

# Amcha Newsletter

Israeli Center for Psychosocial Support of Holocaust Survivors



Issue: 1

Pesach 5770, March 2010

Welcome to the new quarterly Amcha newsletter - to keep you, our friends and supporters from around the world, better informed. The newsletter is edited by Debbie Fishman, who has recently joined Amcha, for public relations and fundraising. We wish her much success in this important project.

On the Pesach-holiday, Amcha centers around the country will arrange symbolic Pesach dinners a few days before the actual holiday, where the Haggadah is read and participants eat together. This is a very moving event for elderly Holocaust survivors without families of their own who can share memories not only from their original families, but also from their liberation from the slavery during World War 2. For online information about the actual dates of these celebrations in different branches of Amcha, please see the club program at [www.amcha.org](http://www.amcha.org).

*Dan Waldman & Natan Kellermann*

## Purim at Amcha

Purim parties were organized at Amcha centers all over Israel. On Monday 1 March, 200 survivors, staff and volunteers from Rehovot, Rishon Letzion, and Nes Ziona joined the Jerusalem social club for the annual Amcha Purim party. The festive atmosphere could be felt with singing and dancing, a culinary meal and the costumes worn by all. The party was also attended by young soldiers from the airborne division of the IDF.



A special inter-generational event was held at Amcha's Haifa branch in honor of Purim. 6th grade children from the Chernichovsky Primary School, some of them descendants of Holocaust survivors, visited the Amcha social club members. The children and adults had the opportunity to get to know each other and played games and swapped 'Mishloach Manot'. The intergenerational programs in Amcha are supported by the German EVZ - Erinnerung, Verantwortung & Zukunft.

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## Rishon Lezion Center Official Opening

## Join Our List

Join Our Mailing List!

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In the year since its inception, Amcha Rishon Lezion has developed into another Amcha success story. Under the direction of Ms Hanah Shiloh, the branch now has 12 professional staff and over 200 clients. On Tuesday 14th February an official opening ceremony of the branch was held in the presence of Amcha Chairman, Mr Arie Barnea, donors and Amcha clients. Guests also enjoyed an original musical performance by Karevitsch & Stav.



## Hot Lunch Program

A new initiative is slowly being introduced to Amcha branches around the country. Social club members in Tel Aviv and Be'er Sheva are now being offered a hot meal at subsidized cost. The program was started in response to a request from survivors who spend most of the day in Amcha and did not want to have to worry about where to get lunch. The ready-made food, which is delivered frozen and only has to be heated, is tasty and nutritious. Over the next few months the program will expand to other branches, including Sderot and Jerusalem.



## General Health Fund Volunteer Program

Amcha is proud to announce a new cooperation with Kupat Holim Clalit - the General Health Fund, the largest health organization in



Israel. In this program, over 200 medical and administrative staff receive training to provide volunteer assistance to homebound elderly Holocaust survivors all over the county.

## UJA Mission to Kiryat Motzkin

During its annual visit to Israel, the UJA delegation, led by Ms Elisheva Flamm-Oren, stopped in at Amcha Kiryat Motzkin. There they had the opportunity to hear first hand from survivors and staff about the importance of home visits and spiritual care services provided by Amcha. During the meeting, an elderly woman shared the following: "I was born 1944 in hiding in Czechoslovakia. It was not a good time to be born. We were found and taken to Terezin, and then brought to Auschwitz. I was only 4 months old when we arrived at the extermination camp. But instead of being



directly sent to the gas chambers, I was chosen by Mengele to be experimented on in the children's camp. They were investigating how long a child could survive in ice cold water..." Then she showed us the camp number which was tattooed on her forearm. It had become large given that she had received it at such an early age. She added; "Amcha is the only place where I feel understood. Here I get support. I do not know how I would have managed without Amcha."

