

ORT AMERICA TIMES

Winter 2017



Naftali Bennett, Israel's Minister of Education

World ORT *Kadima Mada* Launches Google Partnership for Mentor Program

"The project we are launching is a dream come true," said Naftali Bennett, Israel's Minister of Education at a November 16th conference to establish Meet@5, a new program led by the Office of the Prime Minister of Israel and the Ministry of Education in partnership with Google and World ORT *Kadima Mada* (Science Journey). Meet@5 is part of the national effort to increase the number of students in math and science at top level 5 units, being implemented in 125 schools across Israel. It will train outstanding 10th and 11th grade math students to be tutors to middle school students to help them progress in math.

"It brings together all the things we want in education: Hard work, determination, overcoming difficulties, teamwork, giving, responsibility and a sense of competence for the tutor," Bennett added.

Kadima Mada CEO Avi Ganon explained, "This partnership is a breakthrough for the education system. This program is a key to economic independence and equal opportunity in Israel, and leverage to expand the scientific-technological reserve of Israel, which will reduce gaps between the periphery and the center."

In Israel there was a 30% decrease in the number of high school students graduating in level 5 math from 2006-2012, resulting in a "strategic threat to the country," according to Bennett. Last year World ORT *Kadima Mada* launched a project to enhance the knowledge of 200 math teachers to prevent the decline in high school graduates at level 5 math. And although more than 90% of graduates of Israel's engineering facilities achieved level 5 math in high school, the country is not producing enough engineers for its high-tech sectors: 7,000 students are graduating this year.

The Perilous Days of ORT in Iran: A Letter Is Discovered

Mike Amerikaner, the Southern California ORT director, recently inquired about the history of ORT in Iran for an event with the local Iranian-Jewish community. Staff at World ORT found a compelling letter written during the Iranian Revolution by Ms. Parvine Motamed, Director of the ORT school in Teheran, to Joseph Harmatz, then Director General of World ORT. Just after learning of this letter, Mike was at Los Angeles ORT College, where he serendipitously met Ms. Motamed and showed it to her.

The letter of 20 August 1980 details the climate of the Revolution vis-à-vis members of the Teheran Jewish community and the ORT school. Ms. Motamed relates that a group of "Comités" led by a mullah came to the school, looked for documents, tried to occupy the school, and asked many questions of the man responsible for the boys' dormitory. The group wanted to know who was in charge of the extra-curricular program run under the auspices of the Jewish Agency in Iran, where ORT graduates were living and how many went to Israel. She shares that "this is the beginning of the last chapter of ORT's history in Iran" and that "ORT people are leaving both the school and the country one after another."

Ms. Motamed advises, "We must get the Jewish youngsters out of Teheran and prepare them in another place in the world for their future." A remarkable discovery in ORT archives, the letter reflects the tumultuous changes that swept over Iran, the significance of the ORT school, and the fear and upheaval felt by the Iranian-Jewish community.

Education for Life: *We Bring It*

We're proud of all the ways we bring education to a new level for thousands of people around the world, which we highlight in this issue.

Our campaign to benefit the de Gunzburg School - the flagship ORT facility in St. Petersburg, Russia - raised \$312,000 to preserve our important STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) program, ensuring its students can continue to master these subjects and gain educational advantages. The de Gunzburg School is known for its excellence because of this program and the side-by-side Jewish studies curriculum that acquaints young people with their history and culture and celebrates their Jewish identity, made possible by ORT.

We bring quality instruction to seventeen day schools in the FSU and to seven vocational training centers for adults, which offer courses in computer proficiency, project management and other disciplines. Vocational training is also available in seventeen KeshetNet centers, which focus on teaching skills to unemployed and underemployed women to further their job prospects.

In Israel, World ORT Kadima Mada is making great strides in increasing educational opportunities for people of all ages. With the addition of Kfar Silver youth village to the WOKM educational network, more young people in the south can benefit from our forward-thinking teaching methods and state-of-the-art environments that prepare them for higher education and career development.

We are delighted to announce our ORT America Mission to Russia at the end of the summer. We will visit our schools in Moscow and St. Petersburg, see our programs firsthand and meet students and teachers, enjoy historical and cultural sites, and attend exciting events and briefings. Details about this mission can be found on page 5. Please join us.

Thanks to our donors, ORT thrives in meaningful ways that advance the lives of children, youth, young adults, careerists and seniors. We are determined to make this another year of tremendous achievement.

Best regards,



Larry Kadis
National President



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ORT Graduates Inspire Jewish Youth in Russia

Two ORT graduates are project managers of the St. Petersburg *Lehava* (*flame* in Hebrew) leadership program for teens and young adults, which nurtures participation in the local Jewish community. In *Lehava*, participants expand their knowledge of Jewish culture, celebrate Jewish holidays, take part in projects for the community and volunteer in different Jewish organizations.

An alumna of the ORT de Gunzburg School, Leonid Rosenhaus runs a project for young adults under 35, and Rose Lein, alumna of the ORT Moscow Technology School, is in charge of the section for youth ages 11 to 15.

