

MATANEL FOUNDATION

YEAR-END ACTIVITY REPORT

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

Year: 2019-2020

Please present your activity report according to the following lines. The whole report will not exceed 2 or 3 pages (as word document):

Name of the Program: Perach Zahav Matanel - Netu'im Ben HaDorot: Between the Generations

Year of Activity: 2019-2020

Name of the Report's Writer: Debbie Snyder-Eliraz

Function of the Report's Writer: Resource Development Coordinator

Mail: Debbie@kiah.org.il

Phone: 052.541.9468

Website / Facebook address of the organization: www.kiah.org.il

Number of active participants in the program: 24 students

No.	Name of Participant (North)	Netu'im City
1.	Bat-El Mashayev	Migdal HaEmek
2.	Itai Cohen	Hatzor
3.	Rahamim Yosefi	Hatzor
4.	Yagel Malka	Tzfat
5.	Ilana Solodky	Nahariya
6.	Shira Noach	Nahariya
7.	Eden Peri	Tiberias
8.	Bar Achitov	Tiberias
9.	Shelly Elmalem	Tiberias
10.	Daniel Maman	Tiberias
11.	Yossi Peter	Netanya
12.	Priyel Marciano	Bat Yam
13.	Shai Krasanti	Bat Yam
14.	Oren Michaeli	Bat Yam
15.	Yair Nissim	Bat Yam
16.	Shel Cohen	Bat Yam
17.	Shir Biton	Netivot
18.	Roni Buzaglo	Netivot
19.	Lior Yifrach	Netivot
20.	Hagit Damari	Dimona
21.	Rotem Bluchman	Dimona
22.	Shlomit Zaguri	Dimona
23.	Gefen Ben Pazi	Dimona
24.	Mor Knafo	Dimona

Estimated number of impacted participants: 24 students and 24 elderly participants (primary circle); hundreds of elderly who received care packages of food

and medicine from the students, as well as phone calls checking how they were doing during the Corona crisis (secondary circle).

Overview:

The **Perach Zahav Matanel - Netu'im Ben HaDorot: Between the Generations Project** recruited 24 students during the months of October-December 2019 in 9 communities in the socio-geographic periphery: Migdal HaEmek, Hatzor, Tzfat, Nahariya, and Tiberias in the North; Netanya and Bat Yam in the Center; Netivot and Dimona in the South. During the months of December 2019 – January 2020, students solidified their groups, built group dynamics, envisioned and planned their community projects, and outreached to local welfare departments and old age homes to identify homebound elderly.

Students met regularly with the elderly (20-30 meetings, 2-3 hours weekly) to help with household chores, teach them how to use the Internet to access their rights from Bituach Leumi (National Insurance), and collect and write down their stories, recipes, and memories.

In addition to the 75 hours of volunteer hours with the elderly, the students received additional hours of training on how to talk with the elderly, and about the challenges facing the elderly in Israeli society.

There were also several changes mid-year. Several students left the program, so they were replaced with others in their cities. While they continued their meaningful work with the elderly in the local Home for the Aged, the group in Arad did not succeed in pairing up with local elderly one-on-one. Instead, a group of students in Bat Yam succeeded in pairing with several local elderly for the year.

From the moment that the Corona crisis began in Israel, and with the closing of universities and local colleges, the students from all of our groups immediately volunteered to help. They were in touch with local welfare departments, filling packages of food and medicine, and delivering them to the needy. They called hundreds of elderly to find out how they were doing, reducing their feelings of loneliness and isolation. Over the past few months, students have delivered packages to approximately 3,500 elderly throughout the country. The students' overwhelming response to the crisis in meeting the needs of the elderly has shown the incredible potential of these young leaders for their communities.

The following are highlights of our activities over the past year:

Migdal Ha'Emek

Student **Bat El Mashayev** met with 81-year-old Terry Gershomov. At the beginning of the year, Terry was very shy and slow to open up. However, as the year progressed and they got to know each other, she began to trust Bat-El and their connection deepened. One of the most significant things that they did together was writing Terry's life story together. In the booklet, they drew a timeline, where they wrote down significant events/dates in Terry's life. Bat-El also taught Terry how to use her

Smartphone. During the Corona crisis, Bat-El and Terry were not able to meet face-to-face, but they continued talking on the phone. Each time Bat-El called her, Terry was so happy to hear her voice, and was calling to make sure that she was okay. At the beginning of June, they started meeting again. Bat-El shares, “My connection with Terry was really strong and important to both of us. Now, it is the end of the project, and we have to say goodbye, but Terry wants another student to come next year, so that she can have this special connection and meet someone new.”

