

## Ethiopian National Project

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הפרויקט הלאומי לקהילה האתיופית בישראל

### **Oshrit Marsha** **Ethiopian National Project SPACE Alumna, Hadera** **1<sup>st</sup> Year Medical Student, Tel Aviv University**



Oshrit Marsha's parents made the arduous journey from Ethiopia through Sudan during the miraculous, secret Operation Moses. They met in Israel and together fulfilled the generations' long dream of having a family in the Promised Land. Oshrit, 29, is one of five siblings, and lives in the city of Hadera.

Today, Oshrit is forging her way to become a doctor: she started medical school in October, having been accepted to a four-year medical school program at Tel Aviv University.

During her high school years, the Ethiopian National Project's School Performance and Community Empowerment Program provided Oshrit the helping hand she needed to succeed. "My experience with ENP SPACE helped me at every juncture, long after school ended," Oshrit explains. "It was a long process, and the change I underwent remains with me to this day."

In school, Oshrit was very shy, which impacted on everything. Though she was a good student, she rarely participated in class, and even preferred to stay in the classroom when all the other kids would go to recess. "I had a hard time believing in myself, and meeting friends," she explains. "SPACE gave me a framework where I could meet and get close to other kids. We went on field trips, including to nature, which I loved."

The small group scholastic support Oshrit received through SPACE helped her fulfill her potential in math and other subjects. But most of all, the one on one guidance she received from her SPACE counselor, Ifat, was life-changing: "Ifat was always there for me. She helped me understand that I'm good, I can do anything, I need to work hard, push myself, and I can succeed in whatever I set out to do-- even if I don't succeed the first time."

It's that new-found confidence that helped Oshrit get her dream placement in the elite Israel Defense Forces (IDF) intelligence unit upon graduating high school, called 8200: "The selection process was absolutely intensive. Thanks to SPACE, I had the confidence in the interviews that made me a competitive candidate, so I was able to get in." This was Oshrit's first dream fulfilled—ever since she was a child when she was given a book from her father on the Israeli spy Eli Cohen she aspired to serve the State of Israel in Intelligence.

But just as she completed her army experience, SPACE aided her at another juncture: "My grandfather fell ill, and I had the responsibility to accompany him in the hospital. My experience in the hospital filled me with mixed feelings—on one hand, I was fascinated by medicine and enamored with the staff, on the other I was frustrated I could do nothing to heal him. When he passed away, that's when I decided that I would become a doctor. And my belief in myself, from SPACE, helped me navigate every obstacle on the way. I knew nothing would stop me."

Thanks to SPACE, not only has Oshrit's life been transformed, but she has grasped the opportunity to transform the lives of countless others: "SPACE has taught me never to give up. That I am capable of everything. I have the confidence to stand before anyone. I believe in myself. And I know, in just a few years, I will help and heal many others."

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