MATANEL FOUNDATION

YEAR-END EVALUATION REPORT

Program: Perach Zahav Matanel – Netu’im Ben HaDorot: Between the Generations

Year: 2017-2018

Evaluation Methods:

Last year, we began working with Dr. Aviva Zeltzer-Zubeida, of the AVI CHAI Foundation, to map out Memizrach Shemesh programs and maximize the effectiveness of measuring our impact. This year, we implemented questionnaires at the beginning and end of all of our programs, including the Perach Zahav Matanel-Netu’im Ben HaDorot project. At the beginning of the year, each Netu’im group met to set goals for the year, and held verbal evaluation sessions mid year and at the end of the year to evaluate their success and provide feedback on the program’s progress.

We evaluate our work both during the year and at the end of it, enlisting the help of our steering committee, which meets twice a year. We regularly discuss and reflect upon the influence our programs have on the participants, as well as on the community at large. We check the efficiency and quality of the cooperation between the various partners, and the level of satisfaction of the participants. Each facilitator and regional director involved in the Netu’im program submits written reports every two months. The regional director and the group facilitator met once a month, and discussed supervision and the project’s progress. Once every quarter, the senior KIAH staff evaluates the program. The Perach Zahav Matanel – Netu’im Ben HaDorot project was one of our most successful and meaningful projects held this year.

Overview of Our Qualitative and Quantitative Results:

This year, 2017-2018, the Perach Zahav Matanel – Netu’im Ben HaDorot project had 20 participating students from: Tiberias (3), Nazareth Elite (3), Afula (1), Lod (2), Kiryat Malachi (4), Ofakim (4), and Netanya (3). These students worked with 20 elderly very closely, and in addition ran activities for 159 elderly in local day centers and community centers.

Based on our questionnaires and in-depth verbal evaluations of student participants, they reported high satisfaction from their volunteering in the Perach Zahav Matanel – Netu’im Ben HaDorot project this past year. The students reported feeling a very strong connection to the elderly people with whom they volunteered, and felt that the experience greatly impacted their lives.

In each city, in every corner, there are elderly that we don’t see that suffer from loneliness, and who have no family or friends to visit them regularly. This realization hit the students hard. They imagined their own grandparents in this situation. They talked about how easy it is for them to stay connected to their friends and family
through digital communication, but that the elderly are often technologically challenged, and have no way to communicate with the outside world. The students felt that it was perfectly natural for them to build a bridge between these elderly and the outside world, and yet, the students also found themselves waiting eagerly for every meeting with their adopted “grandparents.”

Two highlights of this program include the group in Netanya, and the group in Nazareth Elite.

- **In Netanya**, three students met with their elderly friends once a week for two and a half hours each time (30 weekly meetings). This included personal help with household chores/dealing with bills or bureaucratic forms, and hearing and writing down the elderly’s stories. In addition to the personal connection, this group of Perach Zahav Matanel – Netu’im Ben HaDorot project in Netanya decided in their secondary circle to volunteer with 16 additional elderly and write down their stories as well. They decided that the focus of this group would be on food – something that holds the Jewish people together and defines their various cultures and traditions, while fostering the connection between the generations. They chose to work with 16 families from various ethnic backgrounds, and learn to cook their family’s recipes. The students wrote down the stories of the elderly, as well as the recipes that the grandmothers’ brought with them from their countries of origin. The students gathered all of the recipes into a recipe book, which will be distributed to the families in a special event held in July, and we expect 70 people to attend, including Netanya’s mayor, Miriam Feirberg Ikar, at her request.

- **In Nazareth Elite**, three Netu’im students guided three elderly participants on a weekly basis (30 weekly meetings of 2.5 hours each meeting). Their meetings included personal accompaniment, help with household tasks, and writing down the elderly participants’ stories. The elderly participants, along with the students, initiated an event entitled, “Memories in the Living Room” in Nazareth Elite. As a result of the relationship created with the students, the elderly gained courage and felt more comfortable sharing their stories with young people and others in their city. In addition to their weekly meetings with the students, all of the Netu’im students in Nazareth Elite visited 35 additional elderly people, who are Holocaust survivors, to provide a listening ear, and help document their stories. The students met with this group at the Day Center in the city five times during the year.

A very emotional event was held on April 11, 2018 with all 35 Holocaust survivors, who participated in the city’s Yom HaShoah memorial ceremony, accompanied by the students. During the ceremony, six survivors from the group went up on the stage and lit torches, each one accompanied by a Netu’im student. Then the students stood by them as the elderly shared their stories with the entire audience of 700 people.
The following are two stories documented by Perach Zahav Matanel – Netu’im Ben HaDorot students in Nazareth Elite:

- **Ilya Feinstein**, one of the elderly participants in the project, speaks only Russian. His story has never been told because of the language barrier. Perach Zahav Matanel – Netu’im Ben HaDorot students, Maria Luchter and Rita Oretsky, who are both Russian-speakers, visited Ilya in his home every week, and listened to his stories. Ilya showed them photographs and documents he had never before showed anyone. He had written a book in Russian, describing his childhood memories during the Holocaust. The students sat with him for hours and hours, and translated his account into Hebrew, and brought it to the “Memories in the Living Room” event at the Young Adults’ Center on Yom HaShoah.

