Summary of 5776/2016
The “Chibburim” Project has concluded three successful years in Yerucham; it has realized its goal of cultivating talented girls who come from challenging socio-economic backgrounds.
This past year there were ten active pairs: ten Big Sisters from Midreshet Be’er and ten Little Sisters from Midrashiyat Kama (studying in 8th-9th grades). The two institutions worked side by side, and together the school guidance counselor and the project coordinator (Hadas Cassel) collaborated with the students’ parents.

The Little Sisters came from different backgrounds and had a variety of needs and challenges. Each one was paired with a Big Sister based on common talents and areas of interest.
In the beginning of the year we arranged home visits and talked with each Little Sister’s family.
Each Big Sister built a program for her Little Sister that included educational, cultural, social, and emotional elements. Each Big Sister had petty cash to use with discretion to fulfill these goals and dreams. In the same vein, we identified a talent or strength in each student (such as a talent for singing or gift for learning a particular subject) and she was sent to a club or lesson to cultivate this ability. When therapy or learning disability evaluations were indicated- we were able to fulfill the need because of the generous grant.

The Big Sisters had weekly meetings with the project coordinator so they could process their experiences and prepare material for one-on-one meetings. Interspersed throughout the year there were special workshops or group outings to culturally enriching events.

Central achievements
The students took pride in their inclusion in the program and progressed in all predetermined areas. The educational parameters are easily measurable, and there was a definite improvement in their grades. As for the emotional and social components, these we measured based on each student’s subjective experience, along with their parents’ and Big Sister’s reflections on the process. We have touching written reports from both the Big Sisters and Little Sisters which serve as a testament to the program’s success.

Looking forward to the 5777/2017 academic year

**Yerucham** – The three years the project in Yerucham was funded have concluded. Some of the students were able to receive a full three years of continuing support from 7th-9th grade, and some of them only had one or two years of support. Each student reported vast improvement in their personal sense of security and capability. In 5777 most of the Big Sisters maintained contact with their Little Sisters (even though they were serving in the army) and they continue to have a friendly relationship, checking in on their development and welfare. The project coordinator, Hadas, follows through on the Little Sister’s continued progress on a professional level; she has remained on staff in the school and monitors the girls’ growth from the inside.

**Ashdod** – This year we opened an expanded version of “Chibburim” Project in Ashdod, in cooperation with Midrashiyat Amit High School (7th-8th grade) and the new Midershet Be’er that opened there this year. In addition to the individual Big Sister program for select students, we also developed a unique school-wide mentoring program through an experiential Beit Midrash. Run by Tami Biton, the high school students meet with the Be’er students for two hours a week and cover issues of Jewish identity. (Attached is a list of the mentors and mentees.)

**An exemplary program** –
In addition, there have been requests for us to share our experience so that others can learn from us and copy our model. In the Amit network alone two institutions have shown significant interest – the pre-army mechina in Rechovot and a yeshiva high school in Afula.

Thank you very much!