

Programs for Holocaust Survivors

© All rights JDC ESHEL, 2019

>> 2

Contents

A Message from JDC ESHEL's CEO.....	4
Introduction	6
Holocaust Survivors' Unique Needs.....	9
Program 1 Photography With Joy	10
Program 2 Intergenerational Portrait	12
Program 3 Witness Theater	14
Program 4 Yiddishpiel	16
Program 5 CELEB	18
Program 6 Yad l' Yad (Hand to Hand).....	20
Program 7 Warm Homes.....	24
Program 8 Café Europa.....	26

A Message from JDC ESHEL's CEO

The Holocaust is one of the darkest events in human history. It is undoubtedly one of the most traumatic episodes experienced by the Jewish people.

Currently there are some 200,000 Holocaust survivors living in Israel, with an average age of 86. This population is aging rapidly with some 1,000 survivors passing away each month. The physical, emotional and social state of many survivors is declining and more and more of them are becoming homebound.

Many aging adults experience a decline in functional ability and require designated solutions during old age. However, survivors have additional, unique needs stemming from the traumas they experienced as children during the Holocaust.

In 2006, JDC ESHEL started developing unique interventions for Holocaust survivors. The services that existed until that point were focused primarily on actualizing monetary rights. There was a gap in social and therapeutic services for survivors in Israel.

Within a decade, JDC ESHEL has successfully lead government ministries, local authorities and other relevant organizations to establish and disseminate social and therapeutic based programs and solutions for Holocaust survivors throughout the country.

I am proud to say that some of these programs developed by JDC ESHEL have been adopted by communities around the world, including in the United States, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and Germany.

JDC ESHEL is committed to continuing to share and assist communities globally in the professional development of these and other programs for older adults for local adaptation.

As a social R&D organization that develops interventions for vulnerable older adults in Israel, JDC ESHEL attributes special significance to Holocaust survivors. We are committed to strengthening and disseminating programs for survivors to ensure maximum impact and benefit for survivors in these final years.

JDC ESHEL's programs for survivors are outlined over the following pages for the benefit of community professionals and social investors alike.

I invite you to be in contact with me to discuss how JDC ESHEL's professionals can support the adoption of the programs in your own community. I also thank you for considering JDC ESHEL as a recipient in your philanthropic endeavors.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yossi Heymann

CEO, JDC ESHEL

YossiH@jdc.org

Introduction

“For the Holocaust Survivor, death is not the problem. Death was an everyday occurrence. We learnt to live with death. The problem is to adjust to life, to living. You must teach us about living.” / Elie Wiesel

Following the Holocaust, 500,000 Holocaust survivors were absorbed into the State of Israel. Today, 200,000 survivors live in Israel. Within the next 10-15 years, there will be few if any Holocaust survivors living amongst us.

JDC ESHEL recognizes that Holocaust survivors – the last living link to this traumatic chapter of Jewish history – deserve the highest quality services to help them live out their remaining years with dignity, comfort and community. Accordingly, it has made it a priority to create and provide such care. JDC ESHEL works with Israeli government ministries, municipalities and NGOs to create initiatives that go beyond regular programs for older adults in order to address survivors’ unique needs.

Survivors face a slew of challenges. In particular, the distressing aspects of aging are compounded by the never-ending impact of having lived through the horrors of the Holocaust, and the painful feelings that arise as tragic memories of their youth resurface in their later years. With no forum to share and process these feelings, survivors feel isolated and ultimately experience reduced health and wellbeing.

Holocaust survivors in Israel receive services through Israeli government agencies and NGOs. These range from material support, medical help, housing maintenance, and legal aid. However, when a review of these services revealed a dearth in social and therapeutic services, JDC ESHEL chose to hone in on this area and develop initiatives on a national level.

JDC ESHEL's programs for survivors thus focus on two primary directions - providing recreational outlets to relieve social isolation, and therapeutic frameworks to process memories. Together they offer thousands of survivors solace in their twilight years, and reprieve from the burden of their histories.

