

Israel Up Close: Video News Magazine Volume 1

Running Time: 9:12 minutes

View each portion independently

1. **Short Term Volunteering:** Livnot U'Lehibanot (3:13 minutes)
2. **Wheels of Love:** Israel's Largest Annual Sports Charity Event (1:48 minutes)
3. **Feeding the Needy:** Hazon Yeshaya (4:22 minutes)

PREPARING THE CLASS TO VIEW THE DVD

Begin this lesson by writing the term VOLUNTEER on the board or on chart paper. Ask the students to define the word volunteer, and give examples of volunteer opportunities in their community.

Before class begins, place 3 signs in different locations around the room. They will represent the three volunteer experiences described on the DVD: (Painting at a home for the handicapped, participating in a charity bike ride to raise money for a rehabilitation hospital, feeding the hungry)

Invite your students to stand in front of a volunteer opportunity that most interests them.

Instruct students to discuss the following questions:

- Why did you choose this activity?
- What kind of difference can you make here?
- How do you think will you feel while you are volunteering?
- How do you think you will feel after volunteering?

Have each group select a reporter to share its ideas with the whole group.

RATIONALE

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to learn about volunteer opportunities in Israel, the organizations that coordinate short term volunteer programs, and the stories of several volunteers.

TRANSITION

Before showing the DVD explain to the students that they will be viewing the stories of the people and the organizations that deliver the services the class has just discussed.

Instruct the students to pay attention to each volunteer.

- What are they doing?
- What reasons do they give for volunteering?

Livnot U'Lehibanot

Background:

For 25 years, **Livnot U'Lehibanot** has made it possible for college students from around the world to volunteer their time while exploring their Jewish roots. In response to the outbreak of violence in September 2000 and the surge of eager international volunteers, Livnot began a series of short-term programs for tourists interested in lending a helping hand by refurbishing homes, painting hospitals and caring for the less fortunate. Running time: 3.13 minutes



After the students have listened to the testimony, ask students if they heard anything in the testimony that supported or differed from their earlier discussion about volunteerism.

Teacher Notes:

The first segment of the DVD introduces students to:

Brenda Malanka, a volunteer from Ottawa Canada

- Was a student at the Hebrew University in 1985 and was a victim of a terror attack
- She has returned to Israel 13 years later as a volunteer at the San Simone Home for the Handicapped in Jerusalem, painting railings and walls as part of the **Livnot U'Lehibanot** program
- Brenda returned to give back in gratitude for the care and love she received after she was attacked
- Brenda's return is a statement of her right to be in the land of Israel

Eitan Kuniyoshi, a volunteer from San Francisco, California

- Is a college student?/Post college student?
- Eitan is participating in the **Livnot U'Lehibanot** program to show his solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people when tourism (one of Israel's main industries) was almost eliminated by an outbreak of violence in 2000.
- We see Eitan painting railings with other young adult volunteers

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION:

How are these stories different from our own?

What are the themes in these stories?

LEARNING ABOUT LIVNOT U'LEHIBANOT

Provide students with the Livnot U'Lhebanot fact sheet and review together.

Follow with a discussion of the questions below:

- Why do you think **LIVNOT U'LEHIBANOT** chose a name that means "to build and to be built?" How do you think this phrase relates to the individual? To the State of Israel?

- When you look at the **LIVNOT U'LEHIBANOT** projects described on the fact sheet, what does this tell you about the relationship between the Jewish People and the State of Israel?

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Provide students with paper and art supplies. Working in small groups or individually, have students design an informational brochure about **LIVNOT U'LEHIBANOT**. Students may use photographs from a variety of sources including travel brochures about Israel, and websites about Israel / volunteering in Israel / and the Livnot website.

FACTS ABOUT LIVNOT U'LEHIBANOT

Livnot U'Lehibanot is an unaffiliated, educational and volunteer organization established in 1980, with campuses in Jerusalem and Tsfat in Israel.

