



Matanel - “Hibburim” Project

Connect, Dream, Soar

Our philosophy:

“If you give a man a fish you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

To truly be integrative, a school must constantly work to bridge gaps and provide equal opportunity. Beyond the financial support it must provide for students from lower socio-economic classes, each student must also be empowered personally, ethically, culturally, and academically, each one according to her potential, talents, and background.

The point of the “Hibburim” project is to provide each of the students who participate with comprehensive, wide-ranging support. We remove some of the financial obstacles in her way so she can dedicate herself to her studies and projects. Additionally, we empower her so she can develop her potential and talents and confront any educational or social challenges she faces. At the same time, she is expected to contribute to the community and be involved socially- since we believe that those who receive kindness also have a lot to contribute.

Participants in the program:

Midrashiyat Amit Kama- The “Little Sisters” (aged 12-18)

Midrashiyat Amit Kama is a unique high school for girls located in Yerucham that draws students from all over the Negev region. It is both a prestigious school and also an integrative one that accepts every student who wants to study there. It focuses on empowering each student as an individual. Midrashiyat Kama is at the forefront of innovative pedagogical methods, investigative learning, and social involvement.

Midreshet Amit Be'er- The “Big Sisters” (aged 18-21)

Midreshet Amit Be'er is a post high school program that brings young women from all over Israel to Yerucham to combine rigorous study of Jewish texts

with educational and social entrepreneurship in the community. The students then continue on to complete a full and meaningful term of service for the IDF.

The relationship between the “Big Sister” and “Little Sister”

Beyond any formal obligations, the students from Midreshet Be'er serve as role models to the high school students from Midrashiyat Kama. These young women have chosen to give of themselves to the community and dedicate themselves to Torah study. The Be'er students learn Torah with the girls from Kama, they run social events, volunteer as tutors, and coordinate community projects.

The “Hibburim” Project

Every year five students finishing 6th grade are chosen to join the program which is designed to provide them with support and empower them throughout their years in middle school, high school, the IDF or national service, and on to a higher education. This educational “package” includes personal guidance designed to empower them and help them grow as individuals within the context of their home and community. Instead of taking these girls out of their homes, their parents and communities are included as partners in the process. The girls study in Midrashiyat Amit Kama, participate in a regional leadership program, and volunteer in their communities.

*The program keeps growing- every year an additional group of five 7th grade girls begins, while the girls who are already in the program continue.

The multi-year program includes:

- High school tuition covered by a full scholarship
- Money for school books, trips, a home computer (when necessary), travel expenses (when necessary)
- Advisor/“Big Sister,” including occasional home visits
- Support and guidance for her community volunteering project
- Regular private tutoring sessions/enrichment programs (based on her personal strengths and challenges)
- Academic guidance writing research and final papers in high school.
- Help finding an empowering position in the IDF or national service
- Maintenance of the personal relationship throughout their service
- Academic guidance navigating opportunities for a higher education
- Support for the family (when necessary)



Identifying suitable candidates:

The principals of the elementary schools in Yerucham and its environs recommend two to three suitable girls from the 6th grade. These girls come from a socio-economic background that does not provide them with much opportunity, and yet they have demonstrated that they possess distinct academic potential and strong personal motivation. The candidates and their parents are invited for a visit so they can learn about the program and we can see how they interact with the group, and get to know them better through interviews with the girl and her parents. The family's cooperation and support are vital components in the program's success.

The long term program

Throughout their studies the girls receive a wide range of personally tailored support and guidance. The student, her parents, and her homeroom teacher work alongside the "Hibburim" program coordinator to put this "package" together. When necessary the school guidance counselor is involved as well.

Each student is given a "Big Sister" from Midreshet Be'er who helps her with school in general, and specifically in the areas she has chosen to focus on. The "Big Sisters" meet with their "Little Sisters" twice a week; sometimes they go out to enrichment activities (to the theater, a concert, the library, a museum, coffee shop, etc.). The students are also allowed to choose a regular club or enrichment activity so that each one can develop her strengths in an area that interests her (such as: voice lessons, scout troops, robotics, guitar, emotional therapy).

Evaluating success:

In the current stage success is evaluated by:

- Monitoring academic progress based on grades and learning skills
- "Little Sister's" commitment to consistently attend meetings with her "Big Sister" and her enrichment activities
- Volunteering in her community in a meaningful capacity with her "Big Sister"

Long term goals for the participants include:

- Competitive scores on her matriculation exams, including a research project
- Meaningful national service and guidance towards higher education
- Social leadership and community entrepreneurship

Unique features and proposals:

1. The participation of the parents and families in the process
The goal is not to remove the girl from her home, but rather to reinforce her relationship with her home. To this end the program includes home visits, the parents are included throughout the decision making process,

and they share in the girl's successes and challenges. In addition, the student volunteers within her community and does research projects on topics culturally relevant to her.

2. The "Little Sister" is matched with a "Big Sister" that has similar interests and talents, which strengthens their connection, cooperation, and motivation, and provides a greater potential for modeling.

3. In 12th grade, after five years of being a "Little Sister" the student herself will become a "Big Sister" for a new student just starting the program in 7th grade, so that she can appreciate the resources that were invested in her success and pay it forward, back into the community.