



The Daniel Centers for Progressive Judaism

Beit Daniel | Mishkenot Ruth Daniel

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Annual Report 2008-9

January 10, 2009
Tel Aviv, Israel



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The Daniel Centers for Progressive Judaism in Israel include Tel Aviv's first Reform Synagogue, Beit Daniel, and Mishkenot Ruth Daniel, a Community-Education Center and Guest House in Jaffa.

The Daniel Centers actively pursue the promotion of a pluralistic and just society in Israel. We aim to help secular and Reform Israelis find their "Jewish voice" and build meaningful relationships with our Diaspora counterparts, creating bridges between congregations and communities. The Daniel Centers are a learning, caring and spiritual community.

"Through faith we experience the world; through action we give the world meaning"
(Leo Baeck, *Essence of Judaism*)



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From the Desk of Rabbi Azari

Dear Friends,

The Daniel Centers look back at 2008 as a year of many changes. Some of these have been good – and some proved difficult. As we start 2009, in the face of a worldwide financial crisis and political uncertainty in Israel, we expect to encounter many more changes. It is with faith and a sense of mission that we look forward to embrace these challenges.

It was with this same sense of mission that Mishkenot Ruth Daniel, a guesthouse and culture-education center, opened its doors in May, 2007. The launching of Mishkenot Ruth Daniel's programming followed suit. Within a little over a year we are proud to have established a vibrant visitors' center that offers Israelis and visitors from abroad cutting edge tours and educational seminars that provide a deeper understanding of Israel through visiting Jaffa – a cultural, ethnic and religious crossroads, with the daily complexities of a mixed city where Jews and Arabs live side by side.

"*Kol Israel arevim ze ba-ze* - All Israel is responsible one for the other" (Talmud: Sanhedrin, 27b). These words guide us constantly, when teaching, praying, and working with the community and in our outreach efforts. At Beit- Daniel we have always opened our doors to visitors from afar and the new center in Jaffa allows us to reach out to an increasing number of Jewish communities around the world. Adhering to our mission of *klal Israel*, we are very excited about our new Tikkun Olam MASA program (in cooperation with BINA and the URJ), starting in September, 2009. We are also hoping to increase and improve our educational seminars and tours in Jaffa and *mifgashim* experiences for visiting congregations. Through our education work within Israeli schools, pluralistic Jewish values are cultivated, creating a common Jewish language, resonating an Israeli secular Jewish voice.

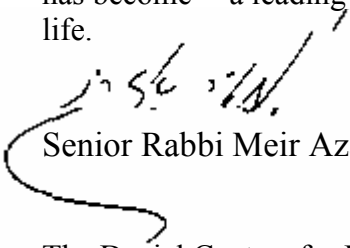
We were especially careful when planning this year's budget. We realize that these are times when it is especially important to monitor expenses and necessary budgetary and organizational adjustments have been made. But I am glad to say that our foundation is healthy, our staff devoted and lay leadership committed so we hope that 2009 will be a year of growth and development, like previous years before it. Since education for over 500 pre-school children cannot be neglected, religious services catering to many more than our members cannot be stopped, the work for pluralism and co-existence cannot be halted, and the hundreds of senior citizens who regularly attend our programs or the hundreds of kids who celebrate their bar and bat mitzvahs with us cannot be left disappointed, we know that our task is great but we must reach out with open arms.



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As Tel Aviv, the first Hebrew city and Israel's cultural and financial center, celebrates its centennial anniversary, Beit Daniel, the home of our congregation in north Tel Aviv is celebrating its Chai (18) anniversary. Having served the congregation of Beit Daniel for the past 18 years, I am thankful to our members, to my colleagues and to our many friends for allowing me to be a part of this beautiful vision and of what it has become -- a leading organization in the city's educational, cultural and spiritual life.


Senior Rabbi Meir Azari

The Daniel Centers for Progressive Judaism

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Letter from Adv. Nuri Conforti, Beit Daniel Board Chairperson

Shalom,

The congregation of Beit Daniel is celebrating its 18th anniversary this year. Our members are more active than ever and a major donation by a member family has allowed us to renovate our sanctuary. The young adult forum has grown, and our building is busy all hours of the day, seven days a week. In Jaffa, a new community is growing and hundreds of guest from all over the world come and visit us, support us and join our journey.

The Daniel Centers touch the lives of many people, in many ways. It certainly has touched mine and my family's. Since my son's Bar Mitzvah at Beit Daniel many years ago, Rabbi Azari has married both my daughters, my granddaughters, Maya and Adi, attended its pre-schools and now its affiliated schools. My daughter has become a Rabbi and teacher at Ussishkin Elementary School where we teach daily, and from time to time she leads the Kabbalat Shabbat service at Mishkenot Ruth Daniel in Jaffa. My wife volunteers as a coordinator for a senior citizen program that draws about 50 people every week to Beit Daniel. And I, through my role as chairperson,



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I have had the opportunity to meet many special people who have made the Daniel Centers their Jewish home.

