel Aviv. I am their principal, Ayala Hagag.

One day, I received a phone call informing me that Michael, whose mother worked long hours cleaning houses, was becoming friendly with local delinquents. I had to find a solution for Michael and the scores of other children in the same situation.

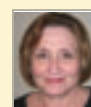
This is the dream that Meir Panim turned into reality: At

the end of the school day, instead of wandering the streets, the children participate in an after-school program where they enjoy educational and recreational activities in a warm, supportive environment. The evening ends with a hot, nutritious dinner provided by Meir Panim. Once a week, we invite parents to join the program, and teach them and their children how to cope with the difficulties in their lives.

Michael has taken part in the new afternoon program for the past three months. He came up to me a few days ago and said, “Ayala, everybody here loves me and takes care of me... I feel like the children’s club is my home.”

Ayala Hagag, in a moving speech given at the Pre-Concert Gala Dinner, January 30, 2007 in Carnegie Hall, New York

Meir Panim welcomes Judy Grossman



Meir Panim is proud to announce a highly valued addition to our dedicated administrative staff: Judy Grossman, our new Director of Development.

Judy Grossman formerly served as Director of The Hebron Fund and is well known both in Israel and abroad as an indefatigable, dynamic and successful fund-raiser for Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. With Judy on board, Meir Panim looks forward to expanding its activities and moving closer towards our ultimate goal of erasing the causes and harsh effects of poverty in every neighborhood in Israel.





Devorah Halberstam, Elsi Levy, Serge and Carol Hoyda



Rabbi Lookstein, Audrey Lookstein, Barry Cooper, Rachel Cooper, Ira Gober, Jennifer Gross, Jonathan Art



Elsi Levy, Arthur Luxenberg, Avi Albrecht, Michael Fromm



Michael Fromm, Dudi Roth, Elsi Levy, Dudi Zilbershlag



Mark Levy, Elsi Levy, Allan Frank

The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra Pays Tribute to Meir Panim

It was a night of elegance and classical music warmed by classic American Jewish philanthropy. On January 30th, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, celebrating its 70th Anniversary, performed in Carnegie Hall in tribute to Meir Panim.

A Gala Benefit Dinner in memory of the late Leon Levy, z"l, prominent philanthropist, preceded the concert. Proceeds of the evening will help complete Meir Panim's \$5.6 million kitchen and food distribution center in Kiryat Gat, where warm, nutritious lunches will be prepared and delivered to 50,000 children every day. The campus will be named in Leon's memory by his wife, Elsi.

Michael Fromm, Chairman of American Friends of Meir Panim, served as Master of Ceremonies. He started the program with an overview of Meir Panim's recent activities, and went on to introduce Elsi Levy, accomplished musician and special friend of Meir Panim and the children of Israel.

Elsi spoke about her late husband and their involvement in Meir Panim's efforts to alleviate the harsh effects of poverty and hunger in Israel. After her talk, David Zilbershlag, Founder of Meir Panim, and David Roth, President, presented her with a beautiful plaque and photo album in recognition and appreciation of her devotion to the children.

Toward the end of a sumptuous meal, Michael introduced Ayala Hagag, principal of a school in Israel that receives daily lunches, and more, from Meir Panim.

A slideshow of her students played in the background as Ayala spoke about her school, her passion and determination evident as she related two moving, true stories demonstrating

the need for every child to enjoy at least one nourishing meal a day, and the need for after-school youth clubs in economically deprived areas.

Hearty applause followed Michael's introduction of Avi Albrecht, renowned cantor and Chairman of Major Events for Meir Panim, described as "the driving force and dynamo behind every major Meir Panim event."

“It was a night of elegance and classical music warmed by Jewish Philanthropy...”

Avi expressed his admiration and gratitude to Arthur Luxenberg for his generosity in dedicating the Meir Panim Kiryat Gat Activity Center in memory of his beloved grandparents, Celia and Jesse Aronson, ob"m.

Avi shared his memories of the Hillcrest Jewish Center in Flushing, New York, where Jesse Aronson was a member of the choir while Leon Levy served as president. Avi presented Arthur with a surprise gift of two beautifully framed sentimental pictures of his grandfather, after which he played a recording of Jesse singing V'liYerushalayim, with Elsi playing in the background. Avi sang along in his warm baritone, and Arthur was visibly moved.

Arthur stepped up to give an impromptu speech about the importance of feeding the hungry, and announced he was doubling his original pledge. He concluded by saying he was honored, and felt lucky, to be a part of Meir Panim's work.



Kiryat Gat Update

The Kiryat Gat facility building is dedicated in honor of Mortimer Zuckerman and his daughter Abigail, who provided a generous starting grant. Mort served as Dinner Chairman, with Malcolm Hoenlein and Elsi Levy as Co-Chairs, at the Gala Benefit Dinner in Carnegie Hall on January 30th.

The building is scheduled for completion sometime in 2008, but David Roth, Presi-

dent of American Friends of Meir Panim, is working tirelessly to finish before the end of 2007. To that end, he has involved Benny Kiryati, former mayor of Tiberias, to help obtain expedited approval of all remaining permits and paperwork.

As soon as the facility is completed, a complete staff will move in and begin producing and packaging meals for 50,000 children every day! This is in addition to

the 11,000 currently prepared and delivered daily by Meals for Children. The new center will also provide occupational rehabilitation for emotionally challenged individuals as well as employment opportunities for local residents – significantly lowering the unemployment rate in the entire area.



American Friends Of
Meir Panim
Relief Centers in Israel

www.meirpanim.org

David Zilbershlag, Founder
David Roth, Director/President
Michael Fromm, Chairman
Chaim Buchinger, Administrative Director
Judy Grossman, Director of Development

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Malcolm Hoenlein
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Meir Panim Relief Centers provide critical food and social services to Israel's needy population, helping to restore their dignity and independence. The largest charity conduit of its kind in the country, Meir Panim currently operates 30 centers in distressed locations statewide. Volunteers from a colorful array of backgrounds work side by side, restoring the traditional sense of community and caring in Israel.

Message from Our President

Shalom and Greetings!



The latest poverty statistics in Israel, released by the National Insurance Institute on January 25th, are grim. But even the shocking

numbers can't tell the heartbreaking day-to-day struggles faced by 1.63 million people, including 775,000 children.

A few weeks ago, in a school located in the economically deprived Negev region (in the south of Israel), the school psychologist paid a visit to the home of a particularly difficult and disruptive young boy.

The psychologist immediately reported back to the principal and related: "I was shocked by what I saw there. It was the saddest place you can imagine. I asked him, "Who makes dinner for you and your brother and sister?" He just looked unhappily at his little sister, Orly. After a moment or two, he said that there was no food to eat at home. He added, "The next time I eat will be tomorrow at noon, when the teacher gives me a sandwich, just like today."

I wondered about this and asked him, "Why only a sandwich? Don't you get a hot lunch at school every day?" He just stood there,

embarrassed, and finally replied, "Every day I save the lunch box for little Orly, my sister, because she's weak and keeps getting sick. The truth is, I'm very hungry all the time."

Upon hearing this story, the principal called Meir Panim and asked for another hot meal every day – a meal for this little boy to eat. Meir Panim agreed without hesitation.

The boy soon began taking an interest in his studies and upon evaluation, was found to be gifted. Now that hunger doesn't rule his life, it's easy to see his special talent in math and computers, and his winning personality.

I have seen firsthand the devastating effects of hunger and destitution on innocent children, and I have seen firsthand the remarkable turnaround brought about by Meir Panim's Meals for Children and After-School Youth Clubs.

Meir Panim is fighting a war against poverty, and every person saved is a victory to be cherished and celebrated.

David Roth, Director/President
American Friends of Meir Panim



Meir Panim Around the World



American News

Beth and Ronnie Stern Host Successful Parlor Meeting

Teaneck and Englewood, New Jersey – Nearly a hundred people gathered at the home of Beth and Ronnie Stern for a live update during the recent war in Israel, delivered by David Zilbershlag and David Roth. Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Dean of The Center for the Jewish Future at Yeshiva University, also spoke, and Hindy Poupko, Yeshiva University Counterpoint Coordinator, showed a moving presentation.



Mira Zeffren, Beth and Ronnie Stern

With the help of the Stern Family and Penny Rabinowitz, the Teaneck and Englewood communities brought the Kiryat Gat mega-kitchen center significantly closer to reality.

Jewish Federation of Somerset Finances Refrigerated Truck

Somerset, New Jersey - A luncheon held at the Fox Hollow Golf Club helped the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren counties Women's Philanthropy Division reach its goal of purchasing a refrigerated truck for Meir Panim. The dedication ceremony is scheduled to take place on March 22nd, 2007 in Jerusalem. Toward the end of her talk, Diane Naar, Executive Director of



the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren, said, "I hope that many community members will actually experience the joy of seeing the goal come true by participating in the dedication of this truck on the Federation mission to Israel in the Spring.

Suburban Torah Center of Livingston, NJ raises \$31,000 for Produce Room in Kiryat Gat

Livingston, New Jersey - Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Ailon Maik and Dr. George Weinberger, who hosted a beautiful Shabbat on behalf of Meir Panim, the Chesed Committee of SSTC selected



David Roth, Dudi Zilbershlag, Ailon Maik

Meir Panim as a recipient organization of their Annual Chesed Campaign for Israel.

David Roth and David Zeffren (husband of Mira Zeffren, Board Member of Am. Friends of Meir Panim), joined them for Shabbat. \$31,000 has already been raised, and this money will fund and dedicate the Produce Refrigeration Room and Administrative Office in the new facility in Kiryat Gat. Mr. Maik presented the check to David Zilbershlag and David Roth during his recent visit to Israel.

“Hoops4soups” raises \$10,000

Aventura, Florida – “Hoops for Soups”, a basketball tournament organized by Joey Cohen, successfully raised \$10,000 for Meir Panim! David Roth, President of American Friends of Meir Panim, attended and spoke at the event, along with Chaim Buchinger, Administrator.



Special thanks to Joey and co-volunteers: Aileen Averbuch, Elliot Corenblum, Dayana Susterman and the entire Susterman Family for their dedication and efforts in making this event possible.

Bar Mitzvah Boy Raises \$1,800 through Candy Sales

Baltimore, Maryland – On a recent trip to Israel, Noah Ferentz and his family volunteered at one of Meir Panim’s kitchens. He was so influenced by the importance of



Paulette Pollack with Noah Ferentz

feeding the children, Noah decided that his Bar Mitzvah project would benefit Meir Panim’s Meals for Children program.

Noah purchased candy which he re-sold to fellow students, and presented the proceeds in the form of a check for \$1,800 to Paulette Pollack, Administrator of Meir Panim’s Baltimore Office. Noah received a Bar Mitzvah plaque in recognition of his incredible efforts on behalf of Israeli children in need.



Israeli Events

Zusman Family Dedicates Relief Center for Underprivileged Israeli Families

A new Relief Center was dedicated in Kiryat Gat by Larry and Lenore Zusman of Columbus, Ohio and Boca Raton, Florida. Known as “Beit Zus-

man”, the Center honors the memory of their parents, Rev. Louis and Mrs. Frieda Zusman and Berthold and Jenny Rothschild.



Lenore and Larry

“Beit Zusman” operates an upscale soup kitchen where hungry adults and children of all ages are able to enjoy a nourishing hot meal. In the afternoon hours, young boys and girls participate in a youth club featuring fun activities set in a warm and healthy environment.

Malcolm Hoenlein and Family Volunteer at Meir Panim Jerusalem

Meir Panim was honored to have Malcolm Hoenlein, Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, volunteer at the



Jerusalem soup kitchen with his children and grandchildren on their visit to Israel for the holiday of Sukkot. The staff and other volunteers at the soup kitchen were much heartened by the Hoenleins’ visit, and Meir Panim extends a warm thanks to each of them. We look forward to welcoming them again on their next visit to Israel. Mr. Hoenlein is a well-known and influential American Jewish activist and an esteemed friend of Meir Panim Relief Centers in Israel. He serves as a member of Meir Panim’s Honorary Executive committee, along with his friend, Mortimer Zuckerman.

Actor Aki Avni charms needy Israeli children

During his recent trip to Israel, the famous actor, TV host and entertainer, Aki Avni, visited the Meir Panim restaurant in Kiryat Gat and the children in the Kiryat Gat and Kiryat Malachi youth clubs. David Roth was in attendance, and the principal of Kiryat Malachi, Ayala Hagag, explained the importance and success of the program to the famous guest, moving him to tears.



The air was charged with emotion and warmth, and everyone enjoyed the lively singing. The children presented the actor with two scrapbooks they prepared to express their love. David Roth later visited Mr. Avni’s home to discuss an event for the benefit of the children of Israel.

This initiative was encouraged by a generous donation from the Asher Dorset Foundation, a steady supporter of the Meir Panim branch in Hazer, which has been serving residents of the region for many years.

Annual Volunteers’ Convention

The annual convention honoring Meir Panim volunteers took place on Monday, 15 Heshvan, the birthday of Meir’ke Zilbershlag, z”l. About 600 volunteers from all over the country were in attendance.



Mr. Simcha Yosifov, Mayor of Or Akiva with a Volunteer

In his conclusive speech, David Zilbershlag praised the dedication of the volunteers from Sderot who exerted themselves every day under the threat of Kassam missiles. He also paid tribute to the Dimona volunteers who came in full force, making the long trip to the north, adding: “I was moved to discover that the date of the convention coincided with the birthday of our son, Meir’ke, in whose name and memory Meir Panim was established. From now on, every year, we - the entire Meir Panim family - will gather on this date.”

Chanukah

Meir Panim organized Chanukah parties around the country, with well over 2,000 children participating. Donuts (sufganiot – in hebrew) were served, and the programs were varied and always exciting, including spirited singing, lively music, and lighting of the Chanukah candles.



Becoming Stronger in the North

The New Center for Complementary Welfare, under the management of Mr. Yaakov Avni, was recently inaugurated in Safed by Meir Panim in partnership with JDC-ESHEL



(The Association for the Planning and Development of Services for the Elderly in Israel). This Center serves the needy residents of Safed and Hazer HaGlilit.

On site is a Meir Panim soup kitchen, a recreation room for seniors, and a youth club offering afternoon activities followed by a warm meal. This year, the memorial service for Meir’ke Zilbershlag, z”l took place in this new branch.

This initiative was encouraged by a generous donation from the Asher Dorset Foundation, a steady supporter of the Meir Panim branch in Hazer, which has been serving residents of the region for many years.

Meir Panim and Be'er-Sova in Beersheba

A new soup kitchen was ceremoniously opened in Beersheba last November, as a joint project between Meir Panim and the Be'er - Sova organization.



This special partnership was formed thanks to the energetic efforts of Ron Harush, director of the Meir Panim operations unit, Yitzchak Brokovitz, deputy manager of Meir Panim, and Hila Pitel, director of Be'er-Sova. The soup kitchen utilizes the elegant dining hall located in the pedestrian mall of Beersheba's old city.

Rabbi Simcha Shtatner of Meitar represented the donors of this special project and spoke on their behalf. Other speakers included local volunteers as well as several diners who expressed their feelings of appreciation for the pleasant and spacious new facility.

A "CounterPoint" Summer For YU Students

Twelve enthusiastic Yeshiva University and Stern College students, along with several talented arts and fashion instructors from the metropolitan New York region, created a very different summer reality for themselves and groups of underprivileged youngsters in impoverished Southern Israeli towns. The students and their talented peers flew to Israel in July as part of the "CounterPoint Israel" program, a joint outreach effort created by Yeshiva University and Meir Panim.



The three-week program included working at a summer camp for teens in Yerucham and participation in Meir Panim's "Rebuilding Communities Project" in Dimona. Shuki Taylor, YU's summer camp coordinator and Nissim Almakayes, the Director of Meir Panim's branch in Dimona worked diligently to produce unique activities that created fascinating cultural and human bonds between these two very different groups of youngsters.

Warming Hearts & Homes In Israel

Strauss-Mehadrin and Meir Panim joined forces in a community outreach campaign that distributed thousands of heaters, warming the hearts and homes of needy families.

A special hotline was publicized on Strauss food products urging consumers to call if they knew of a family in need of a heater for the cold winter.



Dudi Zilbershlag with Ronen Zohar (C) and Uri Mazor (R) of Strauss

Within a few days, the heaters were delivered by Meir Panim volunteers. The Strauss Company also donated thousands of additional heaters to needy families known to Meir Panim.

Renovation and Rehabilitation

A unique furniture workshop has been established in the Power of Giving center in Petach Tikva to provide rehabilitation for the mentally impaired. Participants are taught to repair and redesign furniture, which is then distributed to needy families. This activity is done in conjunction with the Shikum Acher (Alternative Rehabilitation) organization, under the management of Sara Topaz and with the aid of the Foundation for Services for the Disabled - Social Insurance.



Joint Bar Mitzvah

A joint Bar Mitzvah celebration was held at Meir Panim for children from the "Netzach Yisrael" school in Kiryat Malachi and children from the "Tachkemoni" school in Antwerp, Belgium. The celebration was the culmination of a program that began six months earlier at the initiative of Meir Panim.



The high point of the program was the arrival of fifty children from the Tachkemoni School to Israel, where they volunteered at a Meir Panim soup kitchen along with their friends from Kiryat Malachi. A festive event was held afterwards, and the children were blessed by Rabbi Amir Edre'i of Tachkemoni and Mr. Moshe Levkovitz of Meir Panim that they be privileged to increase kindness and to cultivate relationships between communities.

Sewing and Mending in Yokneam

A vocational training course in sewing, mending, and ironing for women from the Ethiopian community is running in Yokneam, helping the women acquire a new



vocation and enabling them to support themselves and their families in dignity. Sewing machines were donated to the branch and repaired by volunteers. The course is given by Rochelle Kravitz of Tivon, who volunteers her time for this worthy cause.

Pesach

Meir Panim will once again host beautiful Pesach seders in hotels, halls and synagogues in 22 cities throughout Israel, for a total of 5,000 people. In addition, 6,000 frozen pre-cooked meals will be delivered to needy adults and families, and 12,000 food packages including matzos, wine, charoses, chocolate, coffee, flour, sugar, pesach cakes, vegetables, and fruit will be prepared and distributed.



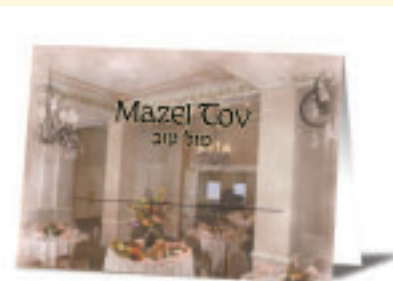
"Keys" to a Good Job

An inaugural ceremony was held recently for "Mafte'ach" (literally "key"), the Center for the Development of Haredi Employment. It is the first of six planned centers to provide professional training, guidance, and job placement for job-seekers in the Haredi population, with a sensitivity to their special needs in terms of work environment and conditions.

The Joint Distribution Committee in Israel is a partner in this project, and supporters include Lenore and Larry Zusman of Ohio, who received a badge of honor as an expression of deep appreciation for their contribution from the Director General of JDC-Israel, Arnon Mantver.



Arnon Mantver of JDC-Israel presenting badge to Lenore and Larry Zusman



Simcha Cards

Enhance the beauty of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Wedding or Special Occasion with personalized seating cards. Your friends will feel honored that a donation has been made in their name, helping Meir Panim feed the hungry in Israel.

To order cards, contact us toll free at:
1.877.736.6283 or email us at: info@meirpanim.org.



Walking the Appalachian Trail for Meir Panim



Texas residents Shlomo and Chava ben Avraham are putting their home and belongings up for sale, resigning from their jobs, and heading east. The couple will walk the 2,173 mile Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine, leaving May 1st and expecting to arrive by October 1st. Their efforts will benefit Meir Panim.

Shlomo and Chava, who are approaching their respective 50th birthdays, felt an urge to do something worthwhile. The Texas Jewish Post quoted Shlomo saying: “We want to make a difference and this seemed like a way to do that, to have meaningful time together and to share an adventure. We both enjoy walking, and when we learned of Meir Panim everything seemed to connect”.

Like Meir Panim, Shlomo and Chava believe that tzedakah can create a bridge of tolerance and understanding among all types of people.

They have already begun intensive training, and plan to walk an average of 16.7 miles each day in order to complete the trail in five months. They will sleep in sleeping bags, in a tent, and hike six days a week, resting on Shabbat.

The couple is hoping, through their walk, to raise \$250,000 to purchase five trucks that are in great need by Meir Panim. For more information and updates, visit the couple’s weblog at www.walkingforisrael.com.

Dear Meir Panim, Shalom!

I am a soldier in the armor corps who was recruited during an emergency draft order for the war. We spent our time in training and on call in the northern region. Throughout an entire week we ate only battle rations from the IDF. However, after a week, we received delicious hot meals from the Meir Panim branch in Hazor HaGlilit ... We really want to thank you for the food which you sent us. It filled our stomachs... and warmed our hearts... Thank you very much for everything and may you merit helping many more needy people and succeeding in all your endeavors!

Gershon, IDF Soldier in Company A, Regiment 702, Armor Corps

“I participated this summer in Meir Panim’s SummerCamp for “underprivileged” kids in Yerucham, Israel thanks to the Meir Panim-Yeshiva University partnership. Your giving and support knows no bounds. Your leaders overflow with warmth. I am honored to have worked with you. Thank you.”

– Shoshana Fruchter
Yeshiva University Student

“..I view my joining Meir Panim as chairman of the community council as a continuation of the battle, using different means – the struggle for quality of life, for our future in a generous, secure, and just Jewish country. ...All members of Israel are responsible for one another, and conscription is for life.”

– Amnon Lipkin-Shahak
Chairman, Community Council

“Meir Panim offers professional, immediate, and effective solutions, while preserving the human dignity of those it helps. Its programs have improved the quality of life for thousands of Israelis, ensuring (their chance for) a brighter future.”

– Dan Gillerman
Ambassador, Permanent Representative
of Israel to the United Nations