

executive message

Looking over the articles that have been published in *FOCUS!* and the items that have appeared on our web site during the past year, I notice how many of the reports have told of ORT Israel's tragic loss of students and graduates, the increased need for trauma counseling and the demand for heightened security measures. In this troubled climate, the news of educating students has frequently been overshadowed.

It was education and nurturing student development, however, that dominated the discussion at October's Executive Committee Meeting in New York, when we had the privilege of being joined by **Uzi Tsuk**, ORT Israel Chair, and **Zvi Peleg**, the recently appointed Director General. Uzi introduced the new Director General to us, and Zvi shared his vision of ORT Israel.

While Zvi has occupied his current position since last spring, his ORT affiliation dates back to 1960,

FOCUS!

leadership matters

November 2002

when he was first introduced to ORT Israel as a student. At the time, it was unusual for an Orthodox child to attend an ORT school, but Zvi's father, whose family had survived the Holocaust, understood the importance of acquiring a marketable skill. Zvi went on to study social

of the uniqueness of an ORT education. He possesses a strong vision of ORT as a vehicle for social change, particularly for students and families with special needs, including learning, language, economic and social challenges. At the same time, he's equally dedicated to creating programs and opportunities for talented students. Zvi takes a holistic approach to education – a well-rounded student excels academically and contributes to his or her community. He believes that this social component is critical to a young person's development.

Emphasizing values and community service, Zvi created the Sunflowers Project, through which high school students offer companionship and computer-based activities to children undergoing treatment in hospital oncology departments around the country. The program has grown to include 700 student-volunteers in its ranks. In a

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work at Bar Ilan University and also holds a degree in educational management. Prior to becoming Director General, he served as ORT Israel's Director of Human Resources, overseeing a network with more than 8,000 employees.

His passion for ORT is apparent when Zvi discusses his philosophy

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We're Moving!

The National Office will be moving to new space on Dec. 27.

Our new home will be at 250 Park Avenue South (at 20th St.), Suite 600, New York, NY, 10003-1494. Phone and fax numbers will remain the same.

separate initiative, high school students who excel in math and physics tutor junior high students. Zvi is developing partnerships with industry, the IDF and colleges and universities. His goal is for companies and universities to adopt schools. High-tech firms would send engineers from their research and development departments to lecture on recent developments, and top students would have the opportunity to visit the companies during school breaks. And through affiliations with colleges and universities, high school students would have access to college-level courses and possibly receive credit.

Zvi also works at establishing relationships with local municipalities. ORT's educational and management expertise is attractive to local authorities when seeking an organization to assume school administration. This fall, the Yitzhak Rabin Upper Secondary School in Gan Yavneh joined the ORT Israel network.

Both ORT Israel's Chair and Director General value the close working relationship that ORT Israel and WAO have enjoyed over the years. They expressed admiration for WAO's devoted work – our financial support, leading missions to schools and reaching out to students and staff. I'm certain this long-standing tradition will continue to flourish and I hope that all news we receive from ORT Israel will be about educational achievements.

*Alice Herman
Executive Vice President*

Corrections: When listing the year-end financial awards in the August/September issue, the **Bronx Region**, which completed its financial assignment, was omitted. The **Northern Virginia Area Council** should have been included in the category of areas that exceeded their assignment by \$10,000.

focus on fund raising

Recommitment Campaign phase 1

Solicitors are off and calling!

More than 100 solicitors are calling nearly 670 individuals for Phase 1 of the 2002-2003 Recommitment Campaign and asking them to renew and upgrade their contributions. The purpose of the Recommitment Campaign is to reach via telephone every contributor who gave a minimum of \$1,000 in 2001-2002, by no later than Dec. 31, 2002.

Wendroff honored as visionary

WAO paid tribute to past National Vice President **Joan Wendroff** at the Association of Fundraising Professionals' (AFP) National Philanthropy Day luncheon held at the New York Marriott Marquis on Nov. 15. The annual event honors individuals who have chosen to make a difference by sharing their wealth, work and wisdom with nonprofit organizations addressing community needs not met by government or business. Twenty nonprofits honored their leaders.

Attended by several hundred people, the event included a discussion on issues facing foundations due to the changing economy, the impact of September 11th and the continued threat of terrorism. Keynote speaker **Jonathan F. Fanton** is President of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. **Jane Hanson**, co-anchor of NBC News Channel 4's *Today In New York*, moderated the discussion.

