



INSPIRATIONS

A PUBLICATION OF WOMEN'S LEAGUE COMMUNITY RESIDENCES, INC.

SPRING 2004

~~This~~ Next Year in Jerusalem

The Old City of Jerusalem, the Israel Museum, Neot Kedumim nature reserve, the Jerusalem Mall, Mea Shearim, the Stalactite Caves, Kosher KFC, Beit Shemesh, the Israel Tank Museum and Memorial, the Biblical Zoo, the Tel Aviv/Jaffa beachfront. . . What do all of the above places have in common? Well, they were hosts to three very excited Women's League consumers who were able to realize their dream of touring Israel this past winter.

"If you were fortunate enough to know Mrs. L. a"h, you would be certain that she was smiling down from Heaven observing her son Harold, on his recent trip to Israel," remarked Kitzia Mintz, a staff member at the Women's League senior residence on 45th St. in Brooklyn. Mrs. Mintz was referring to one of three participants of this spectacular ten day tour of the Holy Land, which was jointly planned and organized by weekend supervisor Josh Sadres and direct care staffer Danny Riemer.

Having had the past experience of coordinating a trip to Florida for two lucky consumers, Josh and Danny were ready



to challenge themselves again to assist consumers in expanding their horizons by traveling to new and different locales. After much consideration, it became apparent that Israel was the perfect travel setting for Harold and his friends. Harold had even twice visited Israel with his mother before her passing.

Steven Schwarcz, residence manager at 45th Street, explained that "Harold and Norman both

enjoy weekly prayer in synagogue, attending Jewish concerts, and watching Uncle Moishy videos; activities which share the common theme of love for the Land of Israel. Additionally, they were both raised with a strong sense of their cultural identity, as they grew up saying blessings and singing Jewish songs. With this in mind, a visit to Israel seemed perfect."

In addition to Harold and Norman, Yanky, a wheelchair-bound, fun-loving, developmentally disabled consumer was desperate to go along. Yanky, who had been to Israel on previous occasions, had been talking for some time about returning to visit his friends who had recently moved there. "With Harold and Norman already going, it was a perfect opportunity to fulfill Yanky's dreams as well," explained Riemer.

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For highlights of our 25th Anniversary Dinner, see pages 4-5

Eddie had a dream. Being a major sports fanatic, Eddie dreamed of visiting every sports Hall of Fame in North America. It's an ambitious project for anyone to undertake, but especially for someone like Eddie, who is developmentally disabled. The sheer logistics of travelling from one big city to another seemed overwhelming. Add to that the special equipment, medication, and supplies that the Women's League residents needed to take along, and it began to sound absolutely daunting.


Still, Eddie was a very determined young man. He wanted this more than anything else in the world. So eventually Women's League sent him and his friends, together with some staffers, on what turned into a most memorable and wonderful experience.

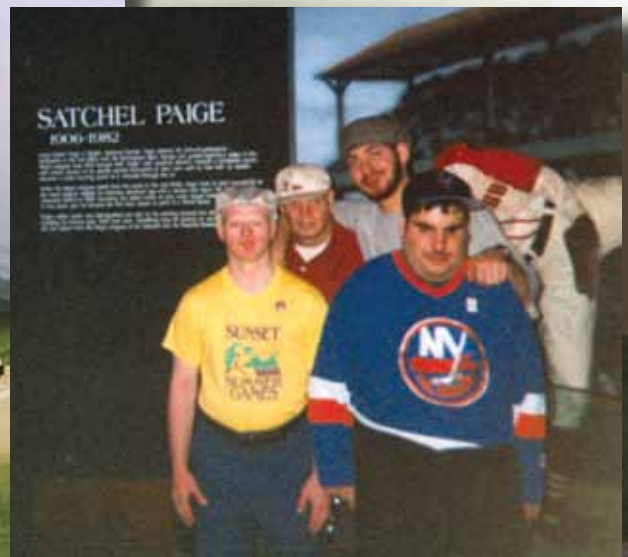
Eddie took his fellow house mates, Isaac and Leslie, along on this adventure. They were accompanied by Tamir Spitzer, his wife Meredith, and staffer, Avi Minkoff. They first travelled to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. From there, they went to the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, then on to the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, and finally to the Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. The entire journey took a spectacular two weeks' time.



Halls of Fame – Here we Come!

"They had a great time," says Joel Lieberman of Women's League, who helped coordinate the outing. "This was Eddie's opportunity to fulfill a lifelong dream, and he really gained a lot out of the experience. Not only did he learn more about sports, but he discovered that if you want something badly enough, it really is possible to achieve your goals."

Eddie also discovered that the staff at Women's League will do whatever they can to help their consumers achieve their lifelong ambitions. It certainly wasn't easy to drive from city to city, state to state, and country to country (remember the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto?) just to make Eddie and his friends happy. No doubt it would have been a lot simpler for everyone to just stay at home. But the dedicated staff at Women's League are committed to the happiness and well-being of their consumers in every possible way. Even when it means accompanying them on a major and exhausting expedition to far-reaching destinations across the United States and Canada. 



