



Opening of ILAN "March of Dimes" - Exciting Event at the President of Israel's Residence

Mr. Shimon Peres, President of Israel, honored the handicapped members of ILAN, as well as the volunteers and the workers of ILAN, in a dignified ceremony that was held at this Residence in Jerusalem on Tuesday, 1 April 2008. The ceremony was mainly a salute to the physically disabled soldiers who struggle in order to be recruited to the IDF, and insist on their right to contribute in spite of their difficult handicaps. Some other handicapped young people volunteer in the framework of the National Service, and they were also invited at the ceremony.

Dignitaries were invited, among them Major General Elazar Stern, human resources director in the IDF, Mr. Igal Dimri, Chairman of the "March of Dimes", Mr. Ehud Rassabi, CPA, Chairman of ILAN, and Mr. Shimon Zurieli, Director General of ILAN, as well as many volunteers and workers of ILAN.

President Shimon Peres was very moved to meet handicapped soldiers, and he said: "A society which cannot take care of its physically disabled people is a handicapped society".



Major General Elazar Stern emphasized the great contribution of the handicapped soldiers in fortifying the forces and in employing their tasks in the best way, doing their utmost. Mr. Ehud Rassabi, Chairman of ILAN, said that nowadays, when many youngsters choose to evade the military service, these young people are fighting to bring a different message to the Israeli society.

Mr. Igal Dimri who chose to chair the March and gave a large financial contribution, spoke about his tight connection to the ILAN branch in Beer Sheva. He added that he employs handicapped people in his company, and

they are more enthusiastic and motivated than many healthy people.

Second Lieutenant Jonathan Cohen, a handicapped officer, brought tears into eyes of everyone when he said that "Israel is fighting on two fronts – both external and social, internal. These soldiers achieved the right to serve in the army because of their stubbornness and the help of their families, but also due to the support they receive from ILAN that taught them that "where there's a will there's a way."

Finally, the choir of children from a special education school in Jerusalem sang a number of songs, and Anna Yurovitzky, an handicapped artist from "Beit Miryam" in Haifa, offered the President a painting of his portrait which she had painted herself.

Mr. Peres handed in the check of the presidency to ILAN, thus launching the "March of Dimes" for 2008. The President asked all the Israelis to contribute to ILAN, which assists the handicapped population in achieving their goals, including recruitment in the IDF.

Memorial to Betty Dubiner – the Founder of ILAN

On the 24th of March 2008 afternoon, the ILAN Management held a ceremony in memory of our beloved Founder Mrs. Betty Dubiner. The ceremony was held at the Learning Center bearing her name at the ILAN Sports Center in Ramat Gan. It is one of the numerous enterprises Mrs. Dubiner established for the rehabilitation of the handicapped children hurt by the polio epidemic in the 50's.

The invitees at the ceremony included Mr. Zvi Bar, mayor of Ramat Gan, Mr. Ephraim Raz, one of the first founders and still active volunteer, Mr. Shmuel Hirschfeld, former director of the Sports Center in Ramat Gan, Mr. Gershon Huberman, the first director of the Sports Center in Ramat Gan, Mr. Ehud Rassabi, CPA,

Chairman of ILAN, Mr. Shimon Zurieli, Director General ILAN, Mr. Kobi Ben Aryeh, director of the Sports Center. In addition, the ceremony was attended by veteran volunteers of ILAN, who knew Betty Dubiner personally, as well as many physically disabled people, members of ILAN – "Betty's Children".

Mr. Zvi Bar, mayor of Ramat Gan, held a speech about Betty Dubiner's activities, saying that he was never able to refuse her demands, and therefore, her requests for cooperation with ILAN were always granted by the Ramat Gan municipality. Due to Betty's influence, the Ramat Gan municipality is still committed to the goals of ILAN. For example, the Mayor has struggled to pass the law at the Knesset for reducing the municipal taxes charged from ILAN and other

non profit organizations alike. Mr. Zvi Bar added that he intended to commemorate Mrs. Betty Dubiner in Ramat Gan in an appropriate and dignified way.

Mr. Ehud Rassabi, Chairman of ILAN Board, praised Mrs. Betty Dubiner, although he admitted he had never met her. However, she had influenced all the activities of ILAN, and therefore he felt he could get somewhat acquainted with her through the people who were close to her. As Chairman of Board, Mr. Rassabi promised to continue the activities for the welfare of the handicapped children and to commemorate the name and guidelines of ILAN's founder.

Mrs. Bella Zur, who was hurt by the polio epidemic on the 50's, and today serves in



the City Council of Raanana, said: "I am here today to remind everybody who Betty Dubiner was. I would have liked Betty to forgive all those who could not understand that ILAN was part of her heart and of her soul, and that she could not renounce her activities for us until her last day. I want to convey the huge gratitude of the Polio Children."

Mr. Avi Teshuva, an active member of ILAN, who had been hurt by the polio epidemic, directed the ceremony with much sensitivity, citing from Betty Dubiner's words. When the name of the organization was changed from ILANSHIL to ILAN, she said "the name was shortened, but not the domains of responsibility."

Mr. Gershon Huberman, the first director of the Sports Center, told the audience that when ILAN intended to hold a summer camp for its handicapped children during the first years following the polio epidemic, and the director of one of the schools was addressed with the request for the appropriate location, some parents opposed, frightened that the Children of ILAN will contaminate their healthy children... Betty could not accept that answer, of course, and the summer camp was finally organized by ILAN. Betty was "the eternal locomotive of the great heavy train named ILAN".

Mr. Alon Braude, former Chairman of ILAN, mentioned that he was close to Betty, since she was a good friend of his mother, and she actually almost raised him. As Chairman of ILAN he used to work closely with her and became more acquainted with her activity. He said he then prayed to obtain "a fraction" of the energy of that great woman when she worked for ILAN!

