

Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoyed a fulfilling and refreshing summer vacation with your family.

We just began the Mechina's 15th year with 56 First-Year Program students and 20 Second-Year Program students. We're very proud of last year's students, who exceeded all our expectations. Many came from difficult social situations, lacking in motivation or belief in their ability to succeed. As the year progressed, however, they began to see themselves in a different light, embarking on a journey to transform their personalities, futures, and determination to protect and perfect Israeli society.

In the framework of the Mechina's challenging physical activities, this year's hike in the Judean Desert was very empowering and unifying. It included a waterfall rappelling apparatus 180 feet above ground. Physically-challenging activities are so important because they expose the students' to their real capabilities as they discover who they really are.

Volunteer activities were particularly special this year and contributed so much to our students. The beneficiaries loved spending time together with them. Activities included: helping out with children in kindergartens, renovations at homes of Holocaust survivors, and helping children with learning difficulties succeed in school. The City of Katzrin and its citizens greatly benefit from these activities, and so do we.

We teach our students to be citizens who give to others, for "the act of giving is the most rewarding act possible." (Rabbi Dessler).

The End-of-Year Ceremony each year brings its own dose of excitement and is always very moving. The parents spoke incredibly about what the Mechina had given their children. Hearing such beautiful feedback gives us strength for the whole year!

In order to better acquaint our readers with the process students undergo at the Mechina, our newsletter this time includes personal letters from a friend of the Mechina, a student, and parents.

"The Mechina has cultivated important values in our son's outlook such as sensitivity, modesty, consideration and respect for others, involvement in society, personal responsibility, and taking the initiative."

Parents of a Mechina student

**"You have no idea how good it makes me feel to help others."
Student from the Mechina**



The Mechina's 14th Graduating Class



A Mechina student at his volunteer activity

**"It's better to tire
from success
than rest from
failure."**

**The Mechina's
Motto**



Mechina T-shirt in memory of Itamar z"l

Mechina Student Itamar Ochana Z"l

With great sorrow, a Mechina student, Itamar Ochana, passed away during Pesach vacation. Itamar z"l had drifted from the shore towards the middle of the Kinneret and drowned as he attempted to swim back. The tragedy was reported in the news for days here in Israel.

It was very traumatic for the Mechina students to lose a friend and they decided to dedicate two special memorials at the Mechina's End-of-Year Ceremony in Itamar's memory, which his parents attended.

May his memory be blessed.

Freda Small's Thoughts Upon Visiting the Mechina

On my recent trip to Israel from Los Angeles, I had the privilege of going to the Golan to visit the Tamir Mechina just outside the city of Katzrin. Upon my arrival I was met by the warm smiles of the enthusiastic staff. The simplicity was stark, but very engaging on a different level. I was struck by the attitude and commitment of those who are in the program. The dedication of the rabbinic mentors and staff create an atmosphere of encouragement, love for Medinat Yisrael, personal growth and training for their future in the IDF by building values that will guide their life's choices.

When speaking to a group of boys, I learned about how special this year was for them. They expressed their personal growth through their relationship with the staff and with each other. They learned to think beyond themselves. They trained hard so they may qualify as a higher-ranking officer. They learned to value friendship and work on themselves. Their love for the State of Israel and the Land was being nurtured.

Many of these boys only wanted to do the minimum requirements for the IDF. However, as they progressed, all the boys felt a strong motivation to excel. It was evident that their lives were changing. As unbelievable as it may sound, several boys told me that this year was the best year of their lives.

As a family we decided to sponsor a boy attending the Tamir Mechina for the year. Each of our children contributed to this joint effort. We followed our student's progress, and we were able to form a relationship with him. He is presently going into the IDF to start his service. I was able to meet our soldier, and we hope to remain in contact with him and witness his future progress. May he be blessed and succeed in all his endeavors.

All of the boys' diverse backgrounds come together as they gain valuable lessons in Torah, self-confidence, leadership skills and commitment. The spirit and enthusiasm of the Mechina are special. I feel so fortunate to have spent time there, and I cannot wait to return.



Freda Small (pictured in center) visiting with Mechina students

Mugas' Letter of Appreciation

The Small Family's adopted student, Mugas, wrote the following after a year of keeping in touch with them:

Dear Small Family,

First of all, I wanted to thank you very much for the support that allowed me to attend the Mechina. It was moving (and a bit awkward) to meet someone who helps me from afar without even knowing who I am.