Prospecting Campaign takes off in New Jersey

As part of the National Prospecting Campaign, the New Jersey Golden Circle/Major Gifts Committee, chaired by **Joan Wendroff**, held its first briefing at the home of **Sandra Wildman**, former President of the Marlboro Chapter. Attendees heard from Vice President and Fund Development Chair **Patti Aaron**, who discussed the current situation in Israel and how it affects the day-to-day lives of our students, teachers and their families. **Sandi Omansky**, New York/New Jersey Planned Giving Committee Chair, made an impromptu appeal on behalf of our planned giving program.

The goal of the Prospecting Campaign is to reach out to new individuals who can potentially make a significant financial contribution to ORT. The New Jersey Region is planning briefings to be held in different areas throughout the year.

*Rachel K. Lobovsky
Director of Major Gifts and
Young Leadership*

news in brief

WAO Day in Florida

As some 150 WAO leaders from around the state descended upon the Deerfield Beach/Boca Raton Hilton for the first All Florida Kick-off Seminar on Oct. 6, the mayors of Boca Raton and Deerfield Beach issued joint proclamations declaring the day "Women's American ORT Day in Florida."

The event, devised as an effort to increase member involvement, generate greater visibility for activities and launch an annual membership drive, officially launched the 2002-03 year. In addition to receiving programmatic updates and motivational training, the members – who represented over 60 chapters – marked WAO's 75th anniversary (official founding date is Oct. 12, 1927). Former Board Member **Mary Ellen Peyton** delivered a keynote address on the past, present and future of ORT.

In an emotional part of the day's program, there was a memorial tribute to the ORT Israel students and graduates who are among those whose lives have been claimed by terror. After lighting a memorial candle, leaders stood and recited each name.

Seminar Co-chair and National Associate Zone Advisor **Joan Mazurek** announced the creation of an ORT Alumni Association. Joan's mother was trained by ORT a half-century ago (see article below). Appropriately, two ORT graduates who now live in Florida participated in a special luncheon program. **Marc Frija** attended an ORT school in Morocco in the late 1950s and was the subject of a documentary about the plight of Jews in the

Casablanca ghetto that many of you may remember, *Mellah*. And **Max Markowitz**, who attended an ORT school in London, is now retired.

In addition to Joan Mazurek, Board Member **Lorraine Epstien** and Honorary Vice President **Naomi Finger** also served as event Co-chairs. Based on this year's success, the seminar stands to become a regular event.

*Annette Israel
Development Associate*

Seeking ORT alumni

Or anyone whose life has been touched by ORT

At this year's Annual Meeting in Chicago, Board Member **Janet Berman** and I discussed how our ORT connection extends beyond WAO membership. My mother and Janet's father-in-law were both former ORT students. Janet and I realized that we both felt the need to create an active alumni association.

Thus, the seeds for a grass roots movement were sown. We hope to build the list – one name and one story at a time – but need your help. Alumni can potentially be excellent

speakers for local events. After all, who better to convey how ORT changes lives than the person who benefited directly from an ORT education?

If you know of anyone who attended an ORT school in the U.S. or Europe, or like Janet and me, whose families were affected by an ORT education, please forward their contact information. I am handling names of people who live east of Chicago, and can be reached at 561.746.4669 or via e-mail at jbmazafl@aol.com. Janet is taking care of Chicago and points west. Please contact her at 248.661.0186 or jsb661@yahoo.com.

See also "Reporter article sparks launch of alumni association" on p. 30 of the Fall 2002 issue of *The Reporter*.

*Joan Mazurek
National Associate Zone Advisor*

Planning for future surrounded by history

The Revolutionary-era (circa 1750) New Rochelle, N.Y., home of **Madelyn** and **Michael Davis** was

**Deadline for next FOCUS!
is Monday, Feb. 3**

assignment update

As of November 30, our 2002-03 assignment income was \$1,533,853, which is approximately 23 percent of the annual assignment of \$6,806,500. Last year at this time, our total fulfillment was \$2,127,519, which was 30 percent of the 2001-02 annual assignment of \$7,149,00.

Phyllis Reiss, Controller

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the historical setting for an Oct. 6 parlor party attended by members and friends of the Westchester Baroness de Gunzbourg Society. Guests enjoyed a dramatization of the life of the Baroness Yvonne de Gunzbourg, brilliantly performed by **Florie Spotkov**, and an informative guided tour of the home-stead given by the hosts.