We offer our deepest thanks and appreciation to our funding partners - the **Claims Conference, The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Schusterman Foundation Israel, UJA-Federation of New York, John Hagee Ministries, EVZ, the Lemsky Endowment Fund of Memphis Jewish Federation and individual donors and foundations around the world** – whose unwavering support enables JDC ESHEL to continue impacting the lives of survivors in Israel.



Holocaust Survivors' Unique Needs

With an average age of 86, it follows that many Holocaust survivors were children when their precious childhood was robbed by the Nazis.

The National Traumatic Child Stress Network, a U.S. Government body, reported “traumatic experiences in childhood have been linked to increased medical conditions throughout the individuals’ lives”. The symptoms found include depressive moods and morose behavior, a guilt complex at having survived while others perished, personality changes and a decline in general health.

The effects of the trauma suffered in their youth is aggravated by the loss of physical and mental faculties as they age. This often renders them homebound, while the mental impairment also affects their ability to communicate effectively.

Advanced age also brings with it a revisiting in the mind, of the traumatic events of the past, together with the associated stress of reliving those experiences.

The U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) has commissioned various studies, which reveal that both the physical and mental deterioration that occurs with aging, is far more pronounced in survivors.

Effective Interventions should therefore be custom designed to meet the special circumstances surrounding aging survivors.

Program I Photography With Joy

Phototherapy Program for Holocaust Survivors

First piloted by JDC ESHEL in 2012, Photography With Joy (Tzilum Begil) has proven to be a life-changing experience for hundreds of Holocaust survivors.

Survivors meet weekly for meetings and photography trips and through a therapeutic process, they learn both the art and science of photography.

At the same time, they create a portfolio of photographs that helps them share and process their experiences of the Holocaust and its continued impact on their own and their families' lives.

Through phototherapy, survivors are able to confront their traumatic past, and using their own creativity, tell their story to the world.

At the conclusion of the course, an exhibition of their work is proudly displayed and the public – including schools and army personnel - are invited to attend and hear the survivors present their picture and tell their personal story as part of the program. Survivors continually remark that the opportunity to exhibit their work and share their stories is both cathartic and empowering.

Photography With Joy exhibitions have taken place throughout Israel, including at the Knesset, as well as in the US and the House of Lords in England, where survivors presented their artwork and shared their stories.

To date, tens of thousands of people have visited and been impacted by Photography With Joy exhibitions throughout Israel, the USA and England.

>> 10



Program 2 Intergenerational Portrait

Intergenerational Phototherapy Program for Holocaust Survivors and High School Pupils

Having evolved from the highly successful Photography With Joy model, the Intergenerational Portrait program brings together survivors with native Israeli youth in their teens. Together they engage in a unique experience of visual study and a journey between ages.

Over three months, the group of survivors and teenagers meet weekly for a series of dynamic and creative engagements. During this time together they are given an opportunity to peek at each other through the camera lens, to expose and be exposed

to ageless content, find common ground, clarify differences, touch, get closer, watch, frame, reflect, blur and sharpen, observe from unique points of view, and build a suitable composition for photographing.

The experiential process is accompanied by counseling for each group. The youth are exposed to the complex childhood stories of the survivors, and the survivors in turn will be exposed to the challenges



of today's youth. The stories are jointly processed through the camera and a connection is formed based on closeness, sharing and direct intergenerational contact.

The products of the sessions – the joint portraits embracing two worlds – are presented in a public exhibit that reflects the intergenerational discourse that is important on the personal, social and public level.

This program aims to initiate group discourse and therapy for both the Holocaust survivors and the youth, with the group meetings based on personal acquaintance and a dialogue across ages. Both the survivor and teenager will develop social abilities and interpersonal communication through the camera and the intergenerational connection.

The therapeutic workshop is designed to assist the Holocaust survivors to cope with their trauma through the use of photography and visual art and the connection with the intergenerational group.

At the conclusion of the program, the group's portraits are exhibited to the public as a reflection of an intergenerational dialogue, and in order to trigger discourse on universal values: connection, hope, Holocaust education and memory, revival, and coping mechanisms.



