

# New NA'AMAT Oshra Center in Sderot offers programming, support for women

By Sharon Sutker McGowan

Whether a woman is interested in information about domestic violence or wants to learn how to make Bedouin pita, the new Oshra Center for Women's Health and Empowerment in Sderot is there to meet her needs. The center, a project of NA'AMAT USA in honor of its 90th anniversary, opened on April 25.

The Oshra Center ("oshra" means personal happiness) provides workshops, seminars and other programming to promote and improve women's health and well-being. "It is a place where women can come together to share their concerns, as well as the good things that they witness in their community," said Yehudit Uliel, NA'AMAT chairperson for the Ashkelon region and deputy mayor of Sderot.

Programming at the center is geared toward women of all ages and religious/ethnic groups, including Mizrachim, Ashkenazim, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. Uliel also plans to recruit Arab mothers whose children attend NA'AMAT day care centers.

Following the model of NA'AMAT's first Women's Center in Karmiel, the center offers educational programs on childbirth, eating disorders, prevention of osteoporosis, family planning, nutrition, preparing for retirement and the rights of working women, among others. The popular "Women's Tuesday" and "Women's Friday" programs feature speakers to address these topics.

A program for mothers, grandparents and children focuses on how to create a positive atmosphere in the home. A workshop for caregivers in NA'AMAT's Sderot day care centers, taught by a local Bedouin woman, showed participants how to make Bedouin pita.

Currently, programs are promoted through word of mouth, Facebook and information given to parents of children at NA'AMAT day care centers. Uliel is planning to hire a director who will be

responsible for marketing the center, planning programs, and supervising staff members and volunteers.

After the High Holidays, the center expects



Marcel Balaish, director of the NA'AMAT Organization department; Yehudit Uliel, NA'AMAT chairperson for the Ashkelon region; and Galia Wolloch, president, NA'AMAT Israel.

to offer a course on cancer in conjunction with the Israel Cancer Association, aimed at both women diagnosed with the disease and their families. It will include information about early detection, treatment and recovery.

Every room at the center has a reinforced shelter that can be reached within seconds in the event of a rocket attack. Located one mile from the Gaza Strip, the center is vulnerable to attacks that have been ongoing since it opened. On Aug. 8, more than 150 rockets were launched into Israel's southern cities from Gaza. Balloons and kites equipped with bombs or other incendiary devices also are terrorizing residents.

NA'AMAT, along with other organizations, coordinates with a trauma center run by the Sderot municipality to offer counseling for people who have been traumatized by the attacks. "We direct people to the centers since they have a very professional staff equipped to deal with the traumatic effect of living in Sderot with the ongoing threats and attacks," said Uliel.

The Oshra location originally housed a NA'AMAT day care center built by the Greater Washington (D.C.) Council of NA'AMAT USA. The day care center was moved to a new, safer facility after a rocket landed in the yard and broke a window.

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## Free speech or hate speech?

By Marcia J. Weiss, J.D.

*Vice President, Advocacy*

Is hate speech protected by the 1st Amendment as free speech? The Supreme Court has ruled that the 1st Amendment right to free speech can yield to the public good in certain instances, and that the right to free speech or free expression is not absolute.

A hate crime is an offense motivated by racial, religious, sexual orientation or other prejudice. The precise definition varies from state to state. According to FBI data, race is the most common motivating factor in hate crimes, followed by ethnicity, ancestry, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender and gender identity.

Many hate crimes go unreported and unpunished; nonetheless they are pervasive. According to 2014 FBI statistics, the 10 highest hate crime rates are in: District of Columbia, Michigan, North Dakota, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Connecticut, Nevada, Washington and Maine.

Hate crimes frequently occur on college campuses and many have been directed at Jewish students. To counter anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions, Jewish students are educated about methods to engage in meaningful dialogue with other groups, and administrators are encouraged to re-

spond quickly and strongly.

Because of universities' commitment to the free exchange of ideas, however, they must not forbid speech before it happens. If university officials say "we know what the speaker will say," citing potential harm that might result, this constitutes unconstitutional "prior restraint." The speaker should be permitted to expose students and faculty to controversial ideas, allowing them to weigh their own beliefs in light of the speaker's words.

Speech becomes criminal only when that speech results in intentional criminal conduct toward a victim selected for his or her personal characteristics.



## Support our Summer Appeal

By Susan Brownstein

and Jan Gurvitch

*Co-Vice Presidents, Fundraising*

By now, you should have received a mailing introducing our first annual Summer Appeal. This year's appeal highlights the amazing work of our day care centers and their dedicated staff. NA'AMAT's facilities span the map of Israel and provide important services for more than 17,000 preschool children. Our day care centers continue to set the standard for childcare not only in Israel but in the world.

As a new year begins, we hope we can

count on your support to give generously, with an open hand and a full heart. To donate, please respond to the mailing you recently received by returning the envelope provided. Or if you prefer, you can go to our website, [naamat.org](http://naamat.org), and make your donation online.

We would like to thank you for all that you do for NA'AMAT and hope that you will make this Rosh Hashana special with a donation to NA'AMAT.

