



MATANEL FOUNDATION



ACTIVITY REPORT

School: Mitzpe Ramon Elementary School for Torah and the Environment

Academic Year:2013-2014

Name of the School: Mitzpe Ramon Elementary School for Torah and the Environment

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Academic year of activity: 2013-2014 (5774)

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The First Project: Renovating The Schoolyard

A year ago the school playground was in a stagnant condition as it had not yet been developed. There has been a significant change and the playground has been transformed from an unused and unexploited area into a animated playground with a variety of several lively beauty spots. Without a doubt we are not relating to a purely physical development and improvement project. The process which the students underwent as participants in the planning and designing of the playground was exceptional and touching. According to their age, the students created special flowerbeds, and built a path between the plots (made of stone, cement and gravel). They built a fish pond with their own hands! They assisted in preparing the area for a synthetic lawn which is designated for sports and other activities. It was amazing to see how the students came during their leisure time in order to continue developing the gardens; they requested chores in different gardens, to paint and to repair. In addition, two sites made of wood were built (pergolas) and both of them; provide the possibility of studying in an outside shaded area in the playground. This offers an option of varied and different type of learning apart from inside the classrooms. We also witnessed children (students from the surrounding neighborhood) who do not attend the school, coming in the afternoons to use the diverse facilities in the school playground. We look forward to continuing additional projects on the school's property that need renovation to improve its facade. Our interest is also to integrate the school children into

these planned projects and to activate the students accordingly in the organization of these ventures.

The Second Project: Excellence

During the scholastic year several peak events took place, where the students were required “to withstand various study tasks”, each child according to his capacity and with guidelines from his educator. We witnessed how the student received the appropriate challenge and made the effort to succeed. Due to our love of the land and the environment, we chose to give quality hiking equipment as a gift to those who excelled: quality flash lights, gas burners and outdoor cooking utensils. We saw how much the children expected these prizes and the extent that they valued the thoughts which were behind these prizes. These rewards have goals which are connected to the ideals that educate the students. Likewise, the possibility to offer them long lasting gifts, with a warranty from the supplier in case they are damaged, is something new which gave the children a sense that they are taken into consideration and are loved. This year we decided to continue the sphere of rewards, by a joint thought process that the children will choose their prizes which will continue to connect them to the land of Israel.

The third project: Welfare

Thanks to **Matanel Foundation** the school had the privilege of an additional major tool which changed the thought process our educational team. The ability to respond to families who need welfare, it possible for an educator who detects a problem and sees that a child who doesn't bring his school books, because his parents simply can't afford to pay for them; or the educator may be aware that a child doesn't have a learning or family environment and therefore the educator may present the case to the committee and receive a rapid response.

We saw amazing changes. Here we offer two cases that show how significant this tool truly is:

One of the families that we decided to assist via a donation from the **Matanel Foundation** was in need of basic help for footwear and clothes for all their children. Several of the team members addressed the foundation stating that matter needs to be directed and the family is in treatment with a coach and has a private person accompanying them, from another project which is the school was also involved in. We consulted with him, and he said that it was important not to give coupons to buy clothes

for the family, but rather find an individual that would go shopping with the mother. Since their circumstances are severe and it involves a family of 7 people, an amount of 3,500 nis was allotted to resolve the issue. One of the women from our team volunteered and received a vehicle from us. She drove with the mother on a Thursday to buy all the necessary items. (There is a distance of about an hour drive to Beer Sheva the closest “Big City” to Mitzpe Ramon). In the evening once they had returned, we received a message from the mother who said, “I wanted to say many thanks for the buying the clothes, I greatly appreciate that you took us into consideration. May you be blessed by Hashem who might shower you with a huge amount of prosperity and the right to benevolence that you bestowed upon us”. After which we spoke to the same lady who had driven the mother to the city, she told me she had not disclosed what the budget was, she simply allowed her to buy all the necessities. This freedom was very beneficial for her. She filled the car with everything the family needed, including items for the parents and in the end the cost was far less than the given budget. The excited children waited for their mother outside their home. They were so happy to change their old tattered shoes and receive clothes like everyone else. The lady who had accompanied the mother said the in essence the trip and the ability to bring the purchase home by car (which they of course the family do not have) was as significant for her as the purchase. The good sensation of been taken care of and the essence of making the purchase, as well as all the surrounding details filled her heart completely.

An additional story is about a family who were distraught as a result of their financial situation. After consulting with a social worker who works with the community, we decided to buy the couple the furniture for a new bedroom. It turned out that the parents had been sleeping for many years on two simple mattresses on the floor. The new bedroom caused a change of atmosphere in the home, which is felt until this day. Another factor which helped to improve the home: is that somebody else bought beds for the children which brought light into their home. The children feel significant and their parents believe in themselves. This case taught us to “think outside of the box” and sometimes a specific kind of limited assistance can strengthen the family to draw on their own resources and become autonomous.

350 students have begun studying this year in our school in 21 classrooms, may they multiply.