



**MATANEL FOUNDATION**

**ACTIVITY REPORT**

**Program: Orr Shalom's Constructive Vacations Program:**

**Year: 2012**

Please present your activity report according to the following lines. The whole rapport will not exceed 2 or 3 pages.

Name of the Program: Orr Shalom's Constructive Vacations Program

Year of activity: 2012

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**Give the actually state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):**

Orr Shalom's therapeutic overnight camps remain a critical program. They provide Orr Shalom children living in family group homes from Haifa to Eilat with a safe and supportive environment during vacation time where they can also grow, explore, and build self-confidence while having fun and making new friends. In 2012, an average of 50 children from 7-18 years of age, who cannot safely go home even for a short time participated in the camps. Days at the camp are very structured and include a variety of activities according to five different age groups. In addition to educational, values-based and fun activities run by the counselors and counselors-in-training (older Orr Shalom teens), the children also enjoy stimulating and fun day trips to cultural venues, and hikes with qualified tour guides which enable them to discover Israel's nature, and are part of building a strong, Jewish identity.

**The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.):**

Vacations, that are supposed to be happy times, can be traumatic for children in out-of-home care. In 2012, the camps were held four times during Pesach, August and Sukkot and Chanukah and each time, about 50 children age 7-18 participated. A total of 79 children



benefited from the camps. About half of the children attended all the camps, while the other half attended the camps they needed:

The camps were extremely successful with a team of dedicated counselors, national service girls, night counselors and in some cases even personal counselors for children who require it. The camps are managed by the Camps Manager and Director, a clinical psychologist, with oversight by the Director of the Family Group Homes program.

In summer 2012, we moved the camp location to Kibbutz Amir. We were forced to move from the Kfar Hassidim campus when it was made clear to us after Pesach that Kfar Hassidim was not able to host us in the summer. This came as a surprise to us as we had understood that we would be able to run all four sessions at Kfar Hassidim. After much research and deliberation, we decided to relocate to Kibbutz Amir in the north of Israel, in the Kimama summer camp campus. Moving to Kimama is turning out to be much more than a simple relocation. We have formed a partnership with the team to bring Orr Shalom campers a higher quality camp experience and have a long term commitment.

The campus and facilities offer a huge amount to our Kaytana and the children. The site is excellent as it has a lot of high quality, fun and constructive activities on-site or in walking distance including an active therapeutic horse riding facility and stables. It is a large, green enclosed space, so the children can have more freedom. They use bikes, and cycle around as their means of transportation and during free time they can explore the area with the counselors. After the turbulence of changing sites since the Yemin Orde fire in December 2010, the children and staff are very happy to have a 'permanent' camp home – the children are even able to sleep in the same rooms and the same bed each Kaytana; which makes it like a second home, and this gives them a very positive sense of stability.

The camps are led by the Camps Manager and staffed by a team of 12-13 counselors who are trained and supervised by Orr Shalom. The staff includes experienced counselors, and four Sherut Leumi volunteers who work in our homes during the year and who attend our camps on a rotating basis. In addition, since summer camp 2012, there are also two or three Camp Kimama counselors on staff as activity expert councilors. There is a high staff-child ratio at all camps to guarantee the care and supervision that these children require. This year, as part of a new initiative, the staff was also joined by two teen volunteers who supported the team.

A significant success is that we have managed to retain our staff. The camps are extremely hard work, both physically and emotionally but we managed to retain most of our staff this year which gives amazing consistency and a family feeling to the camps.



In terms of activities, days out included outdoor challenge activities, rope-climbing up mountains, "survival" day in the desert, go-karting, Tel Hai Photography Museum, theater play and workshop, Hamat Gader (hot springs, antiquities and crocodile farm), Yanko Dada art museum in Ein Hod, day in Caeserea country club, trips to water-parks, pedal boats, kayaking, a maze, an ice rink, and hikes in local beauty spots in the surrounding areas.

Activities in the camp included kibbutz animal corner and petting zoo, swimming pool, horse-riding, horse-stabling, workshops in the fields of art, dance, music, arts, science, sports, crafts, juggling a mentalist (one of the finalists of Uri Geller's show), learning about nature, cooking in nature, informal education about Pesach, Sukkot and Chanukah, cooking and baking activities, "round robin" fun activities.

