

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: *Vacation Group 365 – Jerusalem Hills Therapeutic Centers*

Year: **2023**

Name of the Program: Vacation Group 365

Year of activity: 2023

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Number of active participants in the program:

40 children

Estimated number of impacted participants:

200 - this includes the children and their families who cannot host them on vacation and are relieved that they are taken care of. This also includes the staff and therapists who benefit both during vacation and during the routine year from the children being in a calmer state having had a busy, enjoyable, vacation in a safe space. This also includes the vacation counselors we employ both during the day and the night shift, as well as maintenance staff and kitchen staff.

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

Our mission is to provide therapeutic treatment and special education to 100 of Israel's most at-risk children, aged 6 to 15, within a nurturing and stable home environment. When it comes to vacations throughout the year, not all of the children are able to return to their homes or caregivers. Therefore, our center is open 365 days a year and provides additional programming and therapy services to the children who stay on campus to enhance their vacations. The vacation lengths vary from weekends to weeks at a time, depending on the time of year, and involve the day and night counselors, kitchen and maintenance staff supplies and food for the children and staff, transportation to and from excursions, and the actual activities. These include both on-campus and off-campus activities that are educational and fun and lift the spirits of the children who cannot go back to their families as some of their friends can.

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

The Vacation Group 365 operates successfully throughout the year thanks to the combination of dedicated staff and generosity from friends like the Matanel Foundation. Each vacation, whether it is for one weekend or for weeks at a time in the Summer, is catered thoughtfully for the children in our care. As many of the children's home lives are volatile, unforeseen circumstances often arise and the number of children staying on campus for vacation can vary and change last minute. Activities since the last report:

- December 2022 – Hannukah Vacation
 - Included 20 children for the week of Hannukah who enjoyed on-campus activities as well as a trip to the aquarium in Jerusalem and a trip to the swimming pool in Beit Protea Old Age Facility.
- April 2023 – Passover Vacation
 - Included 25 children for the week of Passover who enjoyed on-campus activities like arts and crafts and a pizza-making party. Off-campus excursions included museums and the park.
- August 2023 – Summer Vacation
 - As the summer vacation is long, the number of children on campus varied throughout the time between 30-40 children. The vacation was packed full of fun with activities including obstacle courses with rope climbing and rock climbing, blow-up castles and water slides, a trip to the movies, a trip to the amusement park, and a trip to the fire station to meet some heroes and learn a thing or two. And of course, lots of water sports and pool visits to keep cool!
- September 2023 – Rosh Hashana/Yom Kippur Vacation
 - 30 children stayed with us for this vacation and enjoyed on-campus activities, fun with food, a few trips to the park, and an extra fun trip to the zoo.
- October 2023 – Sukkot Vacation
 - 25 children stayed for the week and enjoyed a delicious barbeque, a painting activity, a trip to the museum, a trip to the swimming pool at Beit Protea Old Age Facility, and a show from a professional juggling artist.
- December 2023 – Chanukah Vacation
 - We are not sure yet exactly how many children will be staying, but as usual it will be between 20-40 and we already have plans for off-campus events like a show and a trip to the museum, and arts and crafts activities.

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

The 40 children who participated in the Vacation Group 365 for 2023 gained a lot from the program. They were stimulated both intellectually and physically with fun and meaningful activities relevant to the time periods of each vacation. They thrive

on outdoor excursions, creating positive memories with their friends and the staff and counselors who care for them deeply. Their teachers and therapists who greet them after the vacation see a clear difference in the children after having enjoyed their vacation on campus, as they report the children being calmer and having an easier time getting back into routine. It is clear to all of us that the Vacation Group 365 program is very important and we hope it will continue for many years to come.

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

Approximately a third of the children at the Jerusalem Hills campus each year need to stay with us during vacation times. It is an ongoing issue that these children cannot return to their families or caregivers for holidays and we work very hard to provide them with a comfortable, educational, and enjoyable environment 365 days a year, including during vacations.

With the generous support from the Matanel Foundation, the children are able to enjoy special excursions off campus to swimming pools, museums, the zoo and the aquarium, amusement parks, the movies, and so much more. These are memories that will last with the children for many years to come, giving them a sense of pride to be part of the Vacation Group, instead of disappointment that they could not go home.

We thank the Matanel Foundation from the bottom of our hearts and request to continue receiving your generous support for this important project for 2024 as well. We would love to host your representatives on campus one day soon and show you first hand the important work being done here.

Thank you again,

Ella Susman

Resource Development Manager

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