

# TALI Education Fund

Chair, Board of Directors and Executive Committee **Brig. Gen. (Res.) Ram Shmueli**

The Susan and Scott Shay TALI Director General **Rabbi Dr. Eitan Chikli**

**TALI Tops 10%:** TALI schools comprise over 10% of all elementary schools in the secular public school system. In September 2011, 7 additional schools and 17 pre-schools joined the TALI Network.

## Initiatives 2010-11

### TALI Choir Competition: Sweet Music To Our Ears

The TALI Education Fund held two regional competitions for 16 TALI school choirs throughout the country where over 500 children performed. The two regional winners, who received prize money earmarked for school enrichment programs, traveled to Jerusalem to perform at the Genger Prize Ceremony. The competitions, organized by TALI Music Director **Bat Ella Birnbaum**, were a huge success, both in the quality of the performances and in the team spirit the event nurtured.

### TALI Partners with Leket (Table to Table)

Eleven TALI schools participated in a pilot program with the Leket organization to introduce pupils and parents to the Jewish value of Tzedaka by learning sources on the mitzvot of *Leket* and *Peah* (gleaning and leaving a corner of the fields for the poor) and discussing issues of hunger and poverty. Children then went out to pick unharvested crops which were distributed to the poor. A teacher handbook augmented the learning. In 2012, the program will be expanded.

### TALI Bar-Bat Mitzvah Seminars Return to Kibbutz Hanaton

Over 600 sixth graders from ten TALI schools travelled north to Kibbutz Hanaton where Schechter graduate **Rabbi Yoav Ende** and his facilitators have revived the Bar-Bat Mitzvah Seminar program. The Jewish identity program incorporates Jewish history, literature, symbols and values.

### "Total TALI" for Sifryat Pijama Project

All TALI pre-schools, numbering more than 2000 families, participated in the *Sifryat Pijama Project* which strengthens love for books among young children and encourages Jewish parenting. The project distributed nine books to all TALI families plus a copy which remained in the pre-school library.

**Sefer Torah Donated to TALI Givat Zeev** Hundreds of Givat Zeev residents (a town outside of Jerusalem) celebrated a new Sefer Torah donated to the TALI school in January. Schechter Board members **Buddy and Fran Brandt**, who have facilitated donations of Torah scrolls to four TALI schools, brought the scroll from the U.S. and presented it to the school.

### TALI Working Closely with Ministry of Education

This year Israel's Ministry of Education introduced a new curriculum - *Tarbut Yisrael (Jewish Culture)*, which calls for two hours a week of Jewish studies in grades 6-8. The program will eventually be expanded to include grades 4-9. Because of TALI's unrivaled expertise and experience in the field of Jewish education in secular schools, the Ministry of Education turned to TALI for assistance in the program's development. The TALI Education Fund (TEF), viewing this as a crucial opportunity to expose the entire secular school system to TALI's pluralistic and open approach to Jewish education, responded to the challenge:

- ◉ TALI published 5 textbooks on Judaism and Zionism for the Ministry of Education for grades 6-8, and is now engaged in a nationwide book marketing campaign to non-TALI schools.
- ◉ TEF staff led 95 training seminars for some 3,000 non-TALI teachers to instruct them in the use of the new curricular materials based on TALI's approach and methods. Feedback by teachers and principals was very positive.
- ◉ **Dr. Eitan Chikli, Susan and Scott Shay TALI Director General**, proposed to the Ministry a Certification program involving 180 hours of teacher training which will be conducted at 11 academic institutions (including Schechter) around the country. Schechter is well positioned to attract large numbers of teachers because it offers an accredited M.A. degree in addition to the mandated courses for certification.

### TALI Principal and Teacher Awarded Top Honors

- ◉ **Barbara Levin**, founding principal of Jerusalem's TALI Frankel school, received the "Yakir Yerushalayim" Award for 2011.
- ◉ **Tami Tal**, 3rd grade teacher at the TALI Tsafrarim School in Ashdod, received the "Best Teacher in Israel" Award.

## TALI Textbooks

**Every Individual is Unique** A curriculum commissioned by *Shalva*, an association working with mentally and physically challenged children in Israel, is being produced for both formal and informal educational frameworks.

**New Shoah Curriculum** The first half of an educational kit (grades 3-6) for teaching the Holocaust was in the field for Yom Hashoah 2011. The kit forms the basis for a Shoah Resource Center, an interactive museum of 13 "stations" built to encourage discussion on Jewish values and existential questions in the context of the Holocaust. The project will be completed by early 2012.

### Organ Transplants Curriculum to Go Online

*Giving Wholeheartedly*, the organ donations curriculum, published a few years ago for 7-9th graders, is coming out in a revised online version for young adults aged 17-25. The site will provide important information on organ transplants, the different religious approaches to organ donations, dilemmas involved, and educational tools for teaching the subject in frameworks such as youth movements and the army.