I wanted to tell you that I gained so much this year. I matured and discovered hidden abilities I never knew of. The Mechina taught me to value the inner side of things, not the external side of life. Many of my own values changed this year. I enjoyed and learned the most from Rabbi Ya'ish's classes.

I learned to take responsibility and show leadership whenever necessary. I did well on the hikes, the navigation assignments, and the Mechina's other activities.

At the beginning of the year, during the Stretcher Trek, I felt I was about to break but the guys helped me out and that helped me believe in myself. Now I'm the one helping others...

Besides all of this, this year was so much fun, full of experiences, new friends, treks and hikes to beautiful places I wasn't familiar with.

I also thank Hashem, my friends, and the Mechina staff for this wonderful experience. Thanks to all of them, I'm better prepared for the army and for life in general.

Thanks so much,
Mugas

Letter of Appreciation from the Parents of a Mechina Student

Dear Tamir Mechina Staff,

We excitedly joined the Mechina a year-and-a-half ago. ("We", because we all escorted Noam throughout the process he underwent at the Mechina.)



Preparing for the 60-km hike

We are so proud of the path Noam has chosen- a path of ideals and self-sacrifice. Thanks to you amazing staff members, Noam has expanded his knowledge and deepened his insight in many different areas, such as spirituality, society, and Jewish tradition.

His identity has coalesced in so many ways- as an Israeli, a Jew and a Zionist- in a way that fits his outlook and beliefs.

His basic values have been refined, including his sensitivity, modesty, consideration and respect for others, taking the initiative, taking part in society, and personal responsibility.

The Mechina has prepared him for meaningful, values-based IDF service, whether in a combat or administrative role, as a soldier or as a commander.

The Mechina has strengthened his connection to our Land and cultivated his love for it.

In deep appreciation,
Y. and P., Noam's parents



Dear Friends,

As generous partners in our shared endeavor- thank you for all your assistance and for understanding our needs. No words can fully express our thanks.

Another year has passed. Our students have left to serve the Jewish People in the IDF and everywhere they are needed, and our IDF graduates are now returning to lead society as outstanding citizens. Thank you for all you've enabled them to achieve in becoming better people.

Israel is undergoing a difficult time as the waves of terror have increased. We must stand strong in order to continue to securely develop our homeland. We are confident that, with G-d's help, we will always emerge victorious and evil will cease.

May we continue to build our nation together, and may G-d bless us all all boundlessly.

Shana Tova U'mevorechet!
Rabbi Ya'ish Chanuna

To Our Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we end the year and approach the High Holidays, we all become a bit nervous about how we will emerge afterwards. This is often the feeling during Rosh Hashana, the Ten Days of Repentance, and Yom Kippur.

Is this, however, the right way to approach these holidays? Apparently not. Only those unaware of G-d's goodness perceive a cold, dark, and threatening world. We must remove the partitions and reveal the Divine goodness, a world illuminated in a generous light. Every soul reaches this world in purity, each at the appropriate time, and every person has an objective to achieve. Therefore, the meaning of the Hebrew word "חטא/sin" literally means "to miss the mark" because the sinner misses his purpose in life, not materializing the potential within him. The word "תשובה/repentance" literally means "to return" and actualize one's capabilities.

As we lovingly welcome our new students this year, we accept them in the same straight and simple manner. True, when people approach life, shortcomings are prone to appear. It's not always easy to hear the straight Tekia sound of the Shofar. Sometimes the more prominent sounds are the broken sounds of the Shvarim and Teruah...

Our job at the Mechina is to expose the great inner depth within our students by working together with them to expose the soul's light and illuminate humanity.

Thank you for your friendship and cooperation in this great undertaking.
With great appreciation and wishes for a **שנה טובה**,

Avichai and Michal



We Look Forward to Your Continued Partnership in Assisting Israel's Younger Generation

For tax-deductible check donations:
Write check to "PEF Israel Endowment Funds, Inc.," earmarked for Tamir, and send to 630 Third Ave., Ste. 1501, New York, NY 10017.

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Account name: PEF Israel Endowment Funds, Inc.

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Include a memo earmarking the donation for Tamir, and then notify us of the amount at:
michalnatan1959@gmail.com

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