

MATANEL FOUNDATION
ACTIVITY REPORT

Program:
Year: 2023

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: Beit Yisrael Kvutzat Reut - Perach Zahav Matanel - Community Resilience Program

Year of activity: September 2022 to August 2023

Name of the report's writer: Akiva Harris

Function of the report's writer: Deputy Director

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Website / Facebook address of the organization:

Website: <https://reut.org.il/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BeitYisrael.Reut>

Number of active participants in the program:

30 students from the Beit Yisrael.

Estimated number of impacted participants:

Elderly: 36 seniors

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

The program ran from September 2022- June 2023. Every week, young volunteers visited their matched elderly person. They made meaningful connections, mitigated loneliness, and engaged in intergenerational dialogue. They helped their elderly friends with chores during their weekly slot, and distributed small plants for Tu B'shvat and Mishloach Manot for Purim. The volunteers made additional visits, extending support and care for Shabbat and holidays.

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

- Close intergenerational relationships developed between 36 elderly and 30 volunteers. The volunteers also experience personal growth by working hard to build relationships based on trust, patience, and perseverance.
- 3 special events.
- Students organized a social event inspired by the popular TV show *Slichá al Hashe'ela* (Excuse me for asking). The initiative created a relaxed atmosphere for young people to ask and their elderly friends to answer. The older women took it seriously, providing sincere answers to the students' questions about aging and their life experiences.
- The volunteers felt supported by the program coordinator and received emotional tools to handle various issues within the friendship.
- Through the students' interactions with the elderly volunteers, younger volunteers gained insight into the neighborhood's dynamic, enabling them to provide more effective help.
- For specific achievements and student stories, please see attached list of participants.

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

The program hired a new manager this year, Tal Hezkia. Tal's evaluation gave her a deeper understanding of the challenges students faced. She saw that they lacked experience in group settings, and struggled to process their emotions and experiences. To address these issues, Tal implemented several strategies. In addition to the scheduled weekly group processing sessions, she held one-on-one conversations with each student. This helped them focus on expressing themselves in a way that helped their visits with their elderly friend. Moreover, for the first time, she made time to meet all the seniors herself this year. These meetings helped her learn about their backgrounds and how they perceived the project. Her main takeaway was that first impressions are the key indicator to the relationship's success. As such, if changes in matching seniors to volunteers were to be made, it should happen as soon as possible. These insights helped her guide students, and will serve as a valuable guide for matching elderly residents with students in the future.

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

- At the beginning of the year, Tal will assess the situation after several meetings with students and their seniors to ensure the relationship is going well. If any adjustments need to be made, she will make them at this early stage, rather than later in the year.
- We will refine the group coaching workshop framework with the students and establish clear boundaries for students.
- We will continue to bring in a diverse range of professionals who work with the elderly and can contribute to students' enrichment.
- The program manager will continue meeting each volunteer personally throughout the year.

Please join the Evaluation Report, the Financial Report and the list of the participants to the program (as PDF documents)

Please join photos – as **JPG files** – and any link or any other document connected to the program which will seem to you relevant – as a **PDF document**.

Please join a 5-minute movie which presents your institution and the particular project supported by the Matanel Foundation. The movie should be accessible to the philanthropic world and to other potential donors.

Volunteers Stories:

* **Dror's Story:** Initially, my elderly friend kept to herself, but eventually, both of us learned to open up and truly connect with each other.

***Shaked's Story:** When I shared my personal difficulties with the elderly lady I accompany, she responded with great empathy, and I felt truly comforted. It took me some time to realize how significant her support, which I understood was derived solely from her empathy, was for me. I learned a lot from her about her life in Russia, her immigration experience, and her integration into Israel. Lastly, when the issue was resolved (after a not-so-short period), I shared it with her, and she was so happy that it deeply touched me.

Although I went to volunteer with her, there were many moments when I truly felt that she was volunteering with me.

Thank you so much for this special connection.

***Zohar's Story:** My elderly friend is completely alone in the world, and with each meeting, I realize the value of our time together. I am among the few people she interacts with in a week. We spend a lot of time together, going out, visiting the beach, and doing everyday tasks like picking up mail and going to the doctor. We even visit her husband's grave every so often.

***Yoram's Story:** The elderly man I was matched with opened up and spoke about his deceased wife. It made me realize how connected he felt, and that was truly meaningful.

***Sivan's Story:** The most memorable moment for me was when I realized how important I was to my elderly lady. She told me that she had been really sad before I arrived, but after spending time together, her mood had lightened and her head was in a good place. It suddenly dawned on me that even if I don't always see or receive positive feedback, I am incredibly important to her.

Students said they learned:

To listen and notice people's difficulties – they got many opportunities to practice active listening.

To cultivate empathy and step out of their comfort zones "I learned to get out of my comfort zone, to sit and listen for an hour and a half and just talk about things that have nothing to do with you and hardly make sense. It's not easy if you have an attention disorder! But it was really worth it. I learned about myself that if I want, I can."

To develop patience and perseverance "The meetings sharpened my understanding that to give is to give, it doesn't depend on whether I receive appreciation. My giving should depend on my giving, and my desire to do good"

"This was real training in understanding and enacting the command to respect our elders."

In evaluating this program at the end of each year we understand all over again how meaningful this intergenerational connection is to both sides. Seniors gain from scheduled weekly time that they can rely on. Their matched friend is there for chores, listening, and relieving painful loneliness. The volunteers discover new heights to patience and sensitivity. While listening, they take in their senior's experiences with humility and benefit from their senior friend's wisdom.

Please [click here to see a short video](#) about the program.

Thank you for ensuring that this project can have such a beautiful impact on lives of all ages in our corner of Jerusalem.