“It is too bad that only once a year people remember the survivors, and make sure to take pictures with them, and everyone makes superfluous speeches that no one listens to. Rita and Maria were the only ones who saw me this year, everyone else checks it off their list and moves on, but Rita and Maria really care about me. Thank you for this program that thinks about us all year long.” – Ilya Feinstein, born in Ukraine

- **Ilana Shemesh** made aliyah from Iraq as a child without her parents in 1956. Ilana was placed in the Ein Shemer transit camp for several months, and then moved to a camp in Petach Tikva for new immigrants. Ilana told the students that on the plane to Israel, the Iraqi authorities stole any jewelry or other valuables from her. In Israel, she and all of the other immigrants had DDT poured on their heads against the spread of lice and disease. Despite these humiliations, Ilana did not give up and worked hard to find a permanent place to live and get an education. She learned to read and write in Hebrew. When she finished high school, she worked as an assistant to a clerk in the Jewish Agency.

After working for five years at the Agency, she used her Arabic skills to help facilitate communications with the Jewish community left in Iraq. She helped bring her parents and extended family to Israel. She eventually studied accounting, and became the head accountant at the Jewish Agency. Ilana was asked to speak at a special evening the students organized to talk about aliyah stories. At the end of her story, the students gave her a certificate of appreciation for participating in the project – all of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren were sitting in the audience, which was very moving for all.

“Through this project for the first time people finally heard about the pain and suffering of the immigrants from Iraq, and yes, the Holocaust also reached there, but no one talks about it. You are doing excellent
work in this program, you care about us, our stories and the history that brought us to live here in Israel today, and in Nazareth Elite.” – Ilana Shemesh, born in Iraq

**Feedback from Participants in the Project:**

From our questionnaires and verbal feedback sessions with the students and elderly, we heard the following:

- “I love her so much. She is amazing. She is like another grandmother for me. Before her grandson got married, I came to visit her and I helped put on her make-up for her and was so happy for her and her family’s simcha.” – Maria Luchter, Nazareth Elite

- “While I was getting to know the elderly woman I volunteered with, we became quickly connected, and everything was great. Then, one day, she told me her aliya story of coming to Israel. How there was nothing here. How much she was a real hero. I am now her biggest fan. I never knew that behind every wrinkle on her face, there is a story so important for all of us to hear.” - Tzlil Biton, Tiberias

- “Well done! All of you ‘lit up’ my mother’s neighborhood. From me and my mama and from the residents of the Yehuda Halevi neighborhood, thank you!” - Etti Ben David, whose elderly mother lit Chanukah candles in Ofakim with Netu’im students

- “Thank you for thinking of us. For seeing that sometimes it is hard for us.” - Rachel Levi, elderly participant, Kiryat Malachi

- “The students were amazing and volunteered with their whole hearts. Thank you for everything, for the warm hugs, for remembering the small details, for the gifts, for bringing smiles to the faces of our grandparents.” – The management and staff of the Elderly Day Center in Kiryat Malachi

Irit Rosh Shitrit, the Director of Memizrach Shemesh, who was the direct supervisor of this program, was surprised and impressed with the commitment of the students in this project, who found every opportunity to volunteer above and beyond what was expected of them. On their own, they initiated meetings with groups of elderly to hear their stories, to celebrate the Jewish holidays with them, and to bring happiness, hugs, and a listening ear to over 159 elderly throughout the country.

Usually in the Netu’im program, our community projects are group-oriented. The Perach Zahav Matanet-Netu’im Ben HaDorot project was more one-on-one. And still, even though students looked forward to their individual meetings with each elderly person, the students were inspired by this program to reach out to more. Students insisted on widening the circle, and met with groups of elderly in various venues to hear and write down their stories, as well.

This program proved very successful. The feedback we received from the elderly participants was very moving. We heard stories from the elderly that were both
inspiring, touching, and even heartbreaking. There was one elderly woman who described how she would wait so impatiently for her four-o-clock tea time with her student, without whom it wasn’t the same tea, and was not the same flavor. Another elderly person told us how frightened he was when he would receive letters in the mailbox, because he didn’t understand the bureaucratic jargon in the letters he received from Bituach Leumi or the Municipality. Since his student started visiting, he feels more relaxed and knows that he can always ask for help, and his student will make sure he understands everything.

In addition to their volunteer hours, the students received ongoing guidance and supervision, and participated in several training sessions with experts on the needs of the elderly, which assisted them in better understanding the needs of their elderly friends, and also contributed, to the overall success of the program.