For 2009 we have two goals: to strengthen our Beit Daniel community and to reach out to Diaspora Jews. Under the leadership of Rabbi Azari, I believe we will achieve both.



Nuri Conforti

Beit Daniel, Chairperson

The Daniel Centers

Nuri Conforti, Chairperson

Bruria Barish, Honorary President

Beit Daniel Board

Dr. Haim Alcalay, Ilan Avisar, Shimshi Chanoch, Tzvi Danenberg, Rivka Eden, Ruth Kleinstein, Dr. Diane Levin-Zamir, Sigal Shaldag, Philip Sitbon, Ricki Tankus, Yosef Wasserman, Naomi Zilberstein, Dr. Yitzhak Ztozner

Mishkenot Ruth Daniel Steering Committee

Rachel Alcalay, Shmuel Cohen, Prof. Manuel Trachtenberg, Amos Ettinger, Adv. Michael Kaplinski, Gershon Katz, Nirit Oren Shtenberg, Ofer Shemer, Prof. Yehuda Shenhav, Sari Shilon, Leah Smoler, Dr. Galia Tzabar-Friedman, Dr. Zvia Waldan, Dr. Rafi Waldan, Gusti Yehoshua-Brawerman

The Daniel Centers are named after Ruth, may her memory be a blessing, and Gerard Daniel, whose vision, commitment and support have made Beit Daniel and Mishkenot Ruth Daniel a reality.



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Vision, Mission and Goals

In light of the changes and developments in the world, Israel and the Reform Movement, as well as the Daniel Centers' expansion into Jaffa, staff, and board meetings were convened last summer to reevaluate our work and draft this year's guiding principle.

The Daniel Centers' goals:

- ⇒ Increase and improve our seminars and tours at Mishkenot Ruth Daniel to visitors from Israel and abroad.
- ⇒ Establish a visitors' center for groups from abroad for *mifgashim* programming that create meaningful contacts between Israeli and Jewish communities worldwide.
- ⇒ Expand our educational programming to Jaffa, creating new educational modules reflecting the unique issues of a mixed city.
- ⇒ Open a first Reform Daniel Center pre-school in Jaffa
- ⇒ Build a Jaffa Reform congregation
- ⇒ Improve the Daniel Centers' communication with its members, supporters, and friends through better and more effective communication channels.

Recent accomplishments and new developments in response to goals:

- ⇒ Beit Daniel and Mishkenot Ruth Daniel have undergone an organizational change creating a unified organization under the name of the Daniel Centers for Progressive Judaism. As part of these changes the Daniel Centers hired a chief of operations to oversee the organizational changes and create a working synergy between institutions.
- ⇒ A tour guide training course took place this summer, training young Arab and Jewish leaders to lead co-existence tours in Jaffa. Coexistence tours are now offered and continue even amidst the recent security and political developments.
- ⇒ The Universal Holiday Celebrations program for pre-school was launched with seed money from the New Israel Fund – the program is in development and will be implemented next year.



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- ⇒ The Daniel Centers will open a first pre-school in Jaffa next school year.
- ⇒ Another elementary school has joined the Beit Daniel education department. At the Ztahala Elementary school, 700 students receive weekly Judaic classes from the Daniel Centers with the support of Temple Israel of Hollywood, Ztahala's partner school within the Los Angeles- Tel Aviv partnership.
- ⇒ A MASA program serving recent college graduates will be launched fall '09 in cooperation with BINA and the URJ.
- ⇒ Fewer trees are being cut down as the Daniel Centers work to create electronic communications with congregation members, participants, friends, users and supporters
- ⇒ A new Hebrew website has been launched and a new English website is under construction.
- ⇒ Kabbalat Shabbat Services have been launched in Jaffa.
- ⇒ Beit Daniel's sanctuary has been renovated with the generous support of long-standing Israeli congregation family, the Eden Family.

The Daniel Centers' Staff

Senior Rabbi Meir Azari, Associate Rabbi Galia Sadan, Rabbi Talia Avnon-Benvensite, Rabbi Michal Conforti, Cantor Freddie Pe'er, Miri Danir, Shay Gilboa, Yonit Kolb, Orna Landau, Ilana Neshet, Ayelet Ronen, Anat Segal, and Maya Vamosh.



