

TALI Education Fund



2008-09 Numbers

- 183 schools and pre-schools
- 35,000 students
- 1500 teachers receive in-service training
- 150 parents in Parental Leadership Program
- 20 pedagogic counselors
- 40 TALI teachers and principals in TALI Leadership Program
- 15 TALI rabbis in over 60 schools
- 500 learning hours in teacher room workshops and summer seminars
- 5 TALI textbooks published



TALI Growth

2008-09: Ten new schools and two pre-schools joined TALI

2009-10: Nine new schools and 15 pre-schools will join TALI, bringing the TALI student population to more than 35,000

TALI at 10%: TALI schools comprises 10% of all elementary schools in the secular public school system

Building TALI Resources

The Educational Leadership Program was established 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, 140 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. The program's impact on participants is profound. Discovering the world of Jewish sources, they learn how to transmit this content to their pupils. They also impact on their fellow teachers and improve the school-wide level of Jewish studies.

For 2009-10: Two groups totaling 45 educators will be learning in the program, with 19 graduates learning at Schechter for an M.A. degree.

FOCUS ON: Professional Development for TALI Pedagogic Counselors is a new initiative designed to expand the counselor's role from a transmitter of knowledge to the school staff into an agent of significant change for the pedagogic infrastructure of the school. The program began in June 2009 with a week-long seminar for the pedagogic counselors. Their end goal: to empower the local Jewish Studies coordinators at the schools to assume pedagogical authority to access and adopt existing educational resources.

TALI Parental Empowerment Project has grown significantly to six national groups totaling 150 parents from 43 schools. Meeting regularly, the Parents' Forum is attaining its goals to make parents active partners in Jewish education, raise their awareness and commitment to TALI, and give them tools for reinforcing Jewish education in the home. In addition, local TALI Parents' Committees have been established in fifteen schools. Sixteen parental initiatives were implemented in schools including

Seder Pesach, Seven Species Corner, Heritage Rooms, Parents Bet Midrash, a "Judaism and Ecology" Rainwater Collection Project and more. Two national events were held: a Shabbat retreat in Jerusalem in December 2008 and an evening event in Tel Aviv in May 2009. A Parents' Bulletin and the Parents' Forum page on the TALI website are new tools created for networking purposes.

TALI Textbooks More than 20,000 TALI textbooks were sold in 2008-09 to TALI and non-TALI schools, in Israel and overseas, including the "bestseller" *Shirat Halev Siddur* which has already gone into a second printing.

Books published in 2008-09

■ *Learning Together*, Unit One on "Coping with Jealousy" and Unit Two on "Sorry to criticize, but..." - How to hear criticism and learn from it; how to criticize so that it can be heard.

■ *Times to Celebrate; Times to Remember*, two books on teaching the cycle of holidays, 4th grade.

■ *Rediscovering the Holidays: A New Perspective on the Jewish Festivals*, by Dr. Pnina Feller, for teachers and adults. To date, a total of 32 textbooks and other educational resources have been published.

Chair of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee **Prof. Haim Be'er**
 The Susan and Scott Shay TALI Director General **Rabbi Dr. Eitan Chikli**



FOCUS ON: The Sixth Award Ceremony of the Devorah and Shraga Genger Prize for Excellence in TALI Education was held in Jerusalem in June 2009. Genger Prize awards went to **Hadassah Gilor**, Principal, TALI Ben Gurion School, Kiryat Motzkin and the **teaching staff of TALI Hod Hasharon**. For the first time, the Genger Prize was awarded to pre-school teachers. **Smadar Ben Avraham and Etti Hamami**, from Congregation Nezach Yisrael TALI kindergartens, Ashkelon, received the prize.

New Initiatives

The Dialogue and Identity Project completed a second year of successful encounters where Arab and Jewish children learn about their own religious identity while nurturing tolerance and openness towards the other. The eight founding schools in the program (four TALI and four Arab-sector schools) returned to participate in 2008-09, sending new classes of 240 pupils and 16 teachers (four of whom are new). Each encounter is preceded by preparatory work and followed by summary meetings. Eight Hebrew-Arabic language interpreters were introduced into the program in 2008-09. The model is unique in that it fosters direct relationships between school staffs

and trains the teachers to facilitate the programming, enabling it to become a sustainable part of the school curriculum.

The “Pajama Library” Project, for pre-school-age children debuted in a number of TALI pre-schools in Spring 2009. **Tirza Rotkowitz and Sylvia Kamowitz Hareven**, from the TALI Education Fund, are advisors to the program which distributes a select group of children’s books together with content sheets for parents to discuss Jewish values reflected in the stories. Founded and funded by the Grinspoon Foundation, the project was initially implemented in North American Jewish communities where it has met with great success.

The Magen David Jewish Day School in Mexico City has partnered with the TALI Education Fund to create a six-year curriculum for grades 7-12. The first book for 7th graders is already in use, with a second on the way. The curriculum, written in Hebrew and then translated and printed in Mexico, integrates Bible with Jewish History and Culture. TEF staff traveled to Mexico in December to give a training seminar on how to teach the material.

In Denmark: A Jewish Day School in Copenhagen approached TEF to provide educational materials. TEF staff gave a mini-seminar to school staff in August 2009 based on the curriculum they have



1. Children from TALI Neurim (Kiryat Bialik) and Franciscan School (Kfar Kana) meet as part of the Dialogue and Identity Project
2. Kabbalat Shabbat at Tzemach Hasade School, Ma’ale Adumim
3. Aaron Malinsky (center) visits his partnered TALI school, Mamlachti Gimmel, Ma’ale Adumim
4. Professional development workshops for TALI pedagogic counselors
5. TALI teacher Michal Lichtig, a graduate of TALI Educational Leadership program
6. *YahaduTALI* radio students from TALI Hadror School
7. Tu B’shvat Seder at Harei Eilat School, Eilat
8. Member of Kiryat Motzkin TALI choir
9. Students of Weizman School, Tel Aviv, visit Senior Citizens
10. Shabbat retreat for TALI parents, Jerusalem
11. TALI textbook on the holidays
12. Dr. Jo Milgrom receives recognition award from Dr. Eitan Chikli at June Genger Prize Ceremony
13. Orit Bar-Or, Principal of TALI Hod Hasharon, accepts Genger Prize from left: Etay Hacoheh, David Golinkin, Ram Shmueli and Eitan Chikli

created for Mexico. Further cooperation is planned.

“YahaduTALI” Radio Talk-Show Maintains High Ratings

The innovative TALI radio program produced and presented by forty fourth and fifth graders from eight schools in the Jerusalem area continued into a second successful season of broadcasts. The groups meets twice a month to produce a radio show on TALI, Judaism, the holidays, the Weekly Portion and current events.

TALI Bridge-Builders

The Builder

The TALI HaDror Elementary School is located in Mevasseret Zion, a garden suburb of Jerusalem comprised of a combination of veteran Sephardi residents from North Africa and Kurdistan who were settled there in the 1950s and middle-class secular Jews seeking a higher quality of life. The school is one of the newest schools to join the TALI network of close to 190 schools and pre-schools; all 630 students (grade 1-6) receive TALI education from a teaching staff that is augmenting its Jewish knowledge at the Schechter Institute.

The Blueprint

“My obligation as head of the school is to provide knowledge and values. Giving the children an identity is an important part of the equation, but I’m afraid many Israelis do not know that they are also Jewish. TALI has solved that problem for us.”

Orit Burla, Principal



Michal Lichtig, Jewish Studies Coordinator, with Hadror student



Philip and Blanche Meisel meet with a student of their partnered TALI school, together with Orit Burla (right) and David Golinkin



Lori Bruck with students

The Bridge

TALI HaDror, which was adopted by Philip and Blanche Meisel, Las Vegas, NV, has just completed its first three out of four “preparatory” years in TALI. This association entitles the school to a full range of services from the TALI Education Fund including pedagogic counseling, in-service training and workshops for the teachers, as well as a full repertoire of TALI curriculum for the students. “After three years we can really see a difference in the children. It is not only that they know what Hebrew month we are in and all about the weekly Torah portion; we also see more willingness to volunteer and help charities,” explains Michal Lichtig, teacher and Jewish studies coordinator at the school.

Michal, together with four other colleagues and school principal, Orit Burla, is enrolled in TALI’s Educational Leadership Program at the Schechter Institute. “I am secular, so the TALI leadership course has been especially important for me as a person, a Jew and a teacher. In the past two years, I have learned an incredible amount about Judaism and myself. I think this knowledge makes me much more self-confident as a teacher,” explains Michal.

It is not only the teachers who are gaining self-awareness. So are the children. “I was disheartened with the kids’ ignorance of Judaism. Not only had they never opened a *siddur* (prayerbook), they did not even know what a *siddur* was! All that has changed,” says Lori Bruck, a teacher at the school who is also enrolled in the Leadership Program at Schechter.

Bruck, who is Orthodox, admitted that in the initial stages there was fierce opposition to bringing TALI into the school. “The secular parents feared TALI would be the “Trojan Horse” leading to religious coercion, while the parents of Sephardi background who are traditional or Orthodox were even more hostile to the idea.” As one initially skeptical parent admitted, “There are beautiful things in Judaism and that’s what TALI emphasizes.” When the official TALI sign recently went up at the entrance to the school, Lori knew that “TALI in Mevasseret is here to stay.”

The Builder

TALI Hod Hasharon, an elementary and junior high school with more than 500 children in first to ninth grades, is one of the founding TALI schools. Established in 1982 in Hod Hasharon, a city of nearly 50,000 in the Sharon region east of Tel Aviv, the school has come to play an important role in disseminating Jewish culture to Hod Hasharon and the surrounding area. In 2009, the school won the prestigious Genger Prize for Excellence.

The Blueprint:

“Most Israeli children grow up with little understanding of Zionism and why they are here, and no connection to Judaism. This is not the case with the thousands of graduates of TALI Hod Hasharon.”

Avigail Gurievsky
Jewish Studies Coordinator

The Bridge

TALI Hod Hasharon boasts a number of “two generation families”- those parents who attended the school in the 1980s and are now sending their own children. Rachi Ofir, an alumna of the school, sends her daughter, Shani, 8. “We immigrated to Israel from Australia when I was a child. My parents were surprised that the ‘Jewish State’ was not providing its pupils with a Jewish education. Religious schools would not have us because we were not religious enough. TALI was exactly what my parents were looking for – a pluralistic religious approach,” explains Rachi.

New York-born Avigail Gurievsky, Jewish Studies Coordinator at the elementary school since it opened in 1982, reflects on the changes that have taken place at the school.

“We have a much smaller percentage of ‘Anglos’ today [immigrants from Western countries]. ‘I’ve had to become more sensitive to a variety of cultural norms. We have many families from Sephardi backgrounds who are less open to egalitarianism, for example.”

Avigail, a graduate of the Schechter M.A. program (2000) and its TALI Leadership Development Program (2005) gives credit to the Schechter Institute “for helping me refine my teaching methods, making them more inclusive. After more than 25 years of TALI education, our children and their families and the community at large are more aware of non-orthodox Judaism,” explains Avigail.

Riki Lapidot, Coordinator of Jewish Studies in the Junior High School, feels that TALI has enhanced the Jewish atmosphere in the city. “About three years ago a group of parents started a Masorti community in the school’s synagogue. This year, a Noam (Masorti) youth group was established. The first group of counselors are all graduates of the school,” she adds.

In addition to the classic Jewish studies component, the school also stresses the extra- curricular. This includes a partnership with the nearby Tzurim Special Needs School, especially during the bar/bat mitzvah year and a program on the connection between Judaism and the environment. In the words of TALI Hod Hasharon Principal, Orit Bar-Or, “The school’s students and graduates are role models for the citizens of Hod Hasharon. The hundreds of families who have been part of the school make a direct impact on Jewish culture in Hod Hasharon.”



Avigail Gurievsky joins students for morning prayers.



Top: Learning to read from the prayerbook
Bottom: Workshop on Jewish Values

