



### **This month in Etzba HaGalil**

*A review of the news for our partners from Coast-to-Coast Canada  
May-June 2007*

#### **General/municipal news**

- Last week, a memorial evening was held in Metulla commemorating five years since the passing of Yossi Goldberg. Yossi was the Mayor of Metulla for twenty years and also served a term in the Knesset. In 1989 he browbeat, cajoled and encouraged local and national government agencies and UIA Canada to build the Canada Center, a unique sports leisure complex with the largest ice rink in Israel. Through his single minded determination and efforts, Yossi transformed the existing Israel Ice Skating Federation from a new association of locally coached figure skaters and a collection of partial ice hockey teams into a formally structured, better functioning and more active organization.
- Volunteers from "Livnot U'Lehibanot" are working to renovate the shelters in Kiryat Shmona and make them more amenable for extended habitation. What remains unclear is who will take responsibility for the shelters afterwards to make sure they are not vandalized or converted back to storage space. Local leaders have suggested establishing a permanent system of monitoring and regulation, though to date, no solution has been reached.
- Israeli radio reports that, in anticipation of the end of the school year, schools in the north are preparing emergency plans that include social and educational activities for youth that can be run in area bomb shelters should there be resumed tensions or another situation of war this summer.

#### **Government/Politics**

- The municipality of Kiryat Shmona announced that it will not follow the Interior Ministry's recommendation to depose Mayor Haim Barbivai. Barbivai was accused of inappropriate behavior as mayor, including incidents of bribery and fraud. The opposition lacks the necessary support to remove him from office at this time.
- Two weeks ago, the communities on the Confrontation Line shut off the lights along the security fence in protest of the Defense Ministry's failure to transfer funds for this purpose ever since the Second Lebanon War. Said Mayor Aharon Valency, "I don't see any other way to get the government's attention. In light of repeated empty words and promises, I have no choice but to take steps that will, unfortunately, threaten our security." Leaders of the struggle have scheduled an additional protest against the government's decision to cancel tax benefits to residents of the region and to cancel subsidies to schools located in the periphery.
- Kiryat Shmona is hosting "The role of agencies for social change," a local conference that will analyze this subject in recognition of the dominant role of social welfare organizations in the city during and after the Second Lebanon War. The goal of the conference is to create opportunities for cooperation among the various agencies and in partnership the local government, particularly in light of potential future tension and conflicts in the region.
- The emergency forces of Kiryat Shmona convened to discuss lessons learned from the Second Lebanon War and to build contingency plans for future conflicts. Of particular focus was establishing rules of cooperation between police, paramedics, firefighters, and military and security representatives.

#### **Culture and Sports**

- Students from the "Ayalim" project at Tel Hai Academic College, in partnership with the Kiryat Shmona Municipality and the Department of Sports, renovated the basketball court in the Eilat neighborhood of Kiryat Shmona, which was damaged by Katyushot in the Second Lebanon War. They repaired and renovated the fences, fixed the baskets,

repaired the electrical and lighting systems, and re-marked the court. This initiative received financial support from JAFI and UIAC.

- In celebration of "Student Day," students of Tel Hai Academic College attended a grand concert with leading Israeli artists, including Barry Sacharof, the Girafot, and Jeremy Kaplan. The fact that the academic strike was still in effect at the time did little to diminish the students' enthusiasm.
- 600 youth and parents from the Itoran soccer club of Kiryat Shmona celebrated the end of the year with a festive ceremony, including guests of honor Izzy Shartzky and his brother Effie, owners of the club from Tel Aviv. As trophies and medals were distributed to all the participants, the brothers promised to double the number of youth in the program next year.
- The police have closed the Kiryat Shmona basketball court because it does not meet the standards for league games. As a result, the local basketball team will not open the season in their home stadium. Repairs will begin in July, and it will take at least two months before the stadium will re-open.
- This week, municipal director for youth Elad Hershkovitz announced plans for four summer camps in the region, as well as additional weekly programs in July and August at local community centers. The director of the community centers, Shimon Biton, explained, "We are doing everything we can to engage all sectors of the population in cultural activities, despite inherent challenges." JAFI is co-sponsoring these programs.

#### **Partnership 2000 news**

- This month, a fact-finding mission from Calgary led by Jewish Federation executive Lance Davis and chair Laura Martin arrived in Israel to explore funding opportunities, with a specific focus on initiatives benefiting the Ethiopian-Israeli community. The mission visited the Ayelet HaShachar Absorption Center, BeAtzmi employment initiatives, Tel Hai Academic College, IsraCorps Projects, and the Uziel School, emphasizing projects in the partnership region and in which other Canadian communities have previously invested.
- July 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, the Gesher Hai program is hosting a conference about Jewish settlement in the Galilee - past and present. The conference will take place in Pekiin. 68 educators, teachers and principals are scheduled to attend, including two participants from Ottawa.
- The Social Leadership Institute of Maayan Baruch, a pre-army leadership and study program for Israeli youth sent nine participants to serve as counselors at Jewish camps across Canada. In addition, CIE - Israel office coordinated arrangements for Israeli youth from the Galilee Panhandle to attend Camp Kadimah in Halifax and Camp Kineret Biluim as CITs. This year, Camp Kadimah also invited Israelis from Sderot to come serve as CITs.