Program 3 Witness Theater

Intergenerational Theater Program for Holocaust Survivors & High School Pupils

JDC ESHEL's Witness Theater program is an innovative intergenerational theater program for Holocaust survivors and third generation Israeli high school students.

Witness Theater offers a therapeutic process by which Holocaust survivors can come to terms with their past, spreading testimony through the retelling of their stories. The program aims to simultaneously provide catharsis for the survivor generation and connect them with their grandchildren's generation; thus passing on the memory of the Holocaust to a new audience.

Over the course of a year, the group works together in weekly meetings during which the two generations expose the jarring stories of survival and explore issues of trauma. Through theater workshops, using acting, props, lighting and music, participants young and old undergo a process of transformation.

Professionals guide the creative process and encourage free expression by both survivors and students. The project culminates in the production of a semi-professional public performance that dramatizes the survivors' stories – chronicling their memories and personal survival.

To date more than 1,100 Israeli Holocaust survivors have participated in the program in more than 80 groups throughout Israel. The program has further been adopted in both Germany, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and the USA.



Program 4 Yiddishpiel

“I discovered a theater of benevolence. Thanks to Yiddishpiel Theater, for the first time in many years, I saw my Aunt laugh! She told me afterwards, that for a short time during the performance, she forgot all her aches and pains, and was simply delighted”.

~ Former Israeli Finance Minister, Yaakov Neeman

Yiddish Theater for Immobile Holocaust Survivors

The Holocaust generation are the Jewish children born in the towns and villages of Central and Eastern Europe in the 1930s who had their childhood cruelly interrupted and then destroyed by the Nazi juggernaut. Holocaust survivors living in Israel spent their childhood years in a wholly Yiddish environment in countries such as Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Germany and Lithuania, where the Jews spoke Yiddish, read Yiddish books and newspapers, and attended Yiddish Theatre as a pastime. Not only did the Holocaust destroy their lives, but it also destroyed a Yiddish world that had existed for over 1,000 years.

The home language of the vast majority of survivors was Yiddish. Holocaust survivors, landing the shores of Israel in the aftermath of the Holocaust adopted Hebrew as their home language, yet even

now as older adults, still long to recapture some part of their pre-Holocaust childhood and the warm and loving memories of their families and friends, which brings them joy and lifts their spirit.

Yiddishpiel has groups of actors perform for survivors in day centers for older adults and older adult institutions throughout Israel on a weekly basis. In addition to the pleasure they receive from watching the shows, the theater acts as a therapeutic intervention in helping survivors manage the scars of the dark years of their lives.

Experiencing Yiddishpiel Theater transports them to happier times, a breath of fresh air, as they are able to once again listen to the language of their childhood, and witness scenes in many of the plays that are reminiscent of the villages in which they were born.

First launched in 1998, Yiddishpiel now has over 150 unique performances per year, impacting over ten thousand survivors annually throughout Israel.

JDC ESHEL is committed to ensuring that survivors will continue to benefit from this intervention for the years to come, and ensure they too can live out their lives with dignity, warmth and improved wellbeing.



Program 5 CELEB

Professional Services for Homebound Holocaust Survivors

Aging brings its share of daunting challenges, but for seniors who are homebound for physical or emotional reasons, this stage of life becomes virtually intolerable. For many seniors in Israel, these challenges are frequently coupled with the long-term effects of having lived through the horrors of the Holocaust and the unrest of war.

CELEB is JDC ESHEL's innovative strategic solution to improving the quality of life of the most frail Holocaust survivors who are confined to their homes due to their deteriorating physical, cognitive or emotional health. It is designed to enrich the lives of elderly survivors while giving them new meaning and strength to combat their social isolation, emotional burden and loneliness, while also relieving some of the burden on the family or caregiver.

CELEB provides participants with a basket of social and therapeutic services, which are facilitated by professionals to support them in coping with isolation, and with the grief and pain of their youth.

