

Jerusalem Hills Children's Home — JWI

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THE JERUSALEM HILLS THERAPEUTIC CENTERS

"It is not just an ordinary treatment center but a place where we try to solve the riddles of the wounded soul of each individual child sent to us." - Gerard Pulver, Executive Director

Support the Jerusalem Hills Therapeutic Center

The Jerusalem Hills Therapeutic Centers provides both a warm home and therapeutic framework for children ages 7 to 18 with severe psychological, behavioral, and learning disorders, who must be removed from their homes, some of them by court order.

Formerly known as the Children's Home in Jerusalem and later the Residential Treatment Center, JWI assumed full responsibility for the facility in the 1940s as young survivors of the Holocaust arrived in Palestine suffering the emotional aftermath of their traumatic wartime experiences. This commitment continued unabated for decades, with JWI chapters raising many millions of dollars to support the facility, which now treats at-risk boys and girls.



Their names may be Alex or Chaim or Deena. They come from all over Israel. Their stories are different, yet the same. Each has had a tragic start. Each has experienced, since infancy, physical or emotional neglect, rejection, desertion, or abuse from families caught in cycles of physical and emotional violence, mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse. Each story reflects a dysfunctional family setting unable to provide a normative environment in which a child could grow.

All these children are physically sound and of normal intelligence, but they bear psychological scars that distort their behavior and make normative human interaction virtually impossible. They cannot concentrate on school work, are unable to form trusting relationships, and their aggressive, destructive behavior has poisoned their experiences so that they fail to adjust in foster homes, boarding schools, and in other less therapeutic treatment settings. Some of them have spent time in children's psychiatric wards. Without long-term comprehensive therapeutic treatment, these children would endure lives in the criminal justice system, or the psychiatric facilities of Israel.

With close to 70 years' experience treating these emotionally disturbed children, using our unique holistic treatment plan, the Jerusalem Hills Therapeutic Centers is the lifeline these children need to overcome the trauma and nightmares of their early years and to go on to lead healthy and productive lives.

A Unique Treatment Philosophy:

From the beginning of their lives, each of these children has learned to hide despair, overpowering anxiety, and fear behind a wall of rage, mistrust, and distorting fantasies. The JHTC breaks down this wall. Its long-term objective is to endow the child with emotional health that will ensure his mainstreaming back into Israeli society. The facility works toward winning the child's trust, helping him learn to express his deepest wounds and anxieties, and eventually re-gaining a sense of self-worth.

The Home's unique holistic treatment plan gives children the time and care they need to heal. What makes this program unique is the combined use of four distinct elements:

- Long-term residential and therapeutic care
- Intensive one-on-one interaction between staff members and children
- Drug-free therapy
- Integration of the children's families into the treatment program.

The Results:

As a therapeutic residential treatment facility the majority of the children referred to us by the welfare authorities are considered "therapeutic/post-hospitalization placements" in need of the most intensive therapeutic treatment. Despite the difficulties of treating children with such extreme emotional disturbances, Jerusalem Hills is considered one of Israel's finest therapeutic residential treatment facilities with the highest rehabilitation rate of any institution of its kind - close to 70%.

Since its establishment in 1943, over one thousand graduates have passed through the gates of the JHTC and most have been mainstreamed and today live as productive members of Israeli society. Their childhood traumas are never forgotten; nor do they forget the years of dedicated love and care that helped turn their lives around.

Graduates Speak:

"I was well on the road to juvenile delinquency. Today I know that had I not come to the Children's Home I would have continued on to a life of crime and violence. luckily, I got my life back."

- Michael L., construction engineer

"As I re-visit the haunts of my childhood memories, I realize that the Home saved me. I thank G-d there is such a place."

- Moti A., business manager

"The Home gave me the feeling that I care about myself, that I am not a nobody, and that they love me very much. Now that I am leaving I feel strong. I think I'll be able to handle whatever the future brings."

- Ofer S., haute cuisine chef

"Today I am both happy and sad - happy that I have successfully walked down such a long path to wellness, and sad that this is the moment of parting and leave-taking. Thank you for having helped me so much!"

- Zohar P., Graduated in 2010





The Children's Home

The Children's Home at the Abu Gosh campus offers a stable home environment, therapeutic treatment and special education to boys and girls, ages 7 to 14, from all sectors of Israeli society, emotionally troubled at-risk children and adolescents requiring relocation to a therapeutic environment. These children are often victims of emotional and physical abuse, neglect, rejection, or desertion.

Each of the boys and girls under the Home's care, including more than 4,000 graduates, was an at-risk child referred to the JHTC by Israel's Ministry of Welfare. The dedicated staff of childcare professionals work around the clock to heal the psychological scars and repair the lives of these children and adolescents. The Home's unique program has been able to provide them with a future: More than two-thirds have been successfully rehabilitated to complete their high school education and mandatory military service, lead productive adult lives, establish families of their own, and contribute to the communities in which they live.

Program for HIGHLY AT-RISK TEEN GIRLS

Girls are increasingly at risk in Israel. An increasing number of young girls are experiencing physical and sexual abuse and are growing up in dysfunctional family settings rife with addiction and parental mental illness and neglect. In response to the growing need for real solutions for at-risk young girls the JHTC opened its doors to girls ages 7 to 11 ten years ago, and their integration into the home has been a great success. A number of studies of Israeli youth that were conducted in recent years have clearly determined there is a distinct lack of effective out-of-home therapeutic placement options for at-risk pre-teen and teen girls. At this moment, approximately 375 Israeli at-risk girls between the ages of 11 and 14 are awaiting therapeutic placement outside the home, or transfer from a placement solution that is inappropriate and maybe even detrimental. The studies also show that current intervention methods with these girls and the placement solutions that are currently offered them are not successfully responding to their unique needs.

Because of the JHTC's proven success record, and its ability to develop and adapt new effective treatment methods, and because of the great success it has had in developing a successful treatment program for girls over the past 10 years, the Ministry of Welfare has encouraged the Center to open a new therapeutic unit for girls ages 11 to 14, and to develop a therapeutic program that will address their unique needs.

THE GOLDIE KASSELL CENTER: Working in the Community

The Goldie Kassell Center was established in 1999 to address the needs of the wider community by offering the same JHTC high-quality therapeutic and professional services on an out-patient basis to the population at large. The Kassell Center provides services that include psychological and didactic diagnoses; a wide range of therapeutic interventions; professional supervision; evaluations; and expert opinions for family courts. Additionally, it offers professional training seminars and promotes special projects for the benefit of the community. The Kassell Center is dedicated to providing highly professional services at a reasonable price, making it accessible to private individuals as well as public agencies.

Preventing Non-Normative & Violent Behavior in Junior High Schools

According to recent surveys, since 1995 violence in Israeli schools has increased by 40% and today 60% of elementary and high school students have experienced some form of violence. The Kassell Center has developed an innovative and highly successful program that provides tools to help school staff and students cope with the day-to-day socio-psychological difficulties these students face.

The target population is junior high-school students, who are young enough to reap great benefit from psychological intervention, and whose adolescent stage of development presents them with multiple problems and dangers. Among the major problems that are addressed are physical and verbal violence; difficulty in accepting boundaries and frameworks; lack of empathy and tolerance for others in one's peer group; tendency to fall into non-normative activities (such as drug use, theft, etc.) The central goal also includes the strengthening of accepted social codes and values and creating an opportunity for social activity that focuses on constructive behavioral-emotional elements as a preventive measure against social and emotional regression.

The impact of this program has been phenomenal: The Center has successfully re-mainstreamed nearly 85% of the participating students and has reduced school levels of violence and non-normative behaviors.