

MATANEL FOUNDATION
ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: "Perach Zahav Bnei Bayit"

Year: 2024-2025

Name of the Program: "Perach Zahav Bnei Bayit"

Year of activity: 2024-2025

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Number of active participants in the program: 143 pairs of Mechina students and seniors from 13 Mechinot.

Number of seniors	Place of volunteering	Mechina Name
9	Kibbutz Tseelim	Hanegev
19	Kibbutz Ein-Zurim and Kvutzat Yavne	Tzahali
6	Maale Adomim	Eitan
16	Kibbutz Shluchot and Kfar Rupin	H'aemak
10	Rehovot	Shuvu Achim
4	Maale Efraim	Bnei-David
23	Kibbutz Gevim and Beit-Govrin	Meitarim-Lachish
7	Kibbutz Meitzar	Meitzar
3	Kfar-Saba	Migdalor
23	Hatzeva and Faran	Arava
8	Nof Hagalil and Kibbutz Ramat Hashofet	Tavor
10	Beersheba	Amichai
5	Yahud	Ruch Hasade
143		Total

Estimated number of impacted participants: The program directly impacted 286 participants (143 pairs of Mechina students and senior citizens). In addition to the one-on-one pairs of seniors and participants, there were also pairs in which additional participants regularly joined, with two Mechina students accompanying a senior on a consistent basis. Wider circles of influence include seniors' family members and fellow Mechina students influenced through their peers' shared experiences.

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

"Perach Zahav Bnei Bayit" has completed its second year with 143 active partnerships between Mechina students and senior citizens across 13 Mechinot nationwide. **Despite a year filled with emotional strain and security-related challenges, the program remained a vital source of connection and care.** Mechina students stayed committed to their weekly visits, providing seniors with companionship, assistance with technology, and everyday support. **Many bonds deepened beyond scheduled meetings,** becoming a source of stability for the seniors. Professional social workers provided close guidance, ensuring continuity and sensitivity. The program received enthusiastic feedback, and all participating Mechinot, along with several new ones, have expressed interest in continuing next year.

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

In its second year, Perach Zahav – Bnei Bayit significantly expanded its impact, creating **143 ongoing partnerships** between Mechina students and senior citizens across **13 Mechinot**. Each week, students visited their matched seniors, offering **meaningful presence**, emotional support, and **practical help**—including gardening, organizing, light household chores, and technology assistance. One of the highlights of the project was Before Passover, when students helped clean seniors' homes and shared stories from the early days of their life, creating deep intergenerational bonds. Beyond the numbers, the relationships formed were truly life-changing. As one student from **Mechinat Eitan** reflected: *"I came to give, but I received no less in return. I learned about life, memory, and loneliness—and how presence and listening can be a gift."* In **Mechinat Meitarim Lakish**, students regularly visited Holocaust survivors. She shared: *"It was a privilege to meet a survivor, listen to her stories, and just be there for her. We still speak occasionally. Everyone should have this opportunity."* From **Mechinat Tavor**, another student described: *"My senior had no family in Israel. She became my grandmother in the Mechina. Every visit, I felt I gave her something, but I also got back so much more."* Students and seniors often stayed in

touch beyond the scheduled visits, through phone calls, messages, and informal encounters in the community. The emotional value of the project was especially powerful this year, as many seniors expressed that the students were “like grandchildren.” A student from **Mechinat Meitzar** recounted: *“He told us we were like his granddaughters. He opened up to us, shared from his heart, and we left each time with tears in our eyes.”*

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

Evaluation was based on field reports, feedback from local coordinators, and reflective testimonials from Mechina participants. Compared to the first year, which included 97 pairs, this year saw a **46% increase**, totaling 143 ongoing matches. The quality of engagement also deepened, with students often continuing contact outside official visits and forming strong emotional bonds with the seniors. Students reported feeling transformed by the experience. Student from Mechinat Hanegev wrote: *“It started with helping to replace a lightbulb or hang laundry, and ended with heart-to-heart conversations about memory, identity, and the meaning of life.”* Another student from Mechinat Tzahali shared about visiting a Holocaust survivor weekly: *“She opened up about her past, her values, and her loneliness. It was a privilege to be there for her.”* The program’s adaptability in the face of emotional and logistical challenges—especially under a tense security situation—proved to be a major strength. Many Mechinot noted that the project became a central part of their community’s identity and educational mission.

Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

Building on the strong foundations of the program’s second year, we aim to **broaden and deepen its impact**. All participating Mechinot have expressed their desire to continue, and several new Mechinot have already requested to join in the upcoming year—evidence of the program’s growing relevance and resonance. Looking ahead, we intend to **expand the program to new geographic areas**, while continuing to invest in and support existing partnerships. A key focus will be on enhancing the **quality of interactions**, including training students in emotional presence, intergenerational communication, and identifying seniors’ evolving needs. We also plan to encourage Mechinot to initiate **community-wide events around holidays**, create moments of shared celebration, and develop creative projects that strengthen the visibility and integration of seniors in local life. Our target is to reach **at least 150 seniors** next year, building a wider and more resilient network of meaningful, consistent relationships.