

## Yerus Fisiha

### Ethiopian National Project SPACE Alumna, Beit Shemesh

Yerus, short for Yerusalem, is a recent SPACE alumna from Beit Shemesh. Yerus made Aliyah with her family when she was only 6 years old, in 2005. She remembers the fresh white dress she wore, and how her father hoisted her atop his shoulders as they strode out of the Ben Gurion gate and into Israel for the first time. She remembers the wild rush of elation she felt as her grandmother, who had left Ethiopia to make Aliyah a few years earlier, greeted her and her family with a warm embrace. Yerus is 19 today, and her soft-spoken words carry an understated wisdom. She speaks fondly of her love of studying literature and says that, in her free time, she enjoys reading, watching movies and dancing. Today, they are five siblings—Yerus and her four younger brothers.



Yerus joined ENP's SPACE (School Performance and Community Empowerment) program when she was in seventh grade, and she has been an eager participant ever since. Her parents always pushed her to study and get good grades so that she could go to university, but they were not able to help her with her studies. And that's where ENP SPACE helped. Thanks to SPACE, Yerus thrived, particularly in math, for when Yerus joined SPACE, she had a 15% in math: thanks to SPACE, by midyear she had a 45%, and at the end of the year she had earned an impressive score of 100%. It is difficult for Yerus to study when she is alone or at home, so SPACE gives Yerus the personalized curriculum and one-on-one attention that she needs in order to succeed. Yerus raves about her teachers, Amir and Rina, emphasizing the fact that "the teachers are nice and really want to help you." Yerus's teachers speak proudly about how invested she is in volunteering with kids in the community and in encouraging others to join SPACE.

Upon graduating high school, Yerus joined a pre-military program called Gal, which trains youth to be leaders in society and prepares them for the army and life after the army. It has been such a great experience she decided to stay on for a second year in the program before joining the army.

Yerus has big dreams for her future: she wants to command new recruits in the army and go to university, possibly to study psychology and enter the field of education, and SPACE has helped her to make these goals feasible: "Through SPACE, I was able to believe in myself more. I can't tell you how much SPACE helped me and I know that because of SPACE I will be able to achieve my goals and anything else I want to do. I know now that all I need is to believe in myself, work hard and be ready to learn from my failures and this is all thanks to SPACE. So I want to say thank you to you, because without your support I would not be on my way to achieving my dreams!"



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