

Migdal Ohr at a Glance

An AFMO Bi-Monthly Update

November/December 2013 ~ Kislev / Tevet 5774

www.migdalohrusa.org



On Campus:

Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Ceremony



Since the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin eighteen years ago, the 12th of Cheshvan is commemorated annually in Israel as Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Day. This national day of remembrance and mourning of his untimely death is recognized by all state institutions, army bases, and schools.

The students at Migdal Ohr marked this day on the Migdal Ha'Emek campus with a touching memorial, commemorating the life and legacy of Yitzhak Rabin.

The ceremony began with a day of educational programs focusing on promoting and protecting democratic values and examining the danger that violence poses to society and state.



Chana Reizel's Birthday Celebration for Students



Twenty-three girls from 1st to 8th grade briskly and quietly make their way to the principal's office after being called over the school's PA system. These girls are not about to be punished or reprimanded, but they all do share at least one thing in common—they have all had their birthdays in the previous two weeks. There is excitement in the air and the mood is festive as the children enter the principal's office which has been decorated with balloons and the tables have been set with chocolate milk and pastries.



Once every two weeks, Chana Reizel, the Pnina Ohr School principal, repeats the very same ceremony, addressing girls who have had their birthday as if they are her own children, telling them about the importance of a birthday, and encouraging them to make the most of the year ahead. Chana presents the girls with a beautiful designed blessing for their birthday and a small gift. She calls each girl to her for a warm embrace and a personal blessing. For many of these girls, it may be the only time that they celebrate their birthday and Chana makes sure that it is the warmest, most loving and enjoyable celebration possible.

Donor Reflections:

Matthew Tambor Writes About His Recent Visit to Migdal Ohr

On October 16, 2013, my wife Hagit and I visited Migdal Ohr. We weren't sure what to expect but felt that this trip was important. It was moving to see "Kol Yisrael arevim zeh lazeh / All Israel is responsible for one another" put into practice.



We were taken on a tour of the campus and shown classrooms and dorms. The kids from broken homes and difficult circumstances are getting a safe environment in which to live, learn and re-adjust. We are impressed by the scope—thousands of people, 24/7, and it is working.

We tear-up at the nursery when we understand that some babies are abandoned. There is a strong desire to hug the kids and hug the teachers and caregivers. Notwithstanding the negative backstory, there is so much love. There is hope for a good future for these kids. We learn that at Migdal Ohr, everyone is entitled to a chance, a second chance, and so on...there is no limit. There is no rejection or abandonment here.

We happened to be visiting on the day that the school was commemorating the life of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the program is heartfelt. The teachers and principal have clearly gotten across the civics lessons and imparted a love of Israel to the



kids. Hagit and I really felt the Tikvah (Hope) at that ceremony. Over and over, we saw that giving respect and teaching self-respect and a positive life attitude were key goals of the school. Most unique is the wedding hall, where even a poor couple can feel like a King and Queen for the day. They deserve to feel good about their marriage and themselves.

We are treated to a nice lunch where we visit with Rabbi Grossman. We are honored when he shares some stories with us. The message that resonates with me is Rabbi Grossman's accepting attitude of all children and people in need. The categories and divides we've created among ourselves as Jews do not apply at Migdal Ohr.

Hagit and I felt Rabbi Grossman's love, the dedication of the staff and teachers, and hope to harness it into some new program we participate in and sponsor for the kids of Migdal Ohr. Our advice to other donors: Go to Israel. Visit Migdal Ohr. It's so important.

Community Events: Ohr Yisraeli Slichot Service



In the wee hours of the morning on Thursday, September 12th, just between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Rabbi Grossman led a very powerful Slichot prayer service in Meron, Israel, at the tomb of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. Nearly 7,000 students from all over the country who are involved in Migdal Ohr's 160 Ohr Yisraeli youth clubs joined in the singing, dancing, and prayers. The event began with a concert, followed by speeches from several Rabbis including Rabbi Grossman, and concluded with the moving Slichot prayer service as everyone—regardless of their religious affiliation—prayed together in unison. AFMO Board Member Fabia Preminger was there for the event and captured a video that you can watch on our YouTube page. The story also made the front page of The Jerusalem Post the next day. It was a wonderful way to welcome in 5774!



Bar Mitzvah at Migdal Ohr:

Ari Mitchell, October 2013



This October, Ari Mitchell of New York City celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in Israel, sharing the day with 13 boys who attend the Metivata Boys Junior High School on the Migdal Ha'Emek campus and all of their classmates. After putting on tefillin for the first time at the Kotel, Ari and his father Oliver joined Rabbi Grossman and the Middle School students on campus in a celebration filled with music and dancing. Ari generously gave each of the 13 Bar Mitzvah boys a set of tallis and tefillin in a personalized, embroidered tallis bag.

The Mitchells are long-time supporters of Migdal Ohr. Ari's grandfather Jan Mitchell, OBM, donated a dormitory building for boys and Ari's parents Oliver and Rabia have been dedicated benefactors of Migdal Ohr for nearly two decades. Ari's sister Rachel celebrated her own Bat Mitzvah at Migdal Ohr two years ago with a festive carnival for the young women of Migdal Ohr's Pninat Ohr Elementary School. Through sharing the Mitchells' joyous simchas with our students, it greatly helps the students combat difficulties they are dealing with in their personal lives,



and the ripple effects of the joy they receive at these celebrations radiates out to their classes, schools and campuses. Please contact the AFMO office at 212-397-3700 if you'd like to set up a Bar or Bat Mitzvah twinning celebration on campus in Israel.

New Project:

Rabbi Grossman Video Conference



On Tuesday, October 15th, for the first time in 40 years, Rabbi



Grossman was able to simultaneously address all of the Migdal Ohr schools and their students without having to leave his office. The staff of the Ministry of Education's latest project, "sisma lekol talmid" (a password for every student), set up web-conference facilities at each school allowing

Rabbi Grossman this new opportunity. The goal of the project is to provide comprehensive computer-education systems and allow the use of information technology as an integral part of the lifestyle of students and teachers, therefore creating a computerized educational community.

The Rabbi addressed students on the topics of study, modesty, and respect. This interactive experience allowed the students to ask the Rabbi various questions of their own, which he answered immediately. The students were excited to be involved in this special project and look forward to additional virtual meetings with the Rabbi in the near future.



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If you are planning to visit Israel in the near future, please call us to schedule a VIP tour of one of our campuses or youth clubs.