



Update . . .

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Physical Therapy at the Dvora Agmon Preschool Development Center.

From the Father of a Special Child

by David Levy

Hadassah is our middle child - a very cute 4 year-old and she is disabled. She receives all her nourishment through a gastrostomy. This is a device which enables feeding directly into the stomach. Hadassah needs this because she can't eat in the usual manner. She also uses a walker and a wheelchair, and she doesn't speak except for a few syllables. One of the few words she pronounces best is "Abba" (Daddy).

After Hadassah was born, we met with our rabbi, Mordechai Eilon, and we told him that we decided to name our daughter Hadassah. We wanted him to explain the meaning of this name to us. Rabbi Eilon gave us an amazing explanation which

continues to strengthen us during hardships. He said that "Hadassah" comes from the word "hadas", which is a plant with healing qualities. "Hadassah" is the activity of the plant inside the body, which nobody can see at work; but there is real healing. He explained that Hadassah is our medicine.

We truly feel that she empowers us and gives us a new perspective on life - how to see the tiny moments that no one else sees. For example, when our third child was born, every stage of his development became very special for us. One day my wife called me and said, "David come look! Roi is eating chicken and rice!" We made such a fuss about this experience that most parents take for granted.

Hadassah's first day of kindergarten at the Dvora Agmon Preschool Development Center (Gan Shikumi), we had to organize transportation. It was scary at first, but when I got into the van, I met two women accompanying the children, Tsafi and Tzipie. What smiles! What love! It was as if each child was their own - including my little girl. "Hadassah, you look so pretty!" "Hadassah, you smell so good!"

At 7:30a.m. I met Rali, Hadassah's teacher. It was "circle time" and all the children sat down, but Hadassah was having difficulty. Her body moved involuntarily. Rali noticed this, took Hadassah into her arms and hugged her for the rest of the circle time. Then I felt that I could go home with no doubts whatsoever.

Gan Shikumi also hosts a parent support group based on the understanding that in order to raise children with special needs, the parents need a lot of strength and support. We met a social worker, Vered, who has been with us at every stage – crying, laughing and happy with everything that happens to the parents, children - the whole family.

We feel blessed to have such a precious daughter and a compassionate place like Gan Shikumi. Thank you for reading a bit about us - the Levy family.

David Levy is the father of Hadassah, a student at the Dvora Agmon Preschool Development Center (Gan Shikumi) in Jerusalem. Gan Shikumi is a special kindergarten for handicapped children. Through intensive physical therapy and comprehensive scholastics, children like Hadassah achieve their maximum potential both physically and academically.

Dvora Agmon Preschool video is available at:
<http://videos.love4israel.org/videolarge.php?sel=25>

Richard Weisskopf is visiting the United States and will be available from June 15th through September 21st. If you would like to invite him to speak to your group, please visit the Contact page on our web site and send us an invitation. Somebody will respond to your invitation promptly.

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