### Friends Across the Sea: English Edition on the Way

The popular *Friends Across the Sea* textbook that focuses on Israel-Diaspora relations and Jewish Peoplehood will appear in 2011 in a new and expanded Hebrew edition. An English edition will be available in early 2012 to Jewish communities in North America. Pilot communities are currently being sought for schools that would learn the curriculum and use it as a basis for twinning with Israeli schools. The books include a special *Let's Talk* section with questions to spur dialogue between Israeli and non-Israeli students.

### Textbook Series Warmly Received in Mexico

The TALI *Toldot Jewish History Curriculum* for the Magen David Jewish Day School in Mexico City has been completed for the 7th-9th grades. A program on *Jewish Identity in Transition* is being written for the 10th grade.

### Book Sales

Over 20,000 TALI textbooks were sold to TALI and non-TALI schools in Israel and overseas in 2010. Sales are expected to more than double in 2011, due to the Ministry of Education-sponsored *Tarbut Israel* program being introduced into all public schools.



1-5. TALI books on Judaism and Zionism commissioned for new *Tarbut Yisrael* national curriculum 6. TALI Bayit V'Gan, Jerusalem 7. Award winning TALI Tsafririm School, Hadera 8. Morning prayers at TALI 9. Voted Best Teacher in Israel, Tami Tal 10. Buddy and Fran Brandt present TALI Givat Zeev with Sefer Torah 11. TALI Educational Leadership M.A. graduates 12. Dialogue and Identity students from TALI Givat Ela and Kfar Kana Franciscan Sisters School 13. Adv. Itay Hacoen (2nd from left) with TALI leadership, confers Genger Prize to TALI Tsafririm, Hadera 14. TALI Choir competition 15. TALI Rabbi Elisha Wolfkin (left) shares a Sukkot program with students from TALI Givat Zeev 16. TALI students from the Achva school in Ramle pick unharvested fruits for the Leket project 17. TALI Adam V'olamo School at the Kibbutz Hanaton Bar-Bat Mitzvah seminar

## Numbers 2010-11

- ⊙ 184 schools and pre-schools, including 2 new schools and 12 pre-school classes
- ⊙ 38,000 students
- ⊙ 12 TALI School Counselors worked in 60 schools, guiding curriculum development and providing ongoing pedagogical counseling to 1,200 teachers
- ⊙ 39 TALI teachers and principals studied one full day per week in the two-year TALI Educational Leadership Program

- ⊙ 18 TALI Leadership Program graduates completed their M.A. degree in Jewish studies (education track) at Schechter
- ⊙ 14 TALI rabbis and music specialists worked in 52 schools and pre-schools
- ⊙ 240 hours of teacher training seminars for TALI teachers from 22 new TALI schools were conducted
- ⊙ 95 teacher-room workshops for over 3,000 non-TALI secular public school teachers were held
- ⊙ 5 TALI textbooks and Holocaust curriculum kit published

## Project Updates 2010-11

**The Devorah and Shraga Genger Prize for Excellence in TALI Education Celebrates a Decade** The Genger Prize, established in 2001 to promote and develop the teaching of Jewish Studies in a pluralistic spirit and to bridge the gap between religious and secular Israelis, has become the most coveted prize amongst TALI educators, serving as a benchmark for measuring TALI excellence in education. On April 4, 2011, the Genger Prize was awarded to **Ms. Nurit Eldar**, Outstanding Principal and Outstanding Parental Activity, TALI Bet Chinuch High School, Jerusalem; **Tsafririm Hadera School**, Outstanding TALI School and Educational Initiative; **Ms. Revital Zorach**, Outstanding TALI Coordinator, Tsafririm Hadera School; Outstanding TALI Pre-School, **Hammerman Pre-School**, Jerusalem.

**TALI Leadership Development Program** The program was established over a decade ago to develop competent and professional educational leadership, conversant with Jewish texts and capable of achieving the goals of TALI schools. To date, 189 TALI teachers and principals have graduated from the two-year program, with the vast majority of them going on for an M.A. in Jewish Studies at the Schechter Institute. Presently, there are 58 TALI graduates learning at Schechter for an M.A. degree.

**Dialogue and Identity Enters 6th Year** *The Dialogue and Identity Project* completed a 5th year, operating in 12 schools in Israel's north – 6 TALI schools and 6 Arab-Christian schools. Altogether, 400 children participated in the program which is based on *Three Religions in the Holy Land*. The program's key to success lies in its emphasis on teacher training. Serving as a model of cooperation, Israel's Ministry of Education has praised the program and funded a small part of it. *Dialogue and Identity* was chosen by a Swiss-based organization to participate in a summer workshop in Lausanne/Geneva.

**Visual Midrash Collection Grows** *Visual Midrash, the Milgrom Art and Jewish Education Interactive Archive* is continuing to develop as works are added to the site. The site's rich database on each art image includes referenced biblical sources, artistic medium, date and short description of the work, as well as biographies of the artists. The site's eventual 4,000 artworks will constitute a major resource for Jewish education.