### Claims Conference Visits Amcha



**Claims Conference** ועידת התביעות  
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

At the end of December, a delegation from the New York and Israel offices of the Claims Conference visited Amcha for a first-hand view of the programs offered to Holocaust survivors. The delegation included the newly elected Executive Vice President Mr. Greg Schneider, Abraham Pressler, and members of the board. During the meeting, the delegation was updated on the program developments at Amcha and promised continued support also in the future.

### Disc recorded in Netanya

About thirty Holocaust survivors from Amcha Netanya recorded a disc combining their old songs of youth. Thanks to this initiative, they were able to revive those almost forgotten melodies, witnesses of a world lost during the Holocaust. Amcha Netanya is supported by the FMS - the Fondation pour la Mmoire de la Shoah.

### More space in Ramat Gan

Amcha in Ramat Gan has been operating out of a small apartment for many years. The space was insufficient to hold the many survivors who are members in the social club. Now, thanks to the generosity of the Ramat Gan municipality, Amcha received large, newly refurbished and centrally located rooms from which it hopes to continue providing services for many years to come.

### Margaret Busher House in Ashkelon

The Ashkelon branch of Amcha is proud to announce the opening of the new Margaret Busher House, in a separate and newly refurbished building, which is already providing essential services to



the elderly in the southern part of Israel. The new branch is led by Ms. Marlene Maor, a clinical psychologist and many additional staff members have been hired to provide extended services in this area.

## Amcha Around the World

- **The Netherlands**

Roel van Praag visited Amcha in October to prepare for a travelling photo exhibition on Amcha with photographer Bert Nienhuis and Dr. Arjeh Kalmann. The personal and professional history of Dr. Nathan Durst - one of the co-founders of Amcha - was reported in a large article in the Dutch journal Spectrum, written by Arjeh Kalmann and published in February 2010. Dr. Durst was born in Berlin, escaped to the Netherlands in 1939, and immigrated to Israel in 1971. He has a doctorate in clinical psychology from Groningen University, worked as chief psychologist in a psychiatric hospital for 15 years and was the national clinical director of Amcha.

- **Switzerland**

Mr Edgar Abraham, together with the board of the Friends of Amcha in Switzerland, recently organized a very enjoyable and successful concert in Zurich, proceeds of which were transferred directly to Israel to fund Amcha's vital services.

- **Austria**

An initiative from the Austrian friends of Amcha saw the printing of a national stamp in honor of Amcha with proceeds used for the support of Amcha in Israel. Karl Semlitsch and Maria Halmert worked hard to make this program a success.

- **Germany**

Dr. Peter Fischer, Matthias Gulzow and the friends of Amcha in Germany are pleased to welcome Mr. Christian Krause, who recently joined the Berlin office as secretary both for the foundation and for the friends group.

## In Brief

- In Nes Ziona, Amcha has opened a new social club for its elderly survivors.
- We congratulate **Robbie Shibi** from Jerusalem for receiving the social worker Zemelman (Eshel) award for her devoted work with Holocaust survivors in Amcha.
- **Charlene Seidle**, from the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego visited Israel to get an

update of the program supported by the Leichtag Family Foundation.

- **Atara Ciechanover**, visited Amcha in Rehovot to get an update on programs supported by the Sidney Frank Foundation (through the North American Friends of Amcha in Israel, led by Mr. Bob Kuchner).
- The **Gandel family** from Australia visited Amcha in Tel Aviv and provided generous support. They were accompanied by **Ms. Yael Shalgi** from the Israel Philanthropy Advisors.
- Natan Kellerman's new book "Holocaust Trauma, Pshychological Effects & Treatment" was featured in the Health section of the Jerusalem Post.  
[www.jpost.com](http://www.jpost.com)

These and all of Amcha's projects would be unthinkable without your continual financial and moral support. Even though the Israeli public is more aware than before of the plight of the survivors and even though the Israeli government has publicized a few new initiatives, Amcha has not received any new governmental funds. We rely heavily on our foreign private and institutional supporters and take this opportunity to thank you for your continued supprt. ***Donation information***