

Upper Galilee Panhandle. Youth-at-risk. High unemployment. Struggling families. Dangerously close to the Lebanon border. Unprecedented economic challenges. Limited opportunities.

Imagine yourself in their shoes.



These are tough economic times. Not only in Canada. Our Partnership 2000 region, Israel's Upper Galilee Panhandle, is depending on us to support youth-at-risk programs and desperately needed regional infrastructure. In fact, communities in over 60 countries are counting on help from Federation more than ever before. Last year we sent food parcels and medical supplies to nearly 168,000 impoverished and elderly Jews in the Former Soviet Union—this year the need has only grown. Imagine if you were in their shoes. **Now imagine how much your gift to the Federation Annual Campaign matters.**

Make your gift online at jewishvancouver.com



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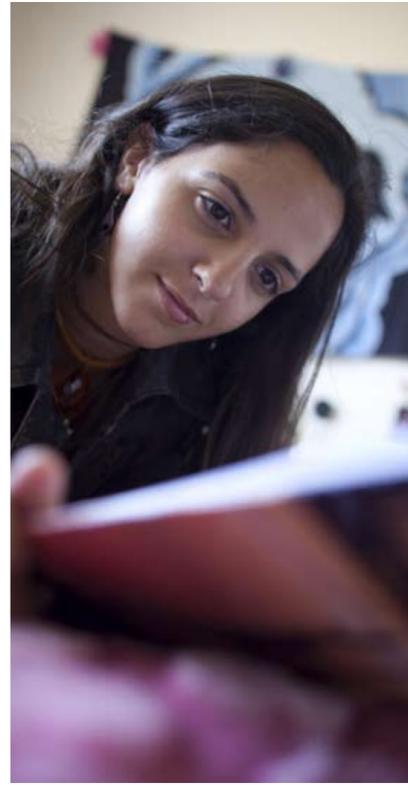
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Your Jewish Community Connection

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Welcome to the Federation Focus, the quarterly supplement about your Jewish Federation, its partner agencies and their impact on Jewish life.

Federation Focus keeps you informed and connected with important issues in our community, ensuring that everyone knows where to find a helping hand and where to extend one.



Brighter Futures for Israel's At-Risk Youth

It is often said that Israel's only natural resource is its people. With help from Federation and its partner agencies, that resource is being supported with education, training and counselling for youth-at-risk—especially in the Upper Galilee Panhandle, Greater Vancouver's partner region. Here are three programs where your Federation dollars are helping build a brighter future:

Net@

"From high-risk to high-tech in Kiryat Shmona" is the motto of the Net@ program—an innovative partnership between Federation, the Jewish Agency for Israel, Israeli non-profit Tapuach and Silicon Valley-based Cisco Systems, Inc. The program's goal is to bridge the digital gap between at-risk teens and their more advantaged peers by providing computer access and training.

The Upper Galilee's proximity to the Lebanon border creates ongoing security and economic issues for residents, and the area's young people have little exposure to the country's thriving high-tech industry other than through Federation-funded programs such as Net@.

Net@'s three year after-school program trains participants as network technicians to design, build and maintain computer networks while learning

to work as part of a team and actively engaging in community service. Upon graduation, the youths currently enrolled will receive internationally recognized CCENT certification as advanced network technicians through program partner Cisco Systems. This opens doors to prestigious technical units of the IDF, higher education and professional opportunities across the high-tech industry.

The Center for Learning Disabilities at Tel Hai University

Many young people with learning disabilities go undiagnosed throughout their school years, but Tel

graduating honours students have struggled with learning disabilities. Professor Amnon, vice president External Affairs and Development at Tel Hai, says "Each one of these students has been called 'lazy,' 'stupid' and 'loser'. At [CLD] our students...realize their potential and view themselves for what they really are: very smart, some even brilliant. More importantly, they conclude that everything is possible in life..."

The assistance provided at the CLD comes at a critical point in these young people's lives, enabling more than 500 students to reach their full potential each year. Equipped with new techniques and skills, virtually all CLD students complete their degrees, and one-third

and leadership experience are often focused around elite populations. Founded with help from Federation, IsraCorps ensures that young people in the country's social and geographic periphery can experience the personal growth and empowerment that come with volunteering—while helping their communities overcome economic and social challenges.

IsraCorps works particularly with marginalized groups, including minorities and youth-at-risk in areas such as the Upper Galilee Panhandle, Greater Vancouver's partner region. After training, volunteers work in fields including immigration absorption,

PROFESSOR AMNON, VP, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS & DEVELOPMENT—TEL HAI UNIVERSITY

"At [CLD] our students...realize their potential and view themselves for what they really are: very smart, some even brilliant."

Hai University's Center for Learning Disabilities (CLD) in the Upper Galilee aims to change that. Funded in part by Federation, the CLD takes a tailored approach to individual students' academic support, and provides counselling to boost their confidence and self-esteem.

During the last nine years, over 18% of Tel Hai's

achieve honours before entering the professional world or continuing with graduate studies.

