Jerusalem International YMCA

TOWER VIEWS INTERNATIONAL

Jerusalem International YMCA Bulletin

WINTER 2008

An Invitation from JIY

Recently we were blessed with a visit from friends representing several YMCAs in the United States including New Haven and Hartford (Connecticut) and Chattanooga (Tennessee). Highlights of their trip to Jerusalem are featured in this issue with the hope that their experience will inspire you to bring a group from your YMCA or place of worship. I would like to extend a heartfelt invitation to each and every one of you to visit the wonders of the Holy Land, while benefiting from JIY's hospitality as the anchor and host of your trip. Our 3 Arches Golden Rule Tour Service can help to plan detailed itineraries to ensure you an inspired, life-changing experience.

This April, JIY will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the construction of its magnificent landmark building. 2008 also marks 130 years of YMCA service in Jerusalem. Since 1878, JIY has served the people of Jerusalem by providing a safe haven for religious, cultural and intellectual freedom. I invite you to join us in celebrating this momentous year and to explore the inspirational city of Jerusalem. The streets and hotels are alive and brimming with tourists from around the world!

On behalf of the staff and volunteers here at JIY, I wish you and your loved ones a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Shalom, Salaam, Peace

NORRIS D. LINEWEAVER
Director General
Jerusalem International YMCA

Children celebrate at JIY's annual Holiday Party.

Holiday Spirit Where It Is Appeciated Most

The holiday season is an extraordinary time of sharing and giving at the Jerusalem International YMCA. For more than 50 years, JIY has hosted a holiday party for hundreds of orphans and children in need from Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

This year, more than 600 children came to JIY's Mary Nathaniel Auditorium for a celebration which featured Ronny Rock, a popular entertainer from Nazareth, as well as singers and musicians from around the area. Each child also received a gift package of special treats and school supplies. Youth volunteers from JIY's Moderate Voices for Progress (MVP) program participated in the celebration by volunteering their time to wrap all of the gifts.

This inspirational evening was made possible through the generosity of the Jerusalem Foundation, the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies and our many friends from YMCAs in the USA and around the world. We extend our thanks to one and all.

Representatives from U.S. YMCAs make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

JIY Hosts U.S. YMCA Delegation

This past November, a group of YMCA professionals and volunteers from the United States traveled to the Holy Land for an eight-day exploration of the region. Hosted by JIY, the delegation represented YMCAs in New Haven and Hartford (Connecticut) and Chattanooga (Tennessee).

The itinerary included activities intended to appeal to the diverse backgrounds and interests of the participants. They met with a group of JIY's Moderate Voices for Progress (MVP) graduates to discuss coexistence; visited the West Bank as guests of the East Jerusalem YMCA; discussed contemporary regional issues with both Arab and Jewish speakers; explored the historic Old City of Jerusalem and shopped in the Arab market; swam in the Dead Sea; and even enjoyed the hospitality of Peniel-by-Galilee, JIY's guesthouse in Tiberias. One participant remarked that, "The trip was everything I expected and more! Seeing kids of all backgrounds together was a true YMCA experience!"

JIY receives thousands of guests each year and especially looks forward to visits from YMCA staff and volunteers from around the world. JIY warmly welcomes and encourages YMCA groups to visit the Holy Land for a life-changing experience. Participants will visit historic sites, learn about the issues and experience the local culture. The staff can accommodate each visiting group's preferences and needs. For more information on how to organize a group trip to visit JIY, please contact us at ymca@ymca.org.il.

JIY's Celebration of Culture and Coexistence, sponsored by the European Union.

Celebration of Culture and Coexistence

JIY hosted its first multicultural arts festival designed to celebrate diversity through the arts. "Celebration of Culture and Coexistence," held from December 6-31, was designed to coincide with the faith traditions of Hanukkah, Id el Adha and Christmas.

The festival featured more than a dozen performances in theater, music, choral and dance which addressed the region's complex issues and underscored the value of cultural expression as a means to unite people through a common experience.

People from all backgrounds gathered to take advantage of this opportunity to explore through performance art, the serious issues impacting the health and happiness of those living in the region. The events took place in different languages including Hebrew, Arabic, English and Spanish.

Amy Kronish, curator of the festival, hopes that "citizens will realize that the same cultural experience, be it a play, a concert or dance performance, can move us all equally. I am confident that festivals such as this unite all Jerusalemites, divided in politics and separate in their lives, through the language of culture and arts."