Activities include visits by social workers, arts and crafts, creative projects, adapted physical exercise, documentation of memories, information on the rights and benefits of survivors and assistance in accessing them, access to medical and paramedical services such as a nurse, occupational therapist or physiotherapist, a mobile library, use of technological aids such as a computers, DVDs and tablets to foster communication between housebound survivors and their friends and family, learning English

with the help of volunteer exchange students, private home concerts performed by student volunteers, distribution of planting equipment, assistance in maintaining a home garden, and Shabbat and Jewish holiday home celebrations.

Additional benefits include enhancing the survivor's sense of vitality by promoting social relationships with individuals other than those responsible for their physical well-being, including other survivors and the community at large. This creates an atmosphere of comfort and joy, where survivors can not only honor their past but also grow and take pleasure in the present.

Since it was first piloted in five locations in 2013, CELEB has expanded to 47 locations throughout Israel impacting thousands of needy homebound survivors and their families.



Program 6 Yad l'Yad (Hand to Hand)

National Volunteer Network for Lonely Homebound Holocaust Survivors

It is understood that approximately 30% of Holocaust survivors are housebound, with a high percentage of these indicating that they suffer from loneliness. Reducing loneliness has an overall impact on the wellbeing of the person – improving physical and emotional health.

In response to this need, the Israel Ministry of Finance Holocaust Survivors' Rights Authority established the National Authority for Holocaust Survivors Task Force. The Task Force was mandated with developing Yad l'Yad (Hand to Hand) - a nationwide volunteer support system that is combatting loneliness among survivors.

In 2016 the Task Force turned to JDC ESHEL, which has extensive experience working with survivors, and homebound survivors in particular, to assume the lead role in developing Yad l'Yad.

The program, piloted for the first time in 2017, will directly impact 5,000 homebound Holocaust survivors within the first three years. As of January 2019, the model had been implemented in 146 towns throughout Israel, and on target to reach at least 5,000 homebound survivors by 2020. An extension of this initial development phase of the program will be considered in 2020.

Yad l'Yad is alleviating loneliness among Holocaust survivors through the development of a network of volunteers who will visit survivors on a weekly basis.

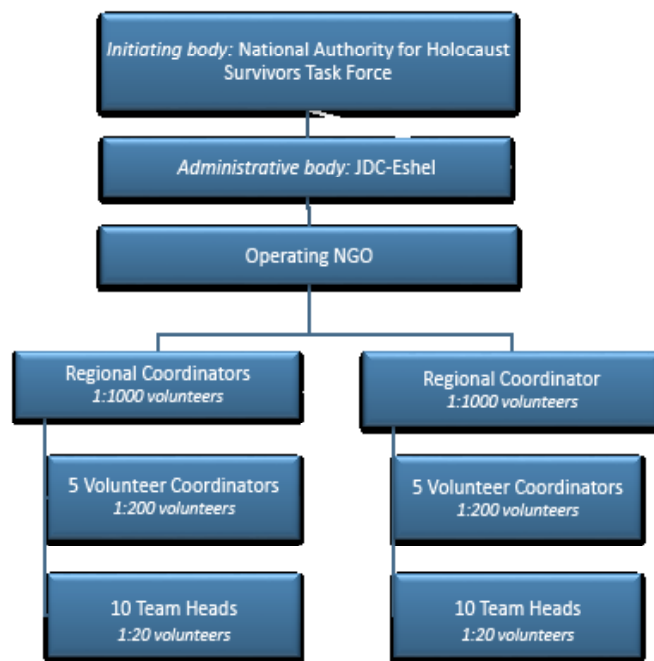
The current framework of social services cannot meet the need for companionship and stimulation of



thousands of Holocaust survivors, especially those living in peripheral areas. JDC ESHEL is working to promote cooperation and resource sharing among various NGOs that work with Holocaust survivors. In general, cooperation and the sharing of professional and financial resources among NGOs is limited. Many of the NGOs who already have volunteers working with survivors lack the resources to expand the scope of their activities to meet the current demands.

