

ICEJ *Aid*

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM



September 2011 Email Update

From Risk to Opportunity

The Jerusalem Conservatory Hassadna's program, From Risk to Opportunity, for special needs and immigrant children was founded in 2002 to give Ethiopian immigrant and disabled children from economically challenged families the opportunity to receive therapeutic and enriching music lessons from qualified teachers. It is wonderfully touching to hear how the program is profoundly impacting the children's personal, academic, and emotional development. We'd like to highlight here a few of the students who have benefited through ICEJ Aid's sponsorship in a special report shared with us from the Jerusalem Conservatory.



Nine year old Elizabeth studies piano and attends the Experimental Elementary School. Her family, like many in the Ethiopian community, faces a constant battle with poverty. Elizabeth struggled with persistently feeling inferior to her peers, something that impeded her social integration at school. However, her teacher recently shared, "In the last two years, Elizabeth has undergone an unbelievable transformation. She went from being almost invisible to becoming the star of the class. During each recess she plays piano and all of the children crowd around her to listen. I see a new spark in her eyes."

In addition, this year 12 children with special needs such as autism, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy, blindness, and physical and mental abilities also participated. The therapeutic intervention enables them not just to learn an instrument, but the instruction contributes in a vital way to their social, emotional, and physical development while offering wonderful opportunities for creativity and growth.

Students in the program are becoming increasingly involved in the community through giving concerts and raising awareness to the special challenges facing them. In a concert on June 13th where nearly everyone in the program performed, some very special and moving events occurred. Yael, a 15 year old with autism who is seriously challenged in communicating with her environment in almost any form, surprised the entire audience when she broke into song while accompanying herself on the piano. This astounding accomplishment moved everyone in the room.



Yisrael, age 17, was born with Down's syndrome but this has not prevented him from making music a meaningful part of his life. His study of traditional piano along with improvisation has greatly contributed to his fine and gross motor development enabling better coordination. His instructor, Deborah Schramm, commented that, "Yisrael has gone through a very

inspiring learning process. In addition to his musical and social development, his motor skills have improved. Ear training has improved Yisrael's pitch so much so that he can now sing along with his family." His sister told us, "From an early age Yisrael has loved music. Since he started studying the piano he loves music even more. Playing makes him happy and he enjoys playing for us and making us happy too." There can be no doubt that this program has helped him to blossom socially and physically.

The 2010-2011 school year brought profound benefits to all those able to participate in the From Risk to Opportunity program. We are so grateful to all of those who enabled this dream to come true for our students, their families, and our community.

Clothes for the Needy



Over the years, it has become a tradition for pilgrims coming to the Feast of Tabernacles to bring along something extra in their suitcases for ICEJ AID to distribute to the needy. These donations have helped new immigrants, Ethiopian Jews, Arabs, youth at risk, as well as young children.

If you are attending the Feast this year, please consider bringing toiletries such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste and toothbrush as well as new clothes for all ages. We also can use kitchen and bath towels, bed sheets and pillow cases.

Thank you so much for your help in helping those in need!

To partner with ICEJ Aid here in the land of Israel, please visit our website at www.icej.org, navigate to ICEJ Aid and click on donate.



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