JIY wishes to acknowledge the Delegation of the European Commission to the State of Israel. Through their vision and generosity, JIY was able to transform the dream of a multicultural celebration into a vibrant reality.

Annual Support Campaign

We hope you will join our campaign and support the work of JIY, including our programs designed to develop peace leadership skills among young people. For more information on how you can help, visit www.jerusalemymca.org.

Jerusalem International YMCA
26 King David Street, P.O. Box 294, Jerusalem 91002, Israel
Tel: 972-2-5692692 E-mail: ymca@ymca.org.il Internet: www.jerusalemymca.org

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JIY MVP professionals: bridging cultural gaps through filmmaking.

MVP Group Visits the U.S.

For three weeks last fall, the YMCA of Greater Hartford (Connecticut) hosted a group of young men and women who are participants of JIY's Moderate Voices for Progress (MVP) program. MVP is a people-to-people program dedicated to helping young Muslim, Jewish and Christian adults (ages 22-35) from diverse communities develop the necessary skills to lead conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence efforts.

Recently, MVP groups have been organized by profession to help foster in-depth relationships with others from their field. This group was comprised of young adults who are all working towards a career in filmmaking.

While in the U.S., the MVP group participated in leadership development activities including an intensive conflict resolution workshop, meetings with established filmmakers and producers, and speaking engagements at two high schools, a synagogue, a mosque and a church. The group also attended the Boston Jewish Film Festival to view a film directed by one of their peers.

"I learned about the depth of the relationship between the world of media and conflict resolution," said one participant. "It was fascinating to see how dealing with art could interest and bring together people on both sides of a conflict."

Since their return to Jerusalem, the group has been working together to complete a film project they began while in Hartford. JIY would like to thank the YMCA of Greater Hartford, the surrounding community and the families who hosted the participants for truly making this a life-changing experience for the group.

We'll all be in Great Shape in 2008

At JIY, our entire staff is committed to providing the highest level of fitness programs and services to the kids, youth, adults, seniors and specialized groups who trust us with their health and wellness needs.

2007 was an exciting year of progress which included the addition of many innovative programs and the merger of SHAPE and Great Shape Fitness Studio into one department, helping to streamline operations. JIY members can now enjoy unlimited use of all of our health and wellness services, including the fitness room, swimming pool, squash courts and all group exercise classes. Our members are delighted with the wide variety of options now available to them.

Overseeing the successful implementation of these exciting initiatives is Ms. Rena Sered, JIY's new Director of Innovations and Services. Ms. Sered has nearly two decades of expertise and experience from her previous post as Fitness Director of the Regency Jerusalem Spa at the Regency Hotel (formerly Hyatt). She has already introduced creative new programs that will continue to engage current and new members alike of all fitness levels. Please join us in welcoming her to the team!

RECENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS INNOVATIONS

- **Personalized exercise programs** are now designed for all new JIY members, beginning with a one-on-one appointment with a JIY Personal Fitness Coach who creates a customized and structured routine. Members will later receive two additional coaching sessions to review and update their program, resulting in greater success in achieving personal health improvement goals. Members benefit from a supportive environment with personal encouragement to help keep them on track.
- **Personal fitness and small group personal fitness programs** are geared towards individuals interested in receiving personalized coaching to achieve a higher level of health and fitness. These programs are tailored to meet specialized fitness needs such as those of beginners, elderly individuals, people suffering from short-term or chronic pain (such as back, knee or shoulder), athletes, pre/post-natal women or diabetics.
- **Recent staff enrichment programs** include the participation of JIY staffers in the IDEA World Fitness convention in San Diego, California. Upon their return, the participants shared the research and global fitness trends that they learned about with JIY's fitness department staff.

For more information, please contact Dafna Gold Melchior,
Director of Marketing and Communication, Jerusalem International YMCA
tel: 972-2-569-2691 e-mail: dafna@ymca.org.il

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Baby Shape

Baby Shape was formed in 2006 when JIY staff reached out to new Muslim, Jewish and Christian mothers at parks around Jerusalem and Tel Aviv to promote maternal and infant health. As seen here, participants of Baby Shape have the opportunity to bond with their babies while getting in shape and meeting other new moms. Through unique programming such as this, JIY brings diverse communities together with the purpose of promoting cross-cultural understanding through the core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

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