The innovative aspect of this initiative is a nationwide campaign to recruit 5,000 volunteers who serve as the backbone of the program. To enable the professional recruitment and retention of volunteers, regional coordinators and volunteer coordinators have been hired, with each regional coordinator responsible for five volunteer coordinators, who are in turn each responsible for 200 volunteers. A team head is further responsible for twenty volunteers each, with each volunteer coordinator overseeing ten team heads.

Role of regional coordinators: Conduct ongoing mapping of needs and activities; prepare periodic reports; supervise volunteer coordinators within the region; create local and regional partnerships and train volunteer coordinators.



Role of volunteer coordinators: Identify survivors; recruit and select volunteers; support, retain and advise volunteers; solve problems and coordinate activities.

The professional staff work with volunteers to devise a customized program to meet the needs and fulfill the desires of the vulnerable survivors. Where possible, volunteers and survivors are matched based on mutual interests or other common factors.

Yad l' Yad ensures survivors will not be abandoned and live out their years with companionship.



Program 7 Warm Homes

Organized Neighborhood Social Engagements

Research has shown a positive correlation between the wellbeing of seniors and their belonging to social networks. Social support becomes more important as people age and their physical mobility declines, but it is precisely then that sources of support tend to become less accessible.

The Warm Homes model, which was first piloted in Israel in 1998, began when immigrants from the former Soviet Union who had known about JDC's Warm Homes before their aliyah, saw its potential to provide a solution for independent older adult immigrants in Israel.

The program, inexpensive and easy to operate, aims to relieve the loneliness of older adults and enrich their lives by providing weekly or bi-weekly social gatherings with approximately fifteen of their peers and neighbors in the community. By recruiting a volunteer and creating an intimate group, the Warm Home successfully relieves loneliness and strengthens its members' sense of belonging.

The program also stresses the importance of strengthening ties with the community by, for example, having volunteers participate as guest lecturer and having group members volunteer in their community.

One of the main factors contributing to the program's success is the homogeneity of the group. For this reason it is important to ascertain that members have similar cultural backgrounds and interests, such as music, literature, the ability to respect one another and actively participate in the group.

The program, which creates a supportive peer group to combat loneliness, was originally conceived as a stepping-stone towards improving attendance at other programs for older adults in the community, such as social clubs and day centers. It expanded its reach from its original target population of immigrants from the former Soviet Union to serve a wider spectrum of Israelis – veteran Israelis, immigrants from Ethiopia, urban and non-urban residents, Holocaust survivors, Ultra-Orthodox, Druze, Bedouin, people with cognitive decline, and bereaved parents of fallen IDF soldiers.

JDC ESHEL has formally phased out of the Warm Homes program and handed over financial and operational responsibility to local municipalities and welfare agencies.

JDC ESHEL has established 330 Warm Homes in 80 locations throughout Israel, impacting over 5,000 older adults. Of these, 110 Warm Homes are exclusively for Holocaust survivors.



Program 8 Café Europa

Social Club for Holocaust Survivors

JDC ESHEL has established 120 Café Europa social clubs for survivors throughout Israel. From Eilat in the south to Kiryat Shmona in the north, this social and therapeutic intervention offers company, conversation, and a range of engaging, inspiring and motivational activities.

Operating between one and four times per week, depending on the local operating agency, survivors can look forward to getting together with peers in a cafe type environment. Here they enjoy art and memoir writing workshops, cognitive games, guest lecturers, discussions, physical exercises, music, song and dance, laughter yoga, interactive games, and computer lessons. The range of activities is flexible and adaptable in line with the requests of the participants.

Amongst the myriad of activities, Café Europa staff apply active therapeutic techniques while building a community of peers who can socialize, console, and meaningfully interact with one another.

As of 2019, 9,000 vulnerable survivors are benefitting from Café Europa clubs on a weekly basis, providing them with dignity, happiness, and wellbeing in the golden years of their lives.

While JDC ESHEL continues to provide professional oversight of the Café Europa model and its implementation throughout Israel, the operational management and funding of the individual Cafés is the responsibility of the local municipalities and welfare agencies.





www.Eshelnet.org.il/en
Marcc@jdc.org