IsraCorps

Volunteering has always been a core part of Israeli history and identity, but compared to other developed countries, social gaps in Israel are high and volunteer

health care, seniors care, the court system and education. Last year more than 700 young volunteers served in Israel's periphery, more than 70% of whom are from those areas. Before IsraCorps was created, fewer than 10% of young year-long volunteers came from at-risk areas.

Agencies Address Affordable Housing

Everyone complains about the cost of housing on the Lower Mainland, but how many of us have ever faced the real prospect of homelessness? The current economic downturn has only exacerbated the lack of affordable housing and the Jewish community is not exempt. The 2003 report on poverty in the Lower Mainland Jewish community indicated that approximately 14% of the community lives below the poverty line, and waiting lists for affordable housing are growing—especially for families, but also for individuals under

the age of 55. Since the late 1940's, local Jewish organizations have worked to address the housing shortage, including the Lions Gate B'nai Brith Building Society and the Shalom 178 Building Society, named for the Canadian Legion branch that sponsored the Maple Crest Apartments. In 1994, Federation established the Non-Profit Housing Society whose mandate was to identify affordable housing opportunities for the Jewish community. Once appropriate resources were made available, the

society evolved into the Tikva Housing Society which has emerged as a lead player in the development and acquisition of affordable housing. Through this partnership, Tikva has become a player in affordable housing on a provincial level. Their partnership with the provincial crown agency BC Housing provided Tikva with matching funds to supplement gifts from private donors, ultimately enabling them to open Dany Guincher House, their first building for Jewish families and individuals at risk of homelessness.

If Tikva's role is to develop affordable housing units, then Jewish Family Service Agency's (JFSA) role is to help fill them, according to Lisa Ross, the agency's director of basic resources. Seniors have the best chance of being placed as there are simply more available resources. The largest gap is affordable housing for families, and the need is growing.

Ross says that JFSA is seeing people who have never before had to ask for help—and the emotional toll is as real as the financial one: "These clients have never had to deal with [poverty]

before. It is quite a culture shock and they are ashamed to ask for help." Ross says that of 300 active files—which can represent individuals or families—49 were new files opened in the last year. Access to safe and affordable housing is often the key ingredient to getting back on track.

Once families do ask for help, there is no guarantee they will get it due to the shortage of affordable housing within and outside the Jewish community. Ross says that out of 244 people needing housing last year, JFSA was able to place only 58. The rest were left on

waiting lists, in shelters or racking up more debt as they maintained housing beyond their means.

Progress is being made in our community. Working together, Federation, Tikva and JFSA are building capacity and planning strategically, the powerful combination of which is expected to translate into more available units. Tikva is already in the process of purchasing another building, and as the partnership continues to grow it will produce new opportunities to meet the most basic need of safe and secure shelter.

Connecting Richmond's Jewish Seniors

Anyone who has ever watched a loved one cope with isolation and frailty brought on by age knows the importance of seniors maintaining their dignity and connections to the Jewish community. Supported by Federation, Richmond's Kehila Society has partnered with the L'Chaim Adult Care Society to offer a weekly program in a uniquely Jewish context that helps engage seniors by getting them out of the house, connecting them socially, and rooting them in the community.

Geared toward seniors with health problems but who still live at home, the Richmond-based program was started as a pilot project by L'Chaim. It has been serving an average of 12 seniors every week for the past 18 months in a space donated by Courtyard Gardens, a Richmond seniors' residence.

The trained L'Chaim staff organizes sessions to motivate and stimulate seniors from a distinctly Jewish perspective. They celebrate Jewish holidays and life-cycle events, sometimes sharing the festivities with Courtyard Gardens' residents. The programming usually echoes that of the Vancouver L'Chaim group, recently featuring an afternoon devoted to famous Jewish musicians and regularly sharing kosher meals together. That kind of content is important to participants like Jack Stein, an 81-year-old Richmond resident: "There are a number of places I could spend time during the day, but I really appreciate the connection to Judaism and to our community here." Not only are seniors connecting, but the registered nurse who tends to participants often detects health issues earlier

than if they were shut in at home.

The importance of maintaining such a program in Richmond, which is on its way to having the highest concentration of seniors on the Lower Mainland, is underscored by Federation's commitment

the Jewish community is fortunate that Kehila and L'Chaim have partnered to provide this kind of program. In addition to supporting L'Chaim through its Annual Campaign, Federation is working to generate additional sources of funding to ensure the

JACK STEIN, L'CHAIM PARTICIPANT

"There are a number of places I could spend time during the day, but I really appreciate the connection to Judaism and to our community here."

to its continued funding. Vancouver Coastal Health has cut funding to numerous seniors' care programs, and

program continues to run. In partnership with Kehila and L'Chaim, Federation has already secured five



additional months of operating funding from donors to provide a bridge until the next Federation allocations cycle. Moving forward, there will continue

to be a focus on developing additional sources of funding to keep the program running so that seniors can continue to build meaningful Jewish connections.