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Ethiopian National Project in Netanya: an Overview June 2010

UJA NNJ has had a long-standing relationship with the city of Netanya, and in particular, the Dora neighborhood of that city. In the early 1980's, the former Bergen County Federation assisted in the building of the Dora Community Center, also known as the Matnas (Community Center) Ramat Yadin.

The Dora neighborhood of Netanya is home to a large number of Ethiopian immigrants. In order to strengthen the neighborhood, our Federation partnered with the Ethiopian National Project, an NGO (Non-governmental organization) whose member organizations include, the Jewish Federation of North America (formerly UJC), Ethiopian Jewish Community organizations, The Jewish Agency for Israel, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Keren Hayesod, and the Israeli Government.

The Ethiopian National Project's programs in Netanya are making tremendous strides in efforts expended to transform the future of Netanya's Ethiopian-Israeli youngsters. Support from UJA Federation of Northern New Jersey has been instrumental in enabling this enormous undertaking to continue.

Below is a description of one program and its successes.

Scholastic Assistance Program

This program promotes the integration of Ethiopian-Israeli students into junior and senior high schools and helps them pass their matriculation exams. Its focus is in three main spheres: scholastic, social, and personal. In the scholastic domain, the program's purpose is to improve the students' achievements reducing the dropout rate at the end of ninth grade and increasing the proportion of students in the higher levels and on academic tracks. Ultimately this also increases the number of high-school graduates whose matriculation certificates satisfy university entrance requirements.

In the social and personal realms, the program aims to increase students' motivation to learn, strengthen their sense of personal capacity, expand their feeling of belonging to their community, and develop their unique identities.

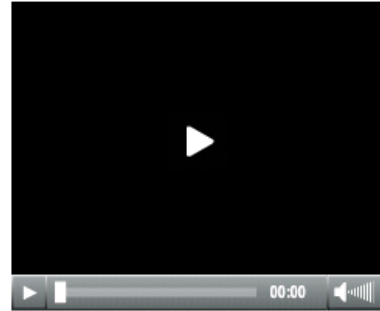
Outcomes and Achievements

On a national level, the proportion of program students who satisfied university entrance requirements increased by 10% from 27% to 37%. Recently published studies by the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute in 2009 reveal the progress being made by Scholastic Assistance Program participants. The Institute's statistical analysis of the odds ratios that calculate the impact of the Program found that participants in the program achieve higher matriculation scores. Among the findings:

- 31% of the Ethiopian-Israeli students in schools with a Scholastic Assistance Program achieved university-level certificates as compared to 17% of students in schools without ENP Scholastic Assistance
- 77% of Ethiopian-Israeli students at schools with ENP Scholastic Assistance achieved English matriculation, in contrast to only 56% at other schools
- 72% of Ethiopian-Israeli students at schools with ENP Scholastic Assistance achieved math matriculation, in contrast to 58% in other schools.

These statistics correspond to another recent survey of principals in schools where the Scholastic Assistance Program is being carried out; it reveals a high level of satisfaction of principals for the program and its contribution. A full 71% of principals reported that they perceived the program as contributing greatly to the students' progress.

The extra-curricular aspect of ENP's Scholastic Assistance Program gave students exciting opportunities to learn about the world around them outside the classroom. Students visited the "Dialogue in the Dark" exhibit in Holon, where they got a small taste of what everyday life is like for blind people. At the exhibit, visitors are led by blind guides in small groups through specially constructed darkened rooms, in which scents, sounds, wind, temperatures, and textures convey the characteristics of daily



environments, such as a park, a city, or a cafe. Other trips and activities included horseback riding, competitive strategy games, and a visit to Cinema City where students learned about preventing addiction.

The following is a letter we received which was written by five participants of the program in Netanya. It certainly speaks for itself:

“Firstly, we would like to thank you for your donation to the Ethiopian National Project and your help in ensuring its success. We want you to know all that you and the staff of ENP do on our behalf helps us progress and succeed.

We really enjoy the Scholastic Assistance Program and it is a lot of fun for us. The help we receive in our studies through ENP helps us to advance in our studies; on a social level, it helps us become a part of Israeli society.

The project provides us with lots of fun activities. For example, last week we had a magician who made us laugh and surprised us. We had a 10th grade student who volunteers with ENP in our school and gives us seminars once or twice a week. In this seminar, we learn about group cooperation and it really unites us.

We learn so many new and interesting things that we cannot write about everything. On Passover, we went on a trip in the mountains of Jerusalem and we met students from all over the country that participate in ENP's programs. It was an unforgettable experience to sleep outside in the wilderness, away from our homes and to meet new students.

We think we have already expressed how much we enjoy the program and we really hope that it will continue next year, and in the coming years. The students' enjoyment and our studies that advance us are all thanks to you, and to our teachers.

Thank you for everything.

With love and great admiration,
Fenta, Aschaela, Batchen, Muzan, and Tekula- Netanya”