In 2012, the camps continued to make a real and critical impact by providing all the children who needed the service with:

- A safe, structured, educational and enriching environment for who have no other framework during vacation time
- Opportunities to develop valuable social and leadership skills and to encounter new experiences
- Recreational activities to which other normative children have access and enjoy as a matter of course during vacation time.

***One Girl's Story** - This summer, Lisa attended her first camp, having only recently joined Orr Shalom's care. She had been removed from her home following severe abuse and neglect. At the beginning of camp the staff found it very difficult to communicate with her – Lisa had no understanding of boundaries and found it hard to relate to the counselors, as figures of authority. Whenever a counselor would tell her off, even for something minor, Lisa would take it very personally and was convinced that everyone 'hated her!' During the first half of camp, she refused to listen to the counselors and camp rules, and was very aggressive towards everyone.*

*As camp progressed, the staff dedicated time to her and her behavioral issues. She had a lot of one-on-one sessions where the concept of boundaries were explored, and staff made it very clear that she was an important and valued member of the group. The staff also arranged for her to spend time working in the horse stables. This was an important turning point. Lisa loves animals and it gave her some constructive time away from the group. On the last days of camp, Lisa of her own accord organized a special activity for her group. During it she told them that she had really enjoyed camp and that each child and staff member had really touched her and 'entered into her heart.'*

**The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...):**

Evaluation after each camp takes the format of three meetings: 1. The counselors with the Camps Manager. 2. The Camps Manager and the Camps Director 3. The Camps Manager with Kibbutz Amir/Kimama staff.. The conclusions of these meetings are written in a report by the camp's management team, and the camp's staff aims to implement the conclusions in the next camp. The staff is continually looking how to upgrade, examining what worked well and trying to improve what did not.

In addition, the final report includes a comprehensive and confidential report on each child who participated in the camp. These reports are sent to the Orr Shalom house parents and therapeutic staff in the homes in which they live, and form an integral part of the annual therapeutic treatment plan of the child.

Training now includes two training days before each camp for all the counselors including therapeutic training by professionals e.g. how to integrate new children, the importance of boundaries, how to deal with extreme cases as well as time to prepare informal educational activities. There is also a special training day for the national service girls which started this year. In addition, the Camp Director is a clinical psychologist, and he provides consultations on an ongoing basis to all the camp's staff.

This year, due to the Matanel Foundation grant, we were able to increase the number of children who were able to attend the camps to an average of 50 children each camp, the number of children who needed the service.

**Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:**

In 2013, we intend to focus on continuing to improve the quality of the camps. Some issues that we wish to look at include:

- Developing the feeling of "family" at the camp that we started in 2012 i.e. they are part of one large group although they are split into smaller groups according to age;
- Continuing to improve our educational and enrichment activities;
- Professionalizing the staff – discussing important issues, aims, long-term thinking in preparing the team in addition to bringing in professionals who talk about specific issues related to abused children;
- Providing additional support to the counselors

**A summary table specifying the progress in the program since the beginning of the encouragement by the Matanel Foundation according to the main parameters and objectives such as:**

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Pre-Matanel</b>	<b>After Two Years of Matanel</b>
Average number of children served per camp	35 – some children were turned away	50 – the number of children who needed it this year
Informal education activities by counselors	1. Adequate content 2. Larger groups	1. More emphasis on creative educational content 2. Smaller groups to enable personal attention
Day trips out	Fun-based	Fun-based, enrichment-based, education-based, values-based outdoor healthy based
Activities at the camp-site	Less invested	Increased range and quality e.g. "professional" teachers for some activities, swimming pool, animal corner, horseback -riding, each child has a bike
Shabbat	Less invested	More structured with clearer format and more Shabbat content
Camps Director	Social worker	Clinical psychologist
Sherut Leumi staff	No training and not well integrated into staff	Training, more integrated and more specific responsibility
Permanent home	Post Yemin Orde fire uncertainty	Kibbutz Amir is permanent home. The children even sleep in the same beds in each camp.
Professionalizing of staff	Less invested	Training regarding sexual abuse and extreme cases
Volunteers	None	In summer 2012, two Israeli girls volunteered