"TYKE" & "MINNA" - HONORED GUESTS

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When Tyke and Minna visit the children of Women's League, they make everybody happy. The two furry Tibetan Spaniels bring joy and laughter to all of the developmentally disabled children. Even though many of these children are unable to respond in the traditional way, they make it obvious through their smiles and facial expressions that they truly love the dogs.

The dogs are part of a program called Pet Therapy, sponsored by the Good Dog Foundation. Pet Therapy has been proven to have a beneficial effect on the state of mind of sick patients, the disabled, and the elderly. "Dogs help humans heal," says Dr. Richard Lippman, the trainer and therapist who taught Tyke and Minna to be especially docile and cooperative when the children pet them. "The children who are ambulatory love to follow the dogs around and play with them. The others just touch the dogs and immediately you see them smile."




Tyke and Minna had to undergo a rigorous training program before they could begin the Pet Therapy program. According to Dr. Lippman, "It's an eight week program that teaches the dogs proper temperament. Only four out of twelve dogs actually graduate."

When the dogs visited the Boys' Home a while ago, the therapeutic results were amazing. One young man is suffering from a condition called Fragile X Syndrome, which leads him to become extremely hyperactive and impulsive. It is virtually

impossible to keep him on one topic of conversation for even thirty seconds. But when Dr. Lippman came in with his dogs, this young man was enthralled. He sat down on the floor next to Tyke and began to stroke his fur. Soon, he was asking Dr. Lippman all sorts of questions. "What do you feed the dog?", "When do you feed him?", "What does he do all day?", etc. The conversation lasted a full twenty minutes, leaving Women's League staffers stunned. The dog, in one encounter, had accomplished more with this boy than all the teachers and therapists who had worked with him for months!

Tyke and Minna now visit the Women's League Babies' Home about once a week. Esther Cohen-Busel, the residence manager of this facility, sees remarkable responses there as well. According to Esther, "Once you put the dog down on the tray of a child's high chair and near his body, you see a definite contentment. The touch-and-feel sensation of new stimuli really makes a difference. He begins to smile and you know that you're making him happy."

Women's League is so grateful for this program that Dr. Stephen Glicksman, its developmental psychologist, wrote a letter of appreciation to the Good Dog Foundation, saying, "The time our children spend with Tyke and Minna make up some of the high points of their week, and the clear social, recreational, emotional and therapeutic benefits we see from these visits continue to astound and delight our families and staff... Suffice it to say that any creature, human or dog, who can focus the attention of a boy or bring out a smile in a little girl has a very special place in Heaven." 



Looking back at



WLCR Anniversary 25th Dinner

December 7, 2003



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1. **Rabbi Yaakov Perlow**, shlita, Rosh Agudas Yisroel of America, Mora Derech of Women's League

2. **Dr. Pinchus Lerner** receives the 'Professional Excellence Award' from Rabbi Perlow and Rabbi Ronald Greenwald-Board Chairman

3. WLCR's talented consumer, **Mordechai P.**, provides entertainment

4. **Mr. Avigdor Gluck**, seen with son Duvie, accepts the "Parents of the Year" award on behalf of himself and his wife Rifky, from Rabbi Greenwald

5. **WLCR consumers** and staff enjoying the Dinner

6. **Dr. and Mrs. Jotkowitz**, the evening's "Guests of Honor" accept their award.

(l. to r.) Annette Jotkowitz, Jeanne Warman-Exec. Director (hidden from view), Yitzchok Warman, Dr. Seymour Jotkowitz, and Rabbi Greenwald

7. **Daniel Chill, Esq.**, Dinner Chairman, opens the evening's program

8. **Mr. Elliot Brownstein**, recipient of the "Program Excellence Award", shakes Rabbi Perlow's hand

9. WLCR consumer, **Shia M.**, delights the guests with his beautiful songs

10. **Rabbi Elimelech Bluth**, shlita, Rav of Cong. Ahavas Achim of Kensington, Posek of WLCR



Howard and Danny

Above & Beyond

by Howard Kaplan



Leslie and Howard

I have heard that there is a tradition that we all have two souls. They are identical, except that one has reached its full potential, while the other is empty. The filled one stays in Heaven, while the other is sent to Earth to achieve its destiny.

Upon its return, the soul is asked some questions as a barometer of its achievements during its sojourn on Earth. A positive answer to the "Big Question" earns the soul immediate entry into Heaven.

The "Big Question" may encompass just a micro-second of the soul's Earthly life, a fleeting moment that may not even have seemed significant at the time.

I have often wondered what my question will be. Perhaps my question will be about my achievements in the business world. My claim to fame as a copywriter for Young & Rubicam, and Dancer - Fitzgerald. No, I don't think so. No Heavenly question on that account.

It's got to be something "giving" – nothing in it for yourself, yet not necessarily too big a deal. Could be about family life. Like the two hours I read Psalms in the doctor's office while my wife and I waited for the results of the x-rays of her tumors.

No, I don't think so. Too selfish – praying for help in order to make myself happy.



The big question may encompass just a micro-second of the soul's Earthly life, a fleeting moment that may not even have seemed significant at the time.