Following a warm welcome from **Toby Bien**, Westchester Event Chair, I presided over the pinning ceremony. **Debbie Hammer**, National Director of Planned Giving, informed the attendees of some additional planned giving options available to them, stressing the benefits received by both the member and WAO. **Dee Bass**, National Co-chair of the Planned Giving Resource Team, reported on the latest news from the ORT programs around the globe, especially the critical situation in Israel. At the conclusion of the program, guests enjoyed a delicious buffet supper and conversation.

Congratulations to the members of the Westchester Event Committee: **Toby Bien, Rita Cohen, Bea Endick, Judy Goldstein, Lila Halper, Roberta Kay, Sandi Omansky, Naomi Raber, Renee Richmond** and **Florie Spotkov**.

WOMEN'S AMERICAN ORT
FOCUS!
leadership matters

Distributed to: Board of Directors; Zone Advisors; ADCs; Planned Giving Resource Team; Major Gifts, Young Leadership & Financial Management Specialists; Presidents of Chapters and Coordinating Bodies; Bulletin Chairs; PYLC 1-8; Protégée Classes 1-4; Past National Presidents; Honorary Vice Presidents; Staff

Toby and her committee orchestrated a delightful day and an exceptional event to promote planned giving.

*Sandi Omansky
New York/New Jersey
Planned Giving Committee Chair*

Building a society for all ages

By 2050, the number of older persons (60 or older) will exceed the number of young people (under age 15) for the first time in the history of humankind. This unprecedented demographic change will have extensive repercussions on all of our lives, making it imperative that we study the situation and plan for the future. To that end, a Second World Assembly on Ageing under the auspices of the United Nations was held in Madrid.

Some factors about ageing that have been verified are that life expectancy has increased among men and women, although there are differences between developing and developed nations. The older population itself is ageing, and it's no surprise that the majority of older persons are women. The illiteracy rate among older persons is still quite high. It is projected that by mid-century, there will be only four working-age persons for each person 65 or older. In developing nations, older people work longer because of limited retirement plans. Also, young people are seeking work in urban areas, leaving the older generation to tend the farms. This can result in decreased agricultural production as those left behind become less able to work the fields. Abuse of the elderly is another hot issue under the microscope, as is the perception of the world on ageing.

A cultural issue presenting a challenge is the discrimination against women in many countries. They often have lower status, little or no inheritance, far fewer opportunities to earn and save, and because they earn lower salaries, they receive smaller pension payments. Regarding health-related issues, traditional support systems are weakening. Once younger people cared for their elders. Today, it's not uncommon for older people, especially grandparents, to care for the young children of those infected with HIV/AIDS.

The Summit set forth the belief that governments must account for the ageing factor in developing their economic, social security and welfare, and political policies. "Active ageing" has become the buzzword. Older persons have so much to contribute to society. The tall tasks of including them in decision-making, educating them about healthier living, advocating for their human rights, establishing safe and enabling environments, and changing the perception of the elderly from a problem to an achievement are the goals established by the Summit. The world would certainly benefit from the steps leading to and reaching these goals.

As U.N. Secretary General **Kofi Annan** said, "In Africa, it is said that when an old man dies, a library disappears. This reminds us of the vital role older persons play as intermediaries between the past, the present and the future, of the veritable lifeline they provide in society. Without the knowledge of the old, the young would never know where they come from or where they belong. But in order for the old to have a shared language with the young, they must have the opportunity to continue learning throughout life."

*Muriel Hertan
ADC*

The following article appeared in the Sept. 26 issue of The Cleveland Jewish News. **Nadine Bendycki** is a member of the National Mentoring Program Class #4.

ORT school in Chicago follows proud tradition

From Czarist Russia to the present, a success story.

By Nadine A. Bendycki, Special to the CJN

This Sunday morning is different. It is 7:30 a.m. I am riding a motorized coach with nearly 75 other well-appointed Women's American ORT members, on a mini-mission to an ORT school.

As the daughter of a woman who worked tirelessly on behalf of ORT children throughout the world, I have long known of the remarkable work this organization does. But I was not in one of the four dozen countries around the world-including Spain, France, Israel and India where there are ORT schools. I was on the north side of Chicago visiting the Zarem Golde ORT school. I was moved more than I could have anticipated, by witnessing three separate acts which dramatically demonstrated the profound effects such a school can have on the lives of ORT students and their families, ORT school faculty and staff and the members of Women's American ORT.

Thirty-five people are cramped together in a narrow hallway reciting the Shehecheyanu (prayer of thanksgiving). At the end of the prayer, the group leader removes a small piece of cloth covering a mezuzah. The mezuzah symbolizes a significant donation had been made by a family to memorialize their recently deceased son and husband. I did not know this young man, but

The following poem was composed by Alyse Laemmle, a charter member of the Los Angeles Region, on the occasion of the region's luncheon celebrating WAO's 75th anniversary.