Leonid shares his story. "I started at the de Gunzburg School in first grade. My parents understood it is not only a Jewish school; it provides a high level of education. Our school had computers, smart boards and other technologies, and nothing like that was seen in other schools at that time. We celebrated

Jewish holidays and took part in community life. After graduation my former teacher of Jewish history suggested I attend a Shabbat service at the reform synagogue, and I realized the community is about all of us, and together we must decide how to shape it. This is why I work in *Lehava* and help young adults get active in the Jewish community."

Rose talks about her background. "ORT Moscow Technology School gave me friends, knowledge, a concept of the world and helped shape me. We celebrated Jewish holidays at home, but at school I spent time with other Jews, planned the Hanukkah celebration, went to Shabbaton camps and learned about Jewish traditions. It's been four months since I started running this *Lehava* project, which helps teenagers become familiar with the St. Petersburg Jewish community and start volunteering."



World ORT Launches LEAD Program for Educators



In November, the new World ORT LEAD (Leadership in Education, Administration and Development) program debuted with a seminar for 20 educators from 12 countries. LEAD is a pilot project that addresses management aspects in modern education. "Schools see

ORT as a way to bring the new wave of modern technology and shape them for a better future. And educational management is a significant component of this challenge," Vladimir Dribinskiy, World ORT Chief Program Officer, told LEAD participants in London.

Daniel Tysman, head of the World ORT education department, said, "We're seeking the best ways to support our educators and improve the performance of their schools, colleges and other activities. The LEAD program is aimed at improving efficiency and making sure the schools are more effective in administration, development and educational processes."

World ORT Director General and CEO Shmuel Sisso explained that middle managers are often described as the "engine room" of their organizations, adding, "They lead teams of professionals, transforming the strategy of senior leadership into practice on a daily basis. We hope their participation in LEAD will motivate them and provide the support they need to succeed."

Showcasing ORT Activities in Our Regions

We Set Our Sights High, Thanks to Our Donors

FLORIDA



L-R: Iris Wolf, Ian Howard, Melissa Howard, Allison Halpern, and Leah Siskin

On December 5, Melissa and Ian Howard, Lake Club, and Lakewood Ranch hosted a cocktail reception in honor of Iris Wolf, chief pedagogical officer of World ORT Kadima Mada, who presented an overview of Kadima Mada accomplishments on its 10th anniversary. Funds raised at this event will help further the renovation of a computer lab and science lab in Kfar Hassidim Youth Village in Israel.



The 7th Annual Cocktail Reception L-R: Leah Siskin, Barbara Ross, Allison Halpern, Iris Wolf, Lois Dermer
The 7th Annual Cocktail Reception of the Florida Region, "The Art of Education," to honor and thank the members of the Golden Circle, Diamond Ladder/Major Gifts Society, was held on December 6 at the Blue Gallery. Lois Dermer and Barbara Ross served as co-chairs.

OHIO



Mark and Trish Adler

At the 45th Annual ORT Brunch on October 30th, Trish and Mark Adler received the 2016 Maimonides Award, and Roni Wallace, retiring Ohio Region Director, was honored for her 31 years of service to ORT.



Roni Wallace, Former Director, NE Ohio Region



Tammy Brosse

Over 60 supporters enjoyed the 3rd Annual Mahj and Canasta Night on September 22. "The night helps raise money for the important work ORT does around the world," explained Tammy Brosse.

ATLANTA



L-R: Susan Berkowitz, event Co-Chair; Randy Adler; Judy Stanton, event Co-Chair; and Jay Tenenbaum

Cooking with Chutzpah: At a cooking demonstration by Randy Adler of Pookie Enterprises and Babs Midtown Restaurant, ORT supporters learned about "Cooking with Chutzpah" in Bloomingdales at Lenox Mall.

2016 ORTBuy Online Auction: For its fifth year, the 2016 ORTBuy Online auction raised close to \$25,000 by auctioning over 450 items from gift cards and services to vacation homes and unique experiences.

Mah Jongg Madness: Partnering with local synagogue Congregation Beth Shalom, ORT Atlanta held its second Mah Jongg tournament. Nearly 80 participants advanced through the competition in a quest to become the victor.

LOS ANGELES



L-R: Lighting the Hanukkah candles are Marla Landis, Darlene Mandelstam, Barbara Pine, Mike Amerikaner, Amalia Shiffriss, Charlotte Gussin-Root, Elaine Friedman, Sharon Winston, Sylvia Vein, Gita Schwartz, Edie Goldberg and Donna Stone

On December 7, the Valley/Ventura chapters hosted their 10th annual Hanukkah luncheon at the Sportsmen's Lodge in Studio City. Nearly 100 attendees enjoyed a lovely boutique, raffle, entertainment and dancing and a delicious lunch. Southern California ORT Director Mike Amerikaner offered greetings and Eda Dayan, a Los Angeles ORT College student, spoke about her experience. The successful event raised over \$14,000 for ORT students.



Members of South County and Laguna Woods Chapters

Mike Amerikaner greeted members of the South County ORT chapter at its annual Hanukkah luncheon December 12, where over 50 members enjoyed latkes and sufganiyot and sang Hanukkah songs. This chapter raised over \$20,000 in 2016, earmarked to help save the STEM* program in the ORT de Gunzburg School in St. Petersburg, Russia.