Perhaps that time with Leslie. "Howard, after you put in my teeth (dentures), may I shake your hand?" "Yes, Leslie," I responded.

It's an honor to shake the hands of all the Leslies of the world. So far I've shaken the hands of Joel, Morty, Phil, Ivan, Isaac, Eddie, Joseph, Jay, Steven, Sam, Mark, Lenny, Naftali, Sol, Moshe ...

No, I don't think so. Shaking hands with the consumers is just part of my job as a direct care counselor at Women's League. It's nothing above and beyond. Then again, maybe my job is above and beyond – though certainly not by the Madison Avenue standards of my past.

But Danny more than amply rewarded me recently when he greeted me at the 38th Street Residence where I work. Danny, a lovely consumer, lives in a Women's League supportive apartment. When Danny suffered a heart attack and was at Maimonides Hospital, I was sent to stay with him, as per Women's League's policy of always having a staff member at the hospital bedside of its consumers. It was 11 p.m. on a hot summer night, so I bought a can of ice cold orange soda from the vending machine in the Emergency Room lobby. I poured half into a cup for Danny which he sipped gratefully, and left the rest for him on his bedside stand. I dozed on



Might our residence manager Joel Lieberman's 'Above & Beyond' question be, "Have you ever danced with your consumers in the middle of the street?"



Above & Beyond

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and off; all the while tuning into the flowing lines on the monitors he was hooked up to. Twice, the alarm went off as the lines exploded into frightening zigzagged squiggles. I immediately alerted the white-coated person on duty who checked it out. No problem, *Baruch Hashem*.

Recently, we unexpectedly met again. Danny excitedly greeted me, "I remember you! You gave me a can of orange soda at the hospital!"

"He gave me a can of orange soda when I was in the hospital!", Danny proclaimed to all the passing staff. He grinned as we shook hands. The Heavens seemed to open up. I think I caught a glimpse of approval

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Mazel Tov! Mazel Tov!


On an auspicious evening just a few short months ago, Women's League staff, consumers, friends, and family members gathered to participate in the celebration of a most joyous event – the Bar Mitzvah of Yonatan, one of its dear consumers.

Though the event fell on a frigid winter night with temperatures dipping towards zero, inside the home the atmosphere was both warm and inviting. From the beautifully set tables replete with dainty flower centerpieces to the sumptuous, five-course meal proffered

by the residence's cook (chef is a more fitting appellation!), the event was arranged in typical Women's League fashion – with painstaking attention to detail, sensitivity, and-most of all, with love.

Highlighting the evening were inspiring addresses delivered by Program Director Elliot Brownstein, and Psychologist Dr. Stephen Glicksman, as well as poignant remarks by Yonatan's close relative, thanking Women's League for helping him flourish and progress thus far. The mutual respect and affection between Yonatan's family and the Women's League staff, was most evident throughout.

The Bar Mitzvah boy, Yonatan, may not have grasped the full significance of this *halachic* milestone. But his glowing face and radiant smile revealed his joy at being the center of attention and his thrill at being the catalyst for such tremendous *simcha* and *achdus*, as the attendees, joined together in harmony and friendship, encircled him with lively dance and heartfelt song.

The evening is one that will surely never be forgotten by Yonatan or his ever growing circle of admirers. 





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After much planning and careful attention to the myriad details involved, the date of departure finally arrived. Everyone at JFK airport and within the El AL airline was extremely helpful and considerate in offering the Women's League travelers special accommodations, ensuring added enjoyment of the long flight.

Norman glowed with excitement upon landing in Israel, and insisted on clapping and cheering for two full minutes. "I'm so happy, I'll have so much fun on this trip," he exclaimed. In contrast, Yanky was so excited to have arrived that he was uncharacteristically speechless.




gave everyone a laminated leaf from his personal *hoshanos*, as a memento of this special visit.

The entire trip was further enhanced by the enthusiasm of a knowledgeable and energetic driver, named Tzabari, who sang and danced with the group throughout the trip, and truly cared for Women's League's precious passengers.



No one imagined in advance how successful this horizon-expanding trip would actually be for all those involved in bringing it to fruition.

The trip was truly action-packed. In addition to all the places the group toured already mentioned, they also visited and were treated to front row seats at a benefit concert at the Jerusalem Great Synagogue. There Harold showed unexpected enthusiasm by clapping and swaying to the music of 'Oif Simchas' and 'Blue Fringe'. They also enjoyed an exceptional private meeting with the Boyaner Rebbe, Rabbi Breyer, shlita. The Rebbe discussed the trip at length with staff and consumers alike, and

No one imagined in advance how successful this horizon-expanding trip would actually be for all those involved in bringing it to fruition. This trip was truly an amazing once-in-a-lifetime experience not only for Harold, Norman and Yanky; but also for their dedicated staffers Josh and Danny. And next year, at the conclusion of the Passover *seder*, all of them will probably be thinking of the glorious sights and memories of this particular trip as they longingly proclaim, "Next year in Jerusalem". 



**WOMEN'S LEAGUE
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