*I'll be here with you, at this 75th birthday party
because I owe ORT some of my life's most treasured memories.
Way back when I started the Los Feliz (later Sunset) chapter at my home
I unexpectedly became the speaker, because
the national V.P. supposed to come... didn't.
Over the next years I just kept on speaking...
In chapter, region, and on to national leadership.
I traveled to our ORT schools in displaced person's camps
and was witness to ORT schools' beginnings in Israel.*

*I remember a student of our Munich D.P. camp's watchmaker's class
who was repairing the watch belonging to that city's mayor!
"Because we're Jews, we need to be even better," said his teacher.
I recall the pride of an old man in another camp-school.
He showed me his buttonhole just completed.
"I'll surely get a good job in Israel.
They have a real shortage of men's underwear."*

*I stopped coming to meetings because I needed to go to work full-time.
At age 86, happily I still work.
But today... I needed to come.*

*Because, if I'm very lucky, I'll meet at least one person
who still remembers me from the years I worked as you do now.
G-d bless you each and all for carrying on.
Our ORT schools need all the support we can give.
Our ORT students deserve our caring... and our pride!*

like his parents and his wife, many of the visiting ORT members and the several faculty present at the dedication, I cry. I learned later that the young man's mother is a long-standing member and contributor to ORT, while his father was a member of the building and grounds committee of the school. Their heart is here and that is where they wish their son to be memorialized.

Next we are led to a room filled with computers which the students use to learn about CAD (Computer Aided design), employing biblical text to inspire their renderings of ancient buildings and structures.

Then we reassemble in the auditorium. Several kindergartners sing songs in Russian, and girls, ages 7-10, dance to Russian music. Several teen-age girls then poignantly read poetry in English, although that was not their native language.

All of these children attend Jewish Sunday school at the Zarem Golde School. Because money is tight, the faculty, some of whom teach at the school during the week, do not get paid for their Sunday school teaching. Nonetheless, these immigrant children are exposed to their Jewish heritage because that is what their parents want them to

experience in their new homeland. This is not 1900 or 1930 or 1940. This is Chicago in the 21st century. A woman in her 30s stands in front of the auditorium. She began classes at the Zarem Golde School six months earlier. At that time she did not speak a word of English. This Sunday morning, she speaks in halting, but nonetheless remarkably clear English about how lucky she and her two children are in having left Kosovo for America. Here she is learning a trade which will enable her to support herself and her children.

“ORT is like a second home to me,” she says. “My teachers care about me and want me to succeed.” This is not Eastern Europe after the devastation wrought by the Holocaust. This is Chicago in the 21st century.

Jews in the Diaspora continue to wander, looking for religious freedom and better opportunities for themselves and for their children. For more than 120 years, ORT has helped displaced Jews and non-Jews by providing technical and vocational skills to better enable such persons to support themselves.

This remarkable program, which began in Czarist Russia around the time my paternal grandmother was born in a shtetl in Lithuania, continues to educate and empower Jews today in Chicago, New York City and Los Angeles.

Focus on ORT Israel

For the first time, ORT, in collaboration with *Scientific American*, is producing and publishing the scientific periodical in Hebrew. The Hebrew edition of *Scientific American* will contain articles and columns that deal largely with

updates and news on the sciences and technology. The periodical is also geared to helping secondary school students in the higher-level science classes stay abreast of innovations and trends. Editors of the periodical are **Dr. Eli Eisenberg**, Deputy Director of Research and Development and Training, and **Dr. Alex Manes**. The first issue (of six annually) has been published and generated great interest among the scientific community and school administrations in Israel.

ORT Israel is introducing a program to train Orthodox male students to become electronic technicians and engineers. The first class began at ORT Spanian in October with 15 yeshiva students. Women’s interest in the project has been noted, and the possibility of starting another class is being investigated. The courses will help the students integrate into the workforce. Graduates will receive professional certificates recognized by the Ministry of Labor and even be able to pursue further academic study at Machon Lev.

leadership development

Congratulations, PYLC Class #9

The Young Leadership Department warmly welcomes the following members of the President’s Young Leadership Council Class #9:

Linda Cawley
Newton, Pa.
Summit Square Chapter

Jodi E. Cohen
Boothwyn, Pa.
Brandywine Chapter

Beverly E. Langston
Houston
B’Yachad Chapter

Lynn L. Reiner
Highland Park, Ill.
Harmony Park Chapter

Deborah Rettig
Manalapan, N.J.
Freehold-Manalapan Chapter

Lori Taylor
Farmington Hills, Mich.
Koach Chapter

We’d like to thank everyone who submitted names. PYLC #9 will meet for the first time in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., on Feb. 8-9.