For 30 years Livnot has:

- Repaired 1000's dilapidated homes for needy families
- Restored 200 Bomb Shelters in Northern Israel
- Rebuilt scores of sites across the Old City of Tzfat
- Aided in the absorption of Ethiopian immigrants

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Livnot is a non-denominational, unaffiliated, educational non-profit with programs open to Jews over the age of 21 who have little or no formal Jewish background. Livnot programs typically combine community service projects and hiking with educational seminars on various Jewish topics. All the educational components of the Livnot program are forum-based and encourage questions and dialog.

WHAT DOES LIVNOT U'LEHIBANOT MEAN?

The name Livnot U'Lehibanot, which in Hebrew means "To Build and To Be Built," refers to the physical contribution the participants make to the building of the Land of Israel, and to the knowledge and experiences gained during the programs it offers.

To learn more you may visit: www.livnot.org.il/

Wheels of Love

Background:

Every year, participants from the United States, Europe, Canada and Israel gather for a five-day ride through the Israeli countryside. It is Israel's largest annual sports charity event and every year it sees a marked increase in the number of riders. **The Alyn Pediatric and Adolescent Rehabilitation Center**, one of the world's premier medical centers for children with disabilities, sponsors the event.

Running time: 1.48 minutes



After the students have listened to the testimony, ask students if they heard anything in the testimony that supported or differed from their earlier discussion about volunteerism.

Teacher Notes: The second segment of the DVD introduces students to:

Joel Grossman, a volunteer from Los Angeles, CA

- *I participate because I am dedicated to good causes*
- *I love biking and I love Israel*

Jim and Paul Levine, a father and son from Chicago, IL

- *I have never had a cause that has affected me so much as this hospital and these children in Jerusalem*
- *I asked my father(Paul Levine) to come this year and I am happy he did.*

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION:

1. One of the riders said that although the uphill ride was difficult it is nothing compared to the "uphill" ride that the children at Alyn have every day. What does his metaphor mean?
2. In what ways does a fundraising event that supports a cause differ from supporting a cause by writing a check? What are the advantages?

LEARNING ABOUT WHEELS OF LOVE AND THE ALYN HOSPITAL

Provide students with the Wheels for Love and Alyn Hospital fact sheet and review together. Follow with a discussion of the questions below:

1. The fact sheet lists several of **ALYN HOSPITAL'S** outreach and humanitarian projects in countries other than Israel. What does this tell you about the core values of the State of Israel and the Jewish People?
2. What is a rehabilitation hospital and how does it differ from a general hospital? What kinds of disabilities do the children at Alyn have. How are these children different from and similar to children with disabilities in America?

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Examine a physical map of the Land of Israel. Learn about the terrain and climate in different areas of the country. Trace the 2009 Wheels of Love route. Choose one stop on the route to explore. Share your findings with your classmates.

FACTS ABOUT WHEELS OF LOVE

1. Wheels of Love (WOL) is Israel's largest sports charity event, and raises funds to support the work of Alyn Hospital Pediatric and Adolescent Rehab Center.
2. Riders experience the thrill of cycling, explore the Land of Israel, and raise money for an important cause.
3. Although the routes differ each year, they now end at Alyn Hospital in Jerusalem, where the children, their parents, the Alyn staff, friends and family welcome the riders.
4. Each rider commits to raising \$2,000 from family and friends. The average amount raised by each rider is over \$5,000.
5. In 2007 WOL had over 600 participants from 13 countries, and raised over \$3 million from more than 15,000 donors.

ALYN HOSPITAL PEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT REHAB CENTER

ALYN Hospital is one of the world's leading specialists in the active and intensive rehabilitation of children regardless of religion or ethnic origin suffering from a broad range of physical disabilities. Over the years, Alyn has developed a wealth of experience in the treatment of acquired conditions such as trauma and head injuries from terror attacks, road and domestic accidents, general pediatric orthopedics, special feeding management, burns, rehabilitation following the removal of benign or malignant tumors and congenital or progressive muscle, nerve and bone diseases and respiratory insufficiency. Everything needed to rehabilitate a child is under one roof at ALYN and a talented staff combines expertise with love and state-of-the-art technology to help each patient reach his or her highest possible level of mobility and independence.