Hatzor

Student **Itai Cohen** met with 80-year-old Albert Gabbai, who suffered a stroke ten years ago, and has difficulty speaking. With the help of a paramedical team at the local Elderly Day Center, Itai built a series of meetings designed to meet Albert’s needs. Itai learned that Albert loves history, so Itai made sure that each meeting he showed him short videos about history and current events. Through their meetings, Itai succeeded in encouraging Albert to speak to him, and helped him improve his speech and pronunciation.

During the Corona closure, Itai continued to visit Albert and brought him food. He prepared videos that Albert’s daughter, Vered, showed him, in order to alleviate the boredom during this difficult time. Vered later told Itai how moved she was by their connection, and that the meetings with Itai were so important for her father that he waited for them excitedly each week. She was worried that during the closure their meetings would stop, but Itai kept in touch. Itai and Albert planned their final meeting at the Elderly Center in Hatzor, where they presented a short video of the historical material they had learned together related to Albert’s life.

Student **Rachamim Yosefi** met with 78-year-old Samuel Lalush, who suffers from schizophrenia. Samuel is religious, and is very connected to Jewish learning, so Rachamim would bring texts to learn together with Samuel each week. Samuel, who does not have many friends or community because of his illness, was at first hesitant to meet with a student, but Rachamim found a way, and patiently created trust between them. Samuel calls Rachamim his “Havruta” or study partner, and Rachamim says that for him the connection with Samuel was is a gift for him and that he learns new things from Samuel each time they learn together. During the closure, they even studied together through Zoom!

Tzfat

Law student **Yagel Malka** volunteered with Avraham Page after meeting him at the nearby synagogue. Each week, Yagel goes grocery shopping for Avraham, and visits him on Saturdays to hear his stories. Avraham loves to talk about history, and shares with Yagel his love for the Jewish traditions, and love for Eretz Israel. During the Corona crisis, Yagel went to sleep at Avraham’s house once a week every Tuesday, because Avraham lives alone and has no family, and Yagel didn’t want him to feel lonely. The special connection has moved beyond Yagel’s commitment to the project, and they continue to meet on a regular basis.

Nahariya

Student **Shira Noach** met with Shula Farhi during the year. In their meetings, Shula shared her photo albums, and Shira began writing down Shula's stories. Shula loves to cook and bake, and so Shula and Shira often baked cookies and croissants together. Shira said: "Our conversations focused on Shula's past, her aliyah from Morocco, and her absorption in Israel, her childhood, and how all this influenced her life." Shira says that she learned a lot from Shula's unique perspective on life."

Student **Ilana Solodky** met with 85-year-old Luna Ohayon at Luna's house each week, and talked about their daily lives. Ilana helped Luna deal with technological challenges like contacting Bituach Leumi (National Insurance). Before the closure, they also went out together to cafés, and for short walks around the neighborhood. During the Corona crisis, they continued to meet at Luna's home, and Luna taught Ilana how to make her favorite recipes. They talked and watched movies together. Luna said: "Being with Ilana helped me get through the closure."

Tiberias

Student **Eden Peri** met with 84-year-old Ida Simoni, who was born in Morocco. Ida moved to Israel when she was 20 years old, when she was already married with three children. During their meetings, Eden would come to Ida's house, and they would talk and cook together. Eden helped Ida clean her house. Ida told Eden about her childhood, and what Tiberias was like when she first arrived there. During the closure, they could not meet, but Eden called her regularly, and each week she would buy groceries for Shabbat and deliver them to Ida.

Student **Daniel Maman** met with Mordechai Kari every Friday. Daniel would bring him something yummy to eat from the nearby bakery, and they would sit and talk. During the Corona crisis, Daniel stayed in touch with Mordechai regularly by phone. In addition to meeting with Mordechai, Daniel worked with elderly in his neighborhood – lighting candles on Chanukah with local elderly, delivering plants on Tu B'Shevat, and Mishlochei Manot on Purim. Daniel believes it is very important to maintain the connection with the founding generation in Tiberias: "Through my work with the elderly, I have learned to appreciate their contribution and life stories. We have a lot to learn from them. I am very thankful to the Matanel Foundation for giving me this scholarship, so that I could participate in this amazing project."