* Science, technology, engineering, math

NORTHEAST



L-R: Marlene Sheena, Marilyn Danesh, Andre Danesh, and David Sheena

The ORT Eastern Massachusetts fall brunch on October 30 at the home of David and Marlene Sheena in Brookline, MA.



L-R: Barbara Siegel, Marcia J. Posner, Naomi Reinharz, Tanea Hammond, Roz Vermut, Sandra Chumsky, Kay Freeman

The Long Island reunion brunch on September 20 at the Whitman Club at the Greens in Melville, NY,



2017 Mission to Russia



Visit ORT schools in Moscow and St. Petersburg and meet with students, parents and staff. Gain an in-depth understanding of the important role ORT plays in Russia.

Enjoy the Hermitage Museum, explore the Summer Palace, walk Red Square, tour a ballet workshop, take the Retrotrain, visit the Jewish Museum, experience Kabbalat Shabbat at Choral Synagogue, and much, much more!**

The land package includes three nights at the St. Petersburg Domina Hotel, four nights at the Moscow Intercontinental Tverskaya Hotel, all breakfasts, five lunches, all dinners, first-class coaches, guides, and all programming.

See the world through the ORT lens:

ORTAmerica.org/Russia2017

***Itinerary subject to change*

Two Leaders in the Financial Industry Honored at Tribute Reception

The Accountants, Attorneys & Financial Services Chapter (AAFS) hosts this annual event

On September 27 at the Prince George Ballroom in New York, the Accountants, Attorneys & Financial Services Chapter (AAFS) recognized Michael Halpern, CohnReznick LLP, recipient of the ORT Community Achievement Award, and Ellen B. Marshall, Capital One Bank, recipient of the Marion G. Wingens Memorial Award. Event chairs were Miriam L. Cohen, Loeb & Loeb LLP and Peter Rosenthal, Rosenthal & Rosenthal, Inc. Co-chairs were Steven J. Mayer, CohnReznick LLP, and Joseph J. Nastri, Capital One Bank.

Chapter Chairperson Saul G. Berkowitz, C-Suite Resources, who introduced the honorees, explained to over 300 attendees that proceeds of the reception were for the Marion G. Wingens Scholarship Fund that benefits students at Bramson ORT College. The principal goal of the AAFS chapter is to enlarge the scholarship fund established in memory of Marion Wingens, one of its founders.



L-R: Saul G. Berkowitz, Ellen B. Marshall, Michael Halpern, Kevin D. Cooper, Angela Nasimova, Dr. David Kanani



L-R: Honoree Michael Halpern and Caryn Halpern



L-R: Honoree Ellen B. Marshall and James M. Flanagan



L-R: Neil J. Bressler, Athina S. Koutsoumadi, Peter Pugliese, Louis G. Barone



L-R: Joseph J. Nastri, Peter Rosenthal, Steven J. Mayer, Miriam L. Cohen, Saul G. Berkowitz, Ellen B. Marshall, Alan Ackbarali, Michael Halpern

Younger Supporters Step Up for ORT

The Next Gen Gala raises funds for programs in Israel

The younger generation stepped out on November 12 for the fourth annual Next Gen Gala at Home Studios in New York. It was a sparkling success, thanks to the efforts of Gala chairs Dan Gomez and Steven Silberman, Next Gen National Chair Jon Lanznar, Next Gen NY Co-Chair Jason Engelstein, the host committee, event sponsors The Bronx Brewery, Orange Theory Fitness and SoulCycle, and all the committed Next Gen members who contributed generously.

Over 140 attendees enjoyed a silent auction of interesting objets d'art and memorabilia contributed by Diamond Resorts International, Mina D. Jewelry, Live with Kelly, Universal Television NBC Studio 8G and other vendors. Proceeds from the Gala were earmarked for two courses offered by the World ORT Kadima Mada YOUiversity after-school center in Nahariya, Israel: Robotics, and Photography for students with special needs.



L-R-Back: Stephanie Halperin, Joshua Teitler, Jason Engelstein, Daniel Gomez, Jared Sais, Daniel Hochler, Morgan Newman. L-R-Front: Roxana Markus, Jonathan Lanznar, Whitney Rose Kemp, Steven Silberman, Naomi Reinharz



L-R: Daniel Gomez, Steven Silberman, Sarah Gilman, Jillian Golden



L-R: Jason Engelstein, Divan Gamaliel





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Teens in Israel Thank Firefighters for Their Efforts

Students from Rabin High School in Kiryat Yam and Hodayot Youth Village, whose schools are part of the World ORT *Kadima Mada* (WOKM) educational network in Israel, provided home-made baked goods to local firefighters to show their appreciation for their hard work extinguishing the recent fires that ravaged much of the country.

Israel Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon accompanied students, parents, and teachers in Kiryat Yam. In addition to an emphasis on academics, in all its programs WOKM reinforces the values of helping others and supporting one's community, and these students are an excellent example of putting that into action.