Young Leadership strategic planning

To help Young Leadership reach its potential, National President **Carol Linch** and Executive Vice President **Alice Herman** approved the initiation of a strategic planning process. The YL Strategic Planning Committee is working to identify goals and objectives and, most importantly, to align them with organizational priorities. With a clear vision and a true sense of purpose, the future of Young Leadership at Women’s American ORT will be strong. The National Young Leadership Department is evaluating the initiative’s progress and making necessary adjustments.

The process is being conducted via conference call to minimize expenses, and participants are given homework assignments. **Shoshana Ben-Yoar**, Director of Field Development, is serving as the facilitator. The process began in September, and the goal is to present the final plan at the February Board of Directors meeting.

YL Strategic Planning Team Members:

Randi Brenowitz, Vice President
Marcy Diamond, Nathan Gould
Fellow and PYLC Class #5
Shelley Fagel, Board Member and
National Chair of Young
Leadership
Sari Gross, Nathan Gould Fellow
and PYLC Class #5
Linda Kirschbaum, Board
Member and PYLC Class #1
Cindy Pitts, National Associate
Chair of Young Leadership
and PYLC Class #6
Robbie Sherman, PYLC Class #8
Shoshana Ben-Yoar, Director of
Field Development
Rachel K. Lobovsky, Director of
Major Gifts and Young
Leadership

Rachel K. Lobovsky

good & welfare

Mazel Tov to...

Board Member **Linda Kirschbaum** and her husband, **Howard**, on the bar mitzvah of their son, **Brian**. Grandparents are **Miriam** and **Joseph Yashon**.

Suburban Chicago Region President **Sheryl Solomon** and her husband, **Joel**, on the bar mitzvah of their son, **Robert**. Grandparents are **Norma** (Vice President) and **Joel Cohen**.

Board Member **Gerri Fish** and her husband, **Mort**, on the marriage of their daughter, **Stephanie**, to **Philippe Weisz**.

Immediate Past National President **Pepi Dunay** and her husband, **Mike**, on the engagement of their daughter, **Julie**, to **Larry Bowie**.

Get well to...

Howie Freeman, the son of Treasurer **Kay Freeman** and her husband, **Irwin**, is recovering from surgery.

Pepi Dunay is recuperating from thyroid surgery.

Vice President **Dorene Berger** is recovering from back surgery.

Board Member **Mara Kahn** is on the mend from a fractured leg.

Greater Sarasota Area Council President **Ann Baum** is recuperating from surgery.

Harold Ovis, husband of **Estelle Ovis**, a member of the Bramson ORT College Board of Trustees, is recovering from back surgery.

Sincere condolences to...

First Vice President **Judy Menikoff** on the passing of her mother, **Frieda Ascher**.

Board Member **Roz Vermut** on the loss of her mother, **Leona Resnick**. A special fund in memory of Mrs. Resnick has been established. Contributions may be sent to the Women's American ORT Long Island Region Office, 131 Jericho Turnpike, Jericho, NY 11753. The family will be notified of all contributions.

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ADC **Paula Murzin** on the passing of her husband, **Leonard**.

ADC **Sandi Sudikoff** on the loss of her mother, **Ida Shepard**.

National Zone Co-advisor **Elaine Smith** on the passing of her mother-in-law, **Sara**.

Toby Feuer, an ADC and East Coast Chair of the Planned Giving Committee, on the loss of her sister, **Judith Cohen**.

Zita Aremen, a long-time member from Long Island (now in the South Palm Beach County Region), on the passing of her husband, **Nathan**.

Lila Sacks, a long-time contributor from Palm Beach who recently relocated to San Diego, on the loss of her husband, **Murray**.

Dr. Hershel Sandberg on the passing of his wife, **Lois**, a former National Board Member and past President of the Michigan Region.

Congressman and **Mrs. Sander Levin** on the loss of **Adele Schlafer**, a past President of the Michigan Region.

Shelly Dreifuss and **Iris Becker** on the passing of their mother, **Jo Goldberg**, a past President of the Chicago Region and a member of the Chicago Area Planned Giving Committee.

staff update

Former Chief Advancement Officer **Pat Pollok** has joined another nonprofit organization as Vice President for Development.

Lauren Glaser
Associate Director of
Human Resources