*L'Shana Tova.*



## October is MEMBERSHIP MONTH!

By Gail Simpson

*Vice President, Membership*

To mark Membership Month, we encourage clubs/councils to have an Ice Cream Social. This will be a great way to start off the New Year. Bring your friends to learn more about NA'AMAT and JOIN that night! Watch for the details from your club.

**Platinum Life Membership** is still going strong. Thank you to all who have recommitted to NA'AMAT and Israel by becoming a Platinum Life Member. Don't be left behind; there is still time to become a Platinum Life Member for \$70 for current life members or \$320 for a new life membership + Platinum.

**New Clubs.** We are always looking to start new clubs. If you know women in the Boston or West Los Angeles area please send their contact information to the national office.

**eNA'AMAT** is a new way for young professional women to keep up with NA'AMAT without joining a club or making a time commitment. Members have access to our closed Facebook page, where they can read informative articles, connect to Israel and meet new online friends. It's easy and free for the first 200 people who sign up. You can register at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/e.naamat/>. Or email Maya Stark ([maya.stark@naamat.org](mailto:maya.stark@naamat.org)) and she can sign you up (or your daughter or granddaughter!).

## Oshra Center

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NA'AMAT runs two day care centers in Sderot, including a full-day multipurpose center, and a third center opens soon.

Commenting on the Oshra Center, NA'AMAT USA National President Chellie Goldwater Wilensky noted, "Our child care centers and social service facilities have had a very meaningful impact in Israel. The expanded educational and counseling services at facilities such as this raise that impact to a new level."

At the grand opening celebration,

Sderot Mayor Alon Duvid thanked NA'AMAT USA and NA'AMAT Israel for their efforts in providing the much-needed facility.

"This opening assures the women and families of Sderot, a city beset by countless rocket attacks, that they will have access to all manner of classes and services they so richly need and deserve."

*Special thanks to former NA'AMAT USA leader Judy Telman, who interviewed Yehudit Uliel at the Oshra Center and translated the interview. Telman lives in Mevasseret Zion.*

# Message from the President



**By Chellie Goldwater Wilensky**  
*President*

This year, as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel, the southern region of Israel near the Gaza Strip has suffered continual arson and shelling attacks. This sadly has been the norm for Israel from its very beginning; there has never been a single year of true peace. And yet Israelis continue to live their lives, celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel's Independence Day), the Jewish holidays and their personal smachot (happy occasions). But this does not mean people are not suffering. The attacks on Sderot and throughout the south take their emotional toll on everyone living there. The children are certainly traumatized as are their parents, and NA'AMAT is there to help them in so many different ways.

The day care teachers make a game of getting to the safe rooms in 15 seconds or less. They have a special song they sing during drills and when the attacks are real. Our multipurpose day care centers help children traumatized by these attacks. They have full time social workers and therapists to teach the children how to cope with their stress. Our Women's Centers and Community Centers have classes for mothers, to help them learn how to deal with stress and to teach them how to help their children deal with the traumas they face every day. And if the home situation gets out of hand, NA'AMAT has a 24-hour hotline that women can call for help. The Glickman Center in Tel Aviv has classes for both men and women to help them deal with their problems. And, of course, the Glickman Center shelter is there as a last resort.

NA'AMAT has been providing this help for the women and children of Israel since before the state was founded. As the years have gone by and the needs change, so have the services NA'AMAT provides. But the goal is always the same, to make the lives of Israeli families easier and better.

And for more than 90 years, NA'AMAT USA has helped raise funds to support NA'AMAT Israel. As we enter the Yamim Nora'im (Jewish holiday season), we pray we will be able to continue to do our part to support the important work of NA'AMAT Israel.

I wish you a happy, healthy and sweet New Year, and a peaceful year for Israel and the world.  
*Shana Tova.*

## Platinum Life Members

The following people contributed to NA'AMAT USA's Platinum Life Membership campaign in honor of Israel's 70th year.

Renee Algazy	Parvin Fogel	Racquel Hochwert	Bette Marinoff	Elizabeth Raider	Raycine Spector
Rhona Arbit	Bonnie Fox	Judith Holtz	Marcia Markowitz	Sandra Reuben	Sandy Spencer
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BE HAVING OUR 43rd  
NATIONAL CONVENTION IN  
ISRAEL BEGINNING NOV. 4, 2019.  
*See enclosed flier for more  
information.*

## Club activities



**SOUTH FLORIDA** — Guy Gilady, Deputy Consul General of Israel in Miami; Debbie Kohn (standing), national board member; and Chellie Wilensky, national president, at the Or and Mazal Dinner.



**PALM BEACH** — Aldelina Seidel and Doris Katz dance at an event for donors.



**NEW YORK** — Ange Nadel (Eastern Area Director), Jan Gurvitch (VP Fundraising) and Friends of NA'AMAT.



**LOS ANGELES** — Marcy McKenzie, NA'AMAT USA administrative assistant, and Susan Isaacs, national publicity chair, at the Israel Festival.



**PHOENIX** — From left: Susan Sparago (Mitzvah Chapter AZ president), Bonnie Ramis, Deanna Migdal (national executive director), Shirlee Katzman, Edie Evans, Anne Baumrind and hostess Adrian Bendick. Photographer is Larry Goldsmith (a Friend of Na'amat), chapter treasurer.

For more photos, visit "News and Events" at [www.naamat.org](http://www.naamat.org)