

## MAKSAM NEWSLETTER

Rosh Hashana 5769/2008

It was a very hot and busy summer for the Ethiopian Israeli pupils of Hadera's MAKSAM Network, hot on the heels of an action packed year of studying and fun.

In addition to our reinforcement lessons in Hebrew Language, English and Math, this year's enrichment curriculum comprised three main subjects: "Painters Around the World" - the pupils learned about famous painters, and how to recognize their specific styles and tried to emulate each different style in their own artwork; "Flowers of Israel" - "nature's works of art", how to recognize them, where to find them, and why some are "protected flowers"; and, (in line with the national school curriculum), the lighter aspects of "60 Years of the State of Israel" in songs, stories and films.

In spite of considerably reduced funding this year, (we are beginning to feel the effects of the global economic situation), MAKSAM's traditional "Day Camp on Wheels" - three weeks of non-stop activity for over 300 children, in July, included five fun-filled mornings at a local swimming pool (something many Ethiopian Israeli children can only dream about), outings to the Luna Park in Tel Aviv, Emet Hataninim nature reserve and adventure park and sporting challenge activities.



We are proud of the fact that many of the facilitators in our Day Camp are former MAKSAM pupils who attended our After-School Program since first grade, and we hope that this strong bond will continue in the future.

For the second year running we were joined on one of the visits to the pool by a group of teens from "Camp Tikkun Olam", teens from Knoxville Tennessee and their Israeli hosts from the Hadera area, who consider their activities with **MAKSAM** as one of the highlights of their trip.

This year our friends from abroad came prepared with games and activities to entertain the kids on "dry land" while their friends were in the pool (for safety reasons not all the kids are allowed to be in the pool at once).



The last day of the Day Camp is Ethiopia Day, our celebration of Ethiopian culture and heritage. This year among the parents and supporters who regularly visit we were honored to host the Mayor of Hadera, Mr Haim Avitan, a staunch supporter of



**MAKSAM**, who visited two centers, chatted with members of the local Ethiopian community, sampled traditional Ethiopian food and watched displays of Ethiopian dancing by the children and camp facilitators.



For the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, all the Ethiopian children (and a few non-Ethiopians) entering first grade in Hadera enjoyed the three-week "Preparation for First Grade" program (which **MAKSAM** operates in conjunction with JDC's PACT program), immediately after the Day Camp.



The pupils learned the alphabet, the principles of early reading and recognizing easy words together with number recognition, simple sums, and the connection between number and quantity. Special exercises improved their fine motor coordination, while our teachers outlined the basic rules of how to behave in school.

Approximately 60 Ethiopian-Israeli pupils due to start Junior High School in September, attended **MAKSAM's** two week "Preparation for Junior High School" program from 27<sup>th</sup> July till 7<sup>th</sup> August. Unfortunately, due to budget cuts, the program was not funded by the Ethiopian National Project (as it had been in the last couple of years).

However, we were determined to continue this important program which we consider to be crucial to the pupils' successful transition to a higher level of learning and vitally important to give our Ethiopian Israeli pupils, who often fall behind grade level in Junior High School, (many even drop out), the extra preparation to keep them in line with their Israeli born peers and boost their self-confidence. Our experienced teachers taught the pupils how to adapt to a different style of learning from what they were used to until now, how to use the internet and library text-books to gather information independently, how to summarize texts and answer questions.

These very important programs prepare the children for the two most significant transitions in their school career, from kindergarten to grade school, and from grade school to Junior High School with the new responsibilities and learning methods involved.

We once again thank our many friends, team and supporters who enabled us to fulfill our long-term commitment to provide the Ethiopian Israeli kids of Hadera with yet another unforgettable summer.

As the school year gathers momentum, Hadera's six **MAKSAM** centers are also returning to routine, welcoming our "veteran" pupils - who run joyfully to **MAKSAM** each afternoon with their homework bags, greeting old friends and teachers - and the new first grade pupils, whom we met in the summer.



We are delighted that the **MAKSAM** Gazit-Sela Center, which commenced operations on a trial basis in December 2007, at the request of the local Ethiopian parents who wanted to set up a **MAKSAM** center in their neighborhood, officially joined the **MAKSAM** network at the start of the school year. The Center, run by an Ethiopian Center Coordinator and an Education Manager, will eventually be staffed by four teachers and two teaching assistants. **MAKSAM** Gazit-Sela, which is located in the "Amal Arts and Sciences High School" in the Gazit neighborhood, will impact 50 Ethiopian Israeli grade school pupils and their families.

The Maksam children, the board, parents, team and volunteers wish you all a Happy and Healthy and Successful New Year

[www.maksam.org](http://www.maksam.org)