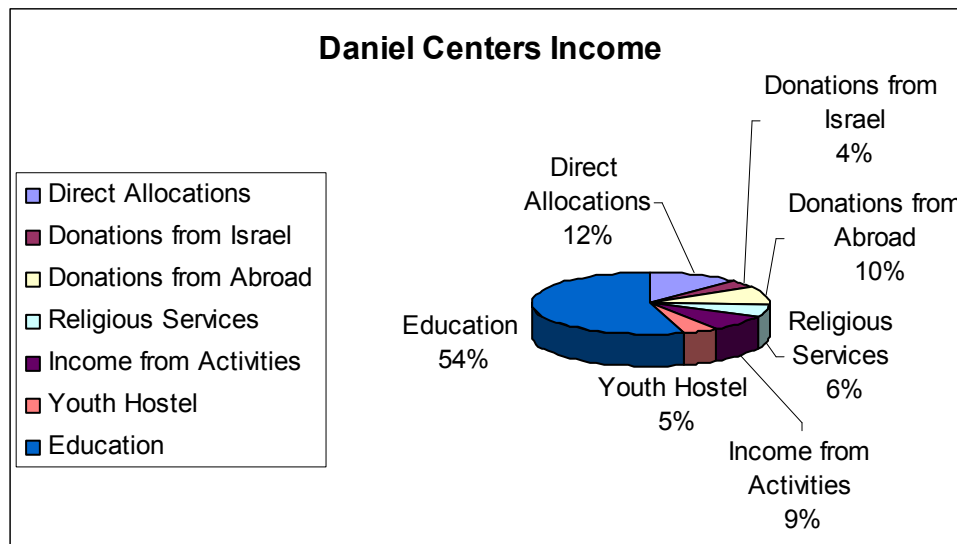
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Daniel Centers Budget

Income:

- The Daniel Centers estimated income for 2009 stands at NIS 8,996,700 (\$2,570,000 at exchange rate \$1=3.5 NIS)
- The Daniel Centers are proud that over 70% of its budget consists of self generated income.
- The Daniel Centers' budget for 2008 was balanced.
- Fundraising goals are moderate and only granted donations are included. Any additional fundraising successes will increase the overall budget and allow the implementation of additional programming.
- Last year Beit Daniel received a substantial donation from an Israeli family that permitted the renovation of our sanctuary and a fund generating NIS 80,000 per year over 12 years for programming.
- The income from the Mishkenot Ruth Daniel youth hostel combined with a substantial Israeli donation permitted an increase in the 2009 budget.
- It should be noted that the Daniel Centers receive no state allocations as a religious institution.



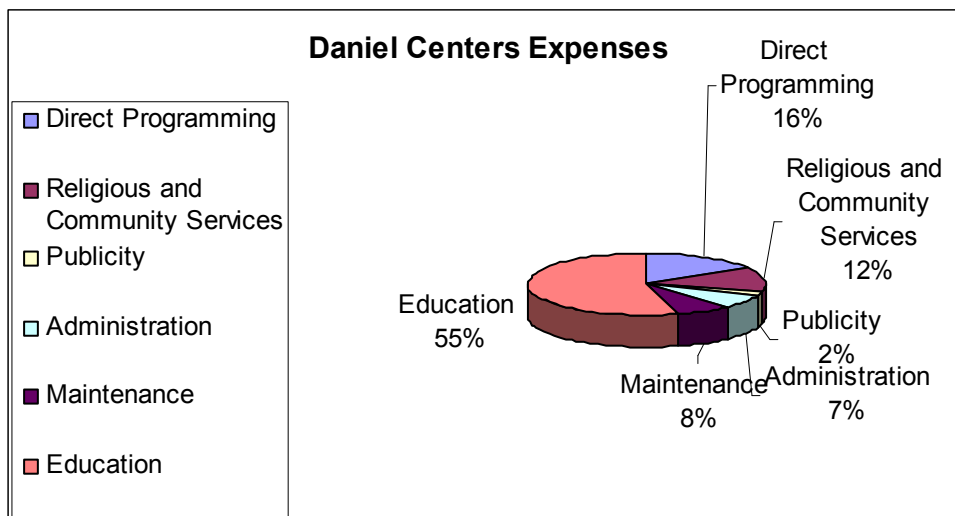


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Expenses:

- The Daniel Centers allocate more than 85% of its income directly to programming (overhead is 15%)
- The budget allocated to non-religious programming including education and culture is over 71%, reflecting the Daniel Centers' commitment to outreach.
- The education department at Beit Daniel has been showing a marked increase in activity in the last couple of years with a steady rise in income and expenses.



Partners and partial list of supporters:

The Jewish Agency
The IMPJ - The Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism
The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles
The Legacy Heritage Innovation Project
The Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality
The New Israel Fund
The Lopez Low Foundation
The Women of Reform Judaism
Temple Israel of Hollywood, LA
Stephen S. Wise Temple, LA
Temple Emanu-El, SF
PEF – Israel Endowment Funds