HOW IS ALYN HOSPITAL FUNDED?

The Rehabilitation Center is a non-profit that receives no government funding and its extraordinary care is only partially reimbursed from fixed hospitalization rates. Funds raised through WOL plus other donations fill the gap between insurance and the true cost of care. The funds raised also pays for research, replacement of equipment and renovations.

ALYN HOSPITAL IS A GOOD WORLD CITIZEN

1. In February 2010, a team of medical experts from Alyn Hospital specializing in the rehabilitation of amputees went to Haiti to assess needs for providing rehabilitation for the injured and training potential Haitian therapists in Israel
2. Alyn therapists participated in an international effort to help children in Ukraine
3. Alyn Hospital treats Israeli and Arab children wounded by war, helping to create bonds between families whose children participate in rehab at the same time.
3. Alyn Hospital goes green as a partner in the global struggle to save the environment.

WHEELS OF LOVE RIDERS SEE THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The routes are physically challenging, and push riders to and beyond their limits

1999 and 2000 Jerusalem to Eilat

2001 Golan Heights to Jerusalem

2002 Jerusalem to Eilat

2003 Maalot in Northern Israel through the Galilee to Jerusalem

2004 Mitzpe Ramon to Jerusalem vis the Negev Desert

2005 Began in the Golan Heights, Went up Mt. Hermon, and culminated in Jerusalem

2006 Jerusalem to Eilat

2007 Tiberias to Jerusalem

2008 Be'er Sheva to Jerusalem

2009 Rosh Pinna to the Sea of Galilee, to the Jordan River; a climb up to the Golan Heights to a trek across the Hula Valley; and a climb from Mt. Hermon to Neve Ativ. The group passed from the border of Jordan to Syria, descended toward Lake Kinneret to Beit She'an and commenced another climb up to Mt. Gilboa. On the last day, they rode from Modi'in up to Jerusalem

2010 Mitzpe Ramon through the Negev Desert

THE LAND OF ISRAEL: GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/Land/THE+LAND+Geography+and+Climate.htm>

To learn more about Alyn Hospital you may visit: www.alyn.org

To learn more about Wheels of Love you may visit: www.alynride.org

Hazon Yeshaya: Feeding the Needy

*Hunger takes no holidays. That's true even in the Holy Land. Despite extensive government sponsored social programs, private initiatives are an essential part of the battle against hunger. **Hazon Yeshaya** is one of Israeli's premiere programs at the forefront of the effort to make sure no one goes hungry. Founded by Abraham Israel, a self-described former hungry refugee, the chain of soup kitchens feeds more than 120,000 Israelis per month. The organization's 140 volunteers are high school and college students, adults and pensioners, many of whom are in Israel as tourists. Hazon Yeshaya's centers are open 365 days a year and often provide the only hot meal of the day for Israel's less fortunate citizens.* Running time: 4.22 minutes



After the students have listened to the testimony, ask students if they heard anything in the testimony that supported or differed from their earlier discussion about volunteerism.

Teacher Notes: The third segment of the DVD introduces students to:

Yaron Lifting, a volunteer from Holland

Brings food from the central kitchen to neighborhoods surrounding Jerusalem

Irwin Nathan, a volunteer from New York City

- I feel that the people here need help*
- It is my way to perform "Gemilut Hasadim" (acts of loving kindness). That is part of the Jewish way of life.*

Judith Miller, wife of a journalist and a volunteer

- I want to help...there are so many poor people*

Maya, American student volunteer

- My family has much, these people do not, and I want to help.*

Andrew Cafitin, new immigrant who is helped by Hazon Yeshaya

- Many of the people here are very old and cannot work*
- Hazon Yeshaya helps immigrants live well*

Sheldon Ritz, youth worker

- We partner with educational institutions to divert young people to the program*
- We offer a hot meal, teachers to help with studies, and computers*
- Children are more attentive in school and they are learning better*

Rabbi Abraham Israel, Founder Director of Hazon Yeshaya

- Founded the program out of his experience as a hungry refugee*
- Unemployment is rising, and more people need a hot meal*

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION:

Distribute the student handout **Abraham Israel Hungry to Make a Difference**

Have the students read the article aloud or in small groups. Discuss the reading with emphasis on the following questions:

- How does Rabbi Israel's life story guide his commitment to help the hungry?
- What motivated Rabbi Abraham Israel to found Hazon Yeshaya?
- In what ways does Rabbi Israel's knowledge and experience in business affect the way Hazon Yeshaya operates?
- In the article it says that the poverty in Israel clashes with the image of Israeli society as a high tech miracle. What are the dilemmas faced by both Israel and the United States in addressing the issues of those in need?