Student **Bar Achitov** met with Yosef Gorga each week, and helped him with his daily chores. Bar said: "Working with Yosef and delivering much-needed food and supplies to the elderly in my community helped me gain a new perspective and "grow up" a little. It reminded me to keep things in proportion in my daily life, and to remember that there are always people who need your help, and a small gesture could mean the entire world to them. Yosef told me that our meetings brought him light during a very dark time."

Student **Shelly Elmalem** met with Sefi Bracha during the year. She helped Sefi with her errands and grocery shopping, and they used to walk together in the

neighborhood. During the closure, Shelly brought Sefi her medicines, and they continued to talk over the phone. Shelly shared: “When we said goodbye at the end of the year, Sefi told me that I was important to her, and she thanked me and said that this program fulfilled the mitzvah of “Vehadarta Pnei Zaken” in the Bible – ‘Venerate your elders.’ I learned so much from her, and I matured a lot because of the responsibility I felt to take care of her.”

Netanya

Student **Yossi Peter** met with Shlomo Abu in his home every week. Together, they talked about the news, and Shlomo’s family history. They played board games, and sometimes went out for walks together. During the closure, out of concern for Shlomo’s health, Yossi didn’t visit, but continued their conversations over the phone. Yossi said: “Shlomo’s wife told me that Shlomo has a hard time opening up to people, and he doesn’t have many friends. The fact that I came to visit and kept in touch on a regular basis meant so much to him.” Yossi has decided to keep in touch with Shlomo even after the completion of the program.

Laris Boharon, a student from last year’s program, who is receiving a scholarship from the municipality, continues to meet with Boba Mahlouf on a regular basis. They have “adopted” each other as grandmother-granddaughter. During the closure, they talked every week by phone. Laris accompanied Boba when she had an eye operation earlier in the year, and over the past few months made sure that Boba had whatever she needed from the grocery store.

Bat Yam

The Netu’im students began their work with the elderly in Bat Yam last year. The students quickly learned about the importance and meaning of initiatives that bring together young people and the elderly. In general, the students in Bat Yam are running several projects for the elderly:

- **Bat Yummy!:** The goal of this project is to connect young people with their grandparents’ generation, and their roots and traditions that reflect the shared mosaic of cultures and customs of the community in Bat Yam. The students began a campaign to recruit young people in the community to film themselves cooking with their grandparents, and will write down the recipe, and customs or stories related to it. We will put all of these recipes together in a cookbook, and the videos will be placed on YouTube.
- **Adopt-a-Senior:** Each student connected with a solitary Holocaust survivor in order to offer a listening ear and companionship by telephone, easing their loneliness especially during the closure.
- **Midrash and Fitness for the Elderly:** The students created an intimate circle of 10 isolated elderly, who met once a week for an exercise session led by student Jonathan Adler, who is studying for his B.A. in Physical Education.

Afterward, they sit together in a circle and learn texts from the Jewish bookshelf, exercising the mind as well as the body.

Student **Priyel Marciano** has been meeting with 82-year-old Zehava Amayetz for the past two years. Zehava lives two apartment buildings away from Priyel. She has lived alone since her husband died, and her children do not live in the area. Zehava is a Holocaust survivor. She hardly ever leaves the house, and the connection between Priyel and Zehava is very important to both of them. Priyel says she learns a lot from Zehava and enjoys listening to her stories of Bat Yam when it was a small town where everyone knew each other, and you could see all the way to the Mediterranean, unlike today where the view is blocked by tall buildings.

Student **Shai Krasanti** met with 87-year-old Sarah Mizrachi each week. Sarah is teaching Shai how to knit, and gives him lots of advice based on the things she has learned in her life. Sarah lives in a building without an elevator, which makes it very difficult for her to go out. Shai goes shopping for Sarah, and arranges everything in her kitchen, and especially loves listening to Sarah's stories reminiscing about when she was a girl during the Second World War.

