

# MATANEL FOUNDATION

## ACTIVITY REPORT

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

**Year:** 2024

**Name of the Program:** Vacation Group 365

**Year of activity:** 2024

**Name of the report's writer:** Ella Susman

**Function of the report's writer:** Resource Development Manager

**Mail:** [ellanus@childrenshome.org.il](mailto:ellanus@childrenshome.org.il)

**Phones:** 0534308890

**Website / Facebook address of the organization:** <https://www.childrenshome.org.il/en/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/JHillsTC/>

**Number of active participants in the program:** 35

**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 actually 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, not all children can return to their homes or caregivers. Therefore, our center is open 365 days a year and provides additional programming and therapy services to those who stay on campus. 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. Especially this year, with the security situation as it is in Israel, the Vacation Group Program was all the more crucial to providing the children with stability, normalcy, and positive experiences during a terribly difficult time.

Activities since the last report:

- December 2023 – Hannukah Vacation – 25
  - With the security situation as it was during this time, we were restricted with what we could provide the children for the Hannukah Vacation. Following security guidelines, all activities outside of the Jerusalem Hills campus were suspended during that time, including trips and excursions. As a placement, we provided a lot of on-campus activities, including cooking, arts and crafts, movies, and sports.
- April 2024 – Passover Vacation
  - Included 20 children for the week of Passover who enjoyed on-campus sports and bonding activities. Off-campus excursions included ninja facilities, the Jerusalem Aquarium, a hike in Ein Hemed, and a trip to the swimming pool.
- August 2024 – Summer Vacation
  - As the summer vacation is long, the number of children on campus varied throughout the time between 20-35 children. The vacation included exciting activities like a pastry workshop, an on-campus carnival and BBQ, blow-up castles, birdwatching, hiking, bowling, and lots of pool time.
- September 2024 – Rosh Hashana/Yom Kippur Vacation
  - 20 children stayed with us for this vacation, enjoyed on-campus activities like a special juggling instructor and fun with food, and went off campus for swimming and a visit to the petting zoo.
- October 2024 – Sukkot Vacation
  - 25 children stayed for the week and enjoyed a trip to the Zoo, laser tag, arts and crafts on campus, a water hike, and a trip to nature.
- December 2024 – Chanukah Vacation
  - We are not sure yet exactly how many children will be staying, but as usual it will be between 20-35 and we already have plans for off-campus events like a hike, a woodwork workshop, and arts and crafts activities.

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

The 35 children who participated in the Vacation Group 365 for 2024 gained a lot from the program. Especially this year, with the security situation as it is in Israel, the Vacation Group Program was all the more crucial to providing the children with stability, normalcy, and positive experiences during a terribly difficult time.

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 guide lines 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 aquarium, amusement parks, movies, and so much more. These memories 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 2025 as well. We would love to host your representatives on campus one day soon and show you firsthand the important work being done here.

Thank you again,

Ella Susman

Resource Development Manager

0534308890