LEARNING ABOUT

Provide students with the Hazon Yeshaya fact sheet and review together. Follow with a discussion of the questions below:

1. The fact sheet lists the groups helped by Hazon Yeshaya. What are the similarities and differences of those in need in Israel and in your community?
2. Compare and contrast the services provided by Hazon Yeshaya to the services available to those in need in your community.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

One of the important things that Rabbi Abraham Israel did was open his eyes to the needs around him. He started small – one man helping one woman. Irwin Nathan, the volunteer from New York called this way of helping *gemilut chasadim*. *Gemilut chasadim* requires personal involvement in a compassionate manner. This way of helping gives respect to each person in the relationship.

Have each student think about a person they are aware of who is in need of help. Ask them to write down their thoughts on ways in which they can make a difference personally and compassionately. As a jumping off point you may ask if anyone has seen the movie *Pay It Forward*, and have them recall some of the ways Trevor tried to make the world a better place.

Invite your students to share their ideas. Allow for time for students to react to each other.

FACTS ABOUT HAZON YESHAYA

HAZON YESHAYA was founded in 1997 to fight poverty and hunger. They provide the following services:

Soup kitchens. Hazon Yeshaya soup kitchens serve over 400,000 meals each month in a nationwide network of over 60 distribution points. Beneficiaries included over 10,000 school children whose teachers have identified them to be in need of better nutrition.

After-school enrichment program: Provides structured after-school programs including tutorials in math, reading, computer activities and sports.

Day care centers: These centers provide day care for underprivileged pre-schoolers whose parents cannot afford tuition.

Vocational training for the chronically unemployed Vocational training courses provided for the indigent in hairdressing, wig styling and repair, office management, and bookkeeping..

Free dental clinics: Volunteer dentists provide free dental care services for the underprivileged.

Shoe and clothing warehouse: Individuals who are in need may select free clothing and shoes.

Bar and bat mitzvah celebrations Organizes bar and bat mitzvah celebrations for orphans and children from abusive and broken homes.

WHO DOES HAZON YESHAYA SERVE?

- Sick
- Single parent families
- Orphans
- Terror victims
- Elderly
- Holocaust survivors
- Victims of abuse
- Children

To learn more you may visit: <http://www.hazonyesmaya.org/index.html>

ABRAHAM ISRAEL HUNGRY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Jewish Times Asia: 7 June 2010

Abraham Israel was a successful accountant turned businessman who made a good living making shoes in China. He made aliyah. One day, he helped a woman – a total stranger – cross a busy street.

The woman needed more than a little help. As it turned out, “R” had multiple sclerosis. When Israel had gotten her across the street, he felt he needed to help her up to her flat. When they arrived there, he was shocked by its emptiness. R had no food.

“What will you eat?” Israel asked her.

“I’ll probably get a yogurt later today,” she replied.

Abraham Israel was no ordinary retired businessman. Born in Egypt, young Abraham and his family fled to Paris with only the clothes on their backs. He remembers his pants growing shorter and shorter as he grew, and the soup kitchens there that sustained the family. “It saved us. We had enough to eat.”

Eventually, the family split to all corners of the Jewish world, and Abraham’s parents went to New York. The Goldene Medina gave Abraham opportunities for education and success, but he never forgot what it felt like to be hungry. “I used to travel through Israel on a regular basis,” he remembers. “With my samples, on the way to China. But when you just travel through Israel, staying in nice hotels, you don’t see the poverty.”