Student **Oren Michaeli** meets with Perla Dadish 1-2 a week, and especially on Fridays. Perla, who is a Holocaust survivor, lives alone. Oren and Perla have become very close, and she shares with him some things she feels uncomfortable sharing with her own grandchildren. Oren records the conversations, and feels honored to learn from Perla's stories and wisdom.

Student **Yair Nissim** has been meeting with Esther Nansee all year. She is a Holocaust survivor, who lives alone, and her children do not live near her. Esther loves to knit, and learn new things. During the Corona closure, she taught Yair to knit. Their discussions often focus on Esther's experiences from her childhood, and especially her favorite foods! She talks about her life during the Shoah, her aliyah to Israel, the beginnings of the State, and having a family and building a home in Bat Yam, which in those days was a brand new town.

Student **Shel Cohen** met with Valentin Gendin throughout the year. Valentin does not speak much Hebrew, and Shel speaks Russian with him, which has opened up the connection between them. He has told her many things about the days before his aliyah to Israel in the 1990s. He misses his life in Russia. He made aliyah at age 56, and today he is 79 years old. Due to the Corona crisis, they have been meeting in the local park enjoying the sunny weather, and doing a little exercise together.

Netivot

Student **Lior Yifrach** met with 72-year-old Matzliach Assis. Lior took responsibility to get anything Matzliach needed outside of the home. Before the Corona crisis, they met once a week and Lior helped him with his daily chores and errands. Lior helped fix his electrical appliances that weren't working, and taught Matzliach how to use his Smartphone. The connection that was created between them was very warm and

caring, and Matzliach said, “Thank you for all of the help – I feel that I have a new grandson who watches out for me.”

Student **Shir Biton** has been visiting 76-year-old Yemena Zuzot all year. Yemena has three children who do not live close by. Her connection with Shir helped her get through the closure. Shir adds, “Yemena was always a little embarrassed, but her eyes are always sparkling. She says that I am like her own daughter. She doesn’t eat what other people make her, but she eats what I prepare, because it is tasty for her. She doesn’t want me to ever stop visiting her.”

Student **Roni Buzaglo** has been meeting with 75-year-old Haim Peretz all year. Haim lives alone, and has many health issues. He lives close by Roni’s parents’ house. Roni taught Haim how to use his Smartphone, and taught him how to use Zoom in order to see his grandchildren during the closure, when they were not allowed to see each other. Right before Shavuot, the entire Netu’im group in Netivot collected cakes and challot from the community and distributed them to the elderly in the city. When Roni brought Haim his care package, he said, “What a pleasant surprise. I did not expect to receive a cake for Shabbat. It is a wonderful thing that there are young people like you in the city that care about us.”

Dimona

Netu’im Dimona is our newest group, completing their first year in the city. During the Corona closure one of the community projects the students initiated was “Adopt a Grandma/Grandpa.” The initiative pairs local community members with elderly residents who live alone. This matching has brought about amazing things – phone calls to combat feelings of loneliness, food packages on Fridays for Shabbat, and lasting community connections.

Many of these elderly face extreme poverty and loneliness. The Netu’im students made sure to call them regularly to ask how they were doing, letting them know they were not alone. The students also reported to the welfare authorities, and worked with them to address the dire situations of some of the homebound elderly, especially those who were not already known to the local Welfare Department.

Another community project that began during the Corona crisis was a student initiative that publicized in social media baking of challot for Shabbat. During the Mimouna celebration after Passover, students sought out local grandmothers to make the traditional mufleta pancakes to distribute to the elderly. On Shavuot, they organized the baking of cakes, and the baking of fresh challot on Fridays. The students added little notes with blessings for the Sabbath, and colored drawings from local children and delivered them to the elderly before the beginning of the Sabbath.

Student **Shlomit Zaguri** met with 73-year-old Batsheva Nidam all year long. When the Corona crisis hit, they continued to “meet” by phone. Shlomit helped Batsheva with all of her chores, and brought her food and medicine during the closure. Shlomit said: “As part of the Netu’im group, we chose to work with the elderly in our city during the Corona crisis, and this turned out to be an opportunity to get to know this

population up close – transforming the values we learned into doing – calling them to find out what they needed, and delivering food packages and medicine. To witness the despair and fear in the eyes of the elderly, and then to see a spark of happiness and gratitude after we brought them food, asked them how they were, and listened to them, was unlike anything I have ever experienced. At the same time, I was exposed to the very difficult situation facing some of the elderly in our city – some of them truly feared for their lives. It is outrageous that there are elderly people in this country, who are hungry for food, thirsty for water, or need heating during the winter months, or a fan to cool them in the hot summer. We passed all of this information over to the city’s Welfare Department, and there is a lot of work to be done. I know that I want to be a part of improving the lives of the elderly in this city.”