## TALI Tsafririm School, Hadera

Winner 2011 Genger Prize in three categories: Outstanding TALI School; Outstanding TALI Coordinator; Outstanding Educational Initiative



**Tova Cohen, Principal**

**Tova Cohen**, sitting behind the principal's desk, ponders her childhood on kibbutz: "I was in love with everything about the kibbutz...except one small thing, the lack of Judaism... and I fixed that," she says with an impish smile. Tova grew up on Kibbutz Gazit, near Mount Tabor and the Jezreel Valley, an area known for its pioneering communities and ideological Zionist secularism.

Leaving kibbutz life at age 14, Tova moved to Bat Yam, where she was exposed to grandparents who were more traditional Jews. The *Shulhan Aruch* (corpus of Jewish law) was something she studied with her grandfather, a Holocaust survivor. Until today, the book holds a place of honor in her library.

A seasoned educator of 34 years, Tova came to TALI Tsafririm seven years ago, transforming the school into a leading provider of quality Jewish education; one of the best of TALI's 90.

"Education must embody pluralism, democracy and the sense that we are all equal. These ideals, coupled with a rootedness to the land of Israel form my educational creed. For me, TALI education completed the circle and provided me with a blueprint for educating the young of Israel," explains Tova.

Tova's educational blueprint clearly was a winner, as her school swept three of the six Genger Prizes in 2011. Tova attributes a great deal of the success to TALI's Educational Leadership Program, which a high percentage of her teaching staff has completed. (See "The Tsafririm Team", page 17)

"My two-hour drive [with two other colleagues] to Jerusalem and back was the highlight of our week. What wonderful ideas we cooked up together from the materials, dialogue and discussions that ensued every Wednesday at Schechter," she remembers.

"Everything we learned, we shared with the school community." This included special ceremonies for the holidays, weekly Torah portion classes, Bar/Bat Mitzvah classes, mini kabbalat-Shabbat programs and more for the school's 530 children and their parents, the vast majority of whom come from secular or non-observant homes.

*"My dream is to see our school evolve into a community Bet Midrash, with a synagogue –that does not frighten away our families, but rather invites them in to create a Jewish gathering place where all are welcome."* - Tova Cohen



**Revital Zorach, TALI Coordinator**

Revital Zorach, looks back at 1996 as auspicious. It was the year she began teaching at Tsafririm and the year that TALI education was introduced into the school. "Teaching for me is magical. It translates into the love of what I do, the belief in what TALI stands for and the pride we take in our accomplishments," explains Revital.

"TALI and I 'grew up' together at Tsafririm. We both went through a learning process," she explains. Raised in a religious home, Revital attended state religious school but then left religious life behind. Only after coming into contact with TALI education at Tsafririm, did she realize that there was more than one road to Judaism.



"I came back to Judaism in a natural way - the TALI way. When a person finds religion through belief and in love, you see results. I see it on the faces of our children at school."

Modest in demeanor, Revital gives credit to the students and fellow teachers for allowing her to win the Genger Prize for outstanding TALI coordinator. "As a teacher, I have a mission: connecting our children to their roots and to world culture. TALI not only facilitates my work, but in a real sense, it reflects on the essence of who I am and the values that are important to me: pluralism, tolerance and respect for the 'other' in society."

*"At TALI, we make sure that all children visit a synagogue. I've heard kids say that this visit was the first time they had ever stepped foot in a synagogue. And I ask myself, 'how is this possible in a Jewish State?'"* - Revital Zorach



## The Tsafririm Team: Committed to TALI Educational Leadership



The line-up is impressive: **Tova Cohen**, principal; **Ravit Biton**, teacher; **Revital Zorach**, TALI school coordinator – all three graduates of the TALI Educational Leadership and Schechter M.A. programs, 2010; **Yifat Kasher** and **Keren Drori**, 2011 students of the Educational Leadership program; teachers **Keren Castro**, **Lizi Katz**, **Mina Yaniv** and former principal, **Yochi Anglister**, trailblazers for TALI who were among the first graduates of the Educational Leadership program in 2001-02.

A reunion of sorts took place in June 2011 when Tsafririm's committed core of TALI teachers - past and present - gathered to catch up on school news and reminisce about years past and the challenges of the future.

Keren Castro, filling in as TALI coordinator this year for Revital who was on sabbatical, feels that the entire school curriculum has evolved into what she termed "a TALI lesson plan," where the "school corridors live and breathe TALI." She adds, "There is a 'TALI corner' in every classroom and all our teachers are using TALI textbooks." One of the first teachers to complete the TALI Educational Leadership program in Jerusalem, she still exudes excitement when talking about it: "I was enriched from the soles of my feet up to my head. But a new challenge always awaits you: there is always more to learn!"

*"The best part is we are seeing our students bringing their education and TALI experiences into the home. This starts as early as 1st grade," –Yifat Kasher, 2nd grade teacher*

Yifat Kasher decided to make the weekly trip to Jerusalem on the recommendation of Revital and Tova. A 2nd grade teacher also in charge of school trips, she incorporates Schechter learning into her lesson plans. Lizi Katz, now retired from teaching, sums up the mood: "The Genger Prize really goes to all of us in the room. We are all links in a chain that has nurtured this spirit of excellence. It is fitting that as Tsafririm celebrates its 60th anniversary, we are also celebrating the Genger Prize."