



Update . . .

January 2011

5771 Shvat



Chairman's Report

by R. David Weisskopf

The Love for Israel Relief Fund opens 2011 with exciting projects for needy Israeli children, plans for an intriguing conference and a new strategy to advocate for at-risk kids. This new advocacy protects approximately 71% of Israel's most at-risk kids while saving up to 90% for taxpayers and donors. Most importantly, it will ensure the most natural and least restrictive environments for at-risk kids in Israel.

Our first scheduled project is a Purim party for a local special education school managed by the Municipality of Jerusalem for boys with behavioral problems. These boys are very gifted, but life circumstances cause them under-developed coping skills. Our Purim party is designed to boost their

self-esteem and morale. The more self-confident they become, the more likely they are to develop their gifts to their maximum potential.

We also love needy girls. For example, a small number of Hareidi communities in Jerusalem do not send their children to public schools for various reasons. Some of these families cannot afford private school tuition. In these circumstances, girls are especially vulnerable to educational neglect. The Love for Israel Relief Fund encourages grassroots educational outreaches to these girls. By 2011 we have seen some of these girls as young as six learn new languages, develop amazing literary, artistic and home economic skills. In prior school years, many of these girls stayed at home all day and were nearly

illiterate. We believe these grassroots efforts need to expand in 2011.

The conference in December 2010 with Knesset Member Yulia Shamalov-Berkovich clarified some of the biggest problems in the Israeli Child Welfare system. The problem begins with outdated legislation from the 1950's which mistakenly grants unchecked power to court-appointed caseworkers. The State of Illinois had similar problems 30 years ago in its child welfare system. The principle is, "power absolutely corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." It is all-too tempting for caseworkers to abuse their court-appointed powers when nobody can legally and effectively challenge them.

Illinois worked hard for many years to solve the same serious problem. The most effective solution was a court-appointed supervising agency (IDCFS) who must delegate most cases to licensed private agencies. Taxpayer money mostly goes toward supervision and licensing – not costly implementation. Furthermore, every single child in Illinois has a right to independent legal representation. The number of children who need institutionalization has dropped from over 14,000 to less than 1,000 as a result. The average per-child cost to Illinois taxpayers has dropped from over \$3,000 per month to less than \$300 per month. Whenever an

Illinois caseworker fails to act in any child's best interest; the family and/or legal aid can legally and effectively appeal to IDCFS who now objectively investigates allegations on behalf of the court. There is every reason to believe Israel can successfully implement a similarly effective system for its 350,000 at-risk kids.

The organizers of the December conference have asked the Love for Israel Relief Fund to sponsor a 2011 "Family Day" conference in Jerusalem. The conference will celebrate the family and we will highlight noteworthy relatives of participating Knesset Members. I would like to compile these highlights into a Hebrew/English documentary that will promote family values in Israel. Proceeds and donations from this project will empower the Love for Israel Relief Fund to continue advocating for Israeli kids from broken homes.

Special events, like weddings and bar mitzvahs, happen year round for hundreds of at-risk kids and needy young adults in Israel. Donations designated "special events" will be set aside for such use.

You can donate online at:
<http://love4israel.org/donate.html>

Send checks to:
Love for Israel Relief Fund
2020 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Suite 445
Washington, DC 20006