Student **Hagit Damari** worked with 83-year-old Dina Tayeb. Hagit says that each time she met with Dina, they “didn’t really notice time passing at all.” During the Corona closure they would meet in the yard near Dina’s house. Hagit loves to cook, and throughout the year she received numerous recipes from Dina. Dina said: “While we were in closure, Hagit’s visits helped keep my spirits up and gave me a taste for life. Hagit would come to visit me together with her children. I would give her my shopping list, and she would make sure I got everything I needed.”

Student **Rotem Bluchman** shared a special relationship with 76-year-old Esther Cohen. Esther became a widow five years ago. She and her husband had seven children, three of whom stayed in Dimona. Esther loves to talk to Rotem about the beginnings of Dimona, and of her first years in the country. Over the past few years, Esther likes to visit the local Elderly Club. Since the COVID-19 crisis began, she has been stuck at home alone. Rotem made sure to call her often and help with anything Esther needed. Esther’s family is very supportive of her, but she feels a special connection with Rotem. Esther says, “It brings me such happiness to see an energetic, young girl who is interested in listening to my stories, and cares about how I am doing.”

Student **Mor Knafo** met with 80-year-old Aliyah Twizer weekly before the Corona crisis hit, and then by telephone. Aliyah talked with Mor about her childhood growing up in Dimona. Mor would also come to Aliyah’s balcony, and talk to her from the street in order to protect Aliyah and maintain social distancing. They have regular phone conversations on Thursdays, and Mor is ready to help with whatever Aliyah needs. Mor shared: “During the Corona crisis this year we tried to help by calling homebound elderly. It was really upsetting. The elderly we spoke with on the phone said that their situation was very difficult, because they were cut off from their families. There were those who said that they didn’t have any food to eat. Before the Passover holiday, I spoke with an 87-year-old woman, who cried over the phone that she doesn’t have a way to celebrate the holiday because no one is taking care of her. I almost cried with her. I contacted the local authorities to make sure to help her.”

Student **Gefen Ben Pazi** regularly visited the local Elderly Club, and led a Beit Midrash learning session each week. During her volunteer work there she became

close with several of the elderly, and during the Corona crisis committed to helping them – she called each of them every week, ran errands for them, and brought them food packages. For her exemplary volunteer work, she received a certificate of recognition from the local municipality. **Gefen** shared: “During the Corona crisis I was honored to volunteer through both the municipality’s volunteer unit and the One Heart organization. I helped deliver food packages to the elderly. Each time we would deliver food, the elderly would be waiting for us and so grateful. I also volunteered at the distribution center. One time I delivered a package to an elderly woman, who only spoke Russian. She kept blessing me, and even though I didn’t understand the words, I understood what she meant. Her smile stays with me all the time. I continue to keep in touch with her to this day.”

Provisional guidelines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

Thanks to the generous support of the Matanel Foundation, we had a successful year, despite the Corona crisis. The students rose to the occasion and provided much needed support, food packages, and a listening ear to numerous homebound elderly. As you can see from our report, the students and the elderly participants reported how the program positively impacted their lives for the better. Next year, we plan to continue to work with the elderly in these cities, building on this year’s successful program.

We wish to deeply thank the Matanel Foundation for their support of this vital program empowering young adult leaders to bring joy, companionship, and meaning to the lives of countless elderly in communities throughout Israel.

The Corona crisis has given students the opportunity to express their leadership in numerous ways. We realize now more than ever that it is imperative to equip these young adults with the tools to assist the elderly in their communities. In order to address the growing needs of the elderly, we hope to expand and improve the activities with this population in the coming year. We see the Matanel Foundation as a strategic partner committed to this issue, and together we can continue to improve the lives of the elderly to ensure that they are able to live the remainder of their lives with dignity, comfort, and companionship.