He asked R if there was anyone else she knew who was as hungry as she

was. It turned out that her neighbour was also hungry. The neighbour was reluctant to let R and her new friend into the flat, but Israel could see through the crack in the door its emptiness and the mattresses propped against the wall – where the children slept at night.

It was with an initial group of seventeen hungry Israelis that Abraham Israel began Hazon Yeshaya, a network of soup kitchens that has grown from its 1998 beginnings to feed, today, more than eight thousand people.

And Israel has just purchased the premises of a defunct supermarket in Ashkelon, from which he hopes to produce food for a further thousand, that will be distributed all over southern Israel. The truth is that the gap between rich and poor in Israel is wide and growing, and Abraham Israel doesn’t see any light at the end of the tunnel. Now, the economy is booming. But Netanyahu slashed allowances for food. Indeed, R – the “index patient” – had a food allowance. The subsidy, however, went to pay for her multiple sclerosis medications. And Israel sees government as part



Abraham Israel

of the problem, not part of the solution.

“There’s a 16.5% VAT tax on meat. And I can’t get them to waive it for us. Plus, the price of bread was just increased by 11%, and the new [Olmert] government is planning another hike in bread and milk prices.”

Hazon Yeshaya runs soup kitchens. The soup kitchens feed families, schoolchildren, Holocaust survivors, the elderly, the entire religious-secular spectrum, 365 days a year.

“The worst thing is to think that survivors are hungry,” says Israel sadly. “No one – especially no one who went through what those people went through – should have to be hungry today in Israel.”

Israel was just in Hong Kong seeking donations. He is not your average fundraiser. As founder and CEO of Hazon Yeshaya, he could easily employ someone to do his fundraising, but he prefers to do it himself.

Israel has applied the knowledge and experience he gained in business to his non-profit enterprise. His overhead is 3%. And Israel keeps track of whom he’s feeding, to make sure the food goes to the truly needy.

“We work almost like a franchise now. We find properties in poor areas – usually it’s not hard, there’s a premises where a business has closed – and then I call the same architect. We use the same kitchen equipment; we’ve learned how to plan for efficient use of space. We can be up and running quickly.”

Finding many children who have lost permanent teeth due to neglect (dental checkups not being free, and care being expensive), Hazon Yeshaya has opened free dental clinics, recruiting volunteer dentists to provide free care to at-risk children and adults.

Holiday food packages are distributed to thousands of families who cannot afford basic food staples. The institution also operates a clothing warehouse masquerading as a department store, where needy people can “shop” like everyone else, trying on their selections and being assisted by volunteers. Israel remembers those vanishing pants legs and how embarrassing it was for a young boy.

Another area of development is vocational training courses for people left behind in the current economic boom. Israel finds recently discharged soldiers, school drop-outs, and people with obsolete skills, for retraining courses as diverse as hairdressing, computer technology, and industrial cooking.

And 80% of Hazon Yeshaya’s efforts are directed at youth. One in three Israeli children are under-nourished, Hazon Yeshaya provides daily hot lunches in Israeli schools and afternoon programmes, directly to children identified by school staff as not receiving sufficient food at home, so that these children can concentrate on learning and not on their empty tummies.

Afternoon enrichment programmes organised by Hazon Yeshaya provide a structured environment, help with schoolwork, and allow access to computers and other resources to give needy children a leg up for the future.

Hazon Yeshaya’s nursery schools and pre-schools help provide poor children a better foundation for mandatory education that begins at age five. Children with special needs – Down’s syndrome children and those on the autism spectrum – from poor families can also get support through Hazon Yeshaya.

It’s clear from a few moments with Abraham Israel that he is, above all, passionately committed to what he does. Hazon Yeshaya is more than a labour of love, it’s an institution dedicated to improving the world. Abraham Israel is no dreamy do-gooder, he’s a completely serious, no-nonsense businessman who has found a way to give back to a needy world. He harbours no illusions that things will miraculously get better after some future election.

Diaspora Jews don’t want to believe that there really is grinding poverty in Israel. It clashes with our image of Israeli society as a high-tech miracle. Abraham Israel didn’t want to believe it either.