Mrs. Rachel Dissenczik, a neighbor and close



friend of Betty Dubiner wanted to hold a speech spontaneously, as one of the closest persons to her. They had been neighbors in the same building for 45 years. Because of the geographic distance between Betty Dubiner and her family, Rachel and her own family had been like a family for Betty. Aryeh Dissenczik, Rachel's husband, participated in the first "Friends of ILAN" circle, established by Betty and Sam Dubiner, and he contributed to the enlargement and activity of the organization. Rachel added that on Betty's 90th birthday, which she had celebrated with her friends, she mentioned her fear of being forgotten. "Therefore, had Betty known about this ceremony, with the participation of the children of ILAN and members in the various managements of ILAN, and the speech of the Mayor – she would be tranquil now about being remembered and appreciated for her activities".

Rachel added that in spite of the fact that Betty's name is synonymous to ILAN, she was always so energetic that her activities encompassed many other fields as well. For example, Betty helped the State of Israel during the waiting period before the Six Day War in 1967. The leaders of the State asked

her to help with the project of lodging the pilots' families. They had resided until then in the IDF bases, but the bases were considered the potentially first target of bombing by the enemy. Under the supervision of Betty, hotels and recreation residences were evacuated and turned into potential hostels.

In addition, after the decease of her husband, Betty Dubiner completed the project of editing 13 books on different subjects regarding the country and state, and on the issues of medicine, fish, water, agriculture, etc. She employed many experts from various universities, who assisted her, and made sure that the special enterprise will be completed, in addition to her own book. Mrs. Rachel Dissenczik ended her speech by noting that it had been a great honor for her to live next door to such a great personality like Betty Dubiner.

Mr. Shimon Zurieli, Director General of ILAN, adjourned the ceremony with a real story that reflects the unique personality of Betty Dubiner – the story of the shoes of the famous violinist Itzhak Perlman. A few years ago, being invited to the President's Residence by ILAN as a polio victim himself, Itzhak Perlman said that this time he would not play the violin but rather tell about his personal encounter with ILAN. The famous violinist told about his poor family who could not afford the purchase of the specially adapted shoes he needed when he was a child. When Betty Dubiner heard about the problem, she promised the family to obtain for Itzhak the special orthopedic shoes, and she kept her promise. Mr. Zurieli concluded the dignified ceremony with the following words: "Betty could not speak the Hebrew language, but she spoke the universal language of contributing and assisting humanity, and this is her heritage to all of us in ILAN".

Judi Widetzky, member of ILAN Board, passed away

By: Aviva Movshovitz, P.R. Director

About two months ago we were shocked by the passing away of Ms. Judi Widetzky, member of ILAN Board, who had been active as a volunteer in ILAN for many years, both in Israel and abroad. She represented ILAN in many Jewish Communities, mainly in the U.S.A,

but also in other countries, such as Australia and New Zealand. Judy assisted in fund raising activities both among Jewish Federations and various foundations, and she obtained donations from her many friends as well.





» She took part in establishing women's councils in various countries, and those organizations keep sending donations to ILAN on regular basis.

Judi was a straightforward person, always telling what was on her mind and striving for achieving her goals in the best ways for all. In the last General Assembly of ILAN, Judy was already using a wheelchair and had many difficulties due to her severe illness. Her spirit, though, was still high, and she took part willingly in the discussions, and was interested in the activities of the Rehabilitation and Occupational Day Center, where the General Assembly was held.



Judi Widetzky at the General Assembly in Beersheba

My Friend Judi Widetski passed away

BY: Marilyn Flanzbaum

I would like to paraphrase a brief prayer by Rabbi Abraham Karp as a testimonial to and remembrance of Judi Widetski. All her life her ideas had wings but they always had an anchor in reality. The road she traveled was straight and smooth, but always marked by hill which added variety and interest to her journey. While she strived for a peaceful life, in her mind she always grappled with in ideas and in her heart she waged war against cruelty and deceit. She always felt that she could not be satisfied if anyone anywhere suffered from hunger and want. Judi always felt that she was not truly free if one human life was controlled and she was not secure if anywhere on the face of G-d's earth there was a human who feared to lift up her/his eyes in hope or her/his voice in prayer at a location of her/his own choosing. Judi lived her life facing these challenges as a proud, upright and committed woman, a Jewess and an Israeli. We will all remember her with blessings of peace, love and justice for all.

Sal Gal Project - The final games of the Sal Gal (wheelchair basketball)

By: Aviva Movshovitz, P.R. Director

The final games of the Sal Gal (wheelchair basketball) were held on Sunday, the 22nd of June 2008. In those games all players – the physically handicapped and the non-disabled youth – use wheelchairs to move, and there are 2 baskets set at various heights, according to the personal ability. The teams are composed according to a special calculation, taking into consideration the number of non-disabled players and the level of disability of the handicapped ones.

The following teams reached the final games of the league: Rishon Lezion, Hadera, Beersheba, and the team of ILAN sports center in Ramat Gan.

The Sal Gal project is financially supported by ILAN and by the Special Fund of

the Israel National Insurance. ILAN provides its sports facilities, and finances the cost of the trainers and of the professional team, as well as the special adapted transportation for the disabled players, which enables them to go to trainings and competitions.

Triplets are playing in the Ramat Gan team : Adi, who is handicapped, and her sister Orr and brother Tzach who are valid. This exemplary family is emblematic of the importance of this project Sal Gal.

The winning team of these 2007-2008 games is the Hossen team from Beersheba; the "Tigers" of Rishon Lezion arrived at the second position and the "Magic Kids" from Hadera gained the third place.



Using wheelchairs – all are equal



The triplets (from left to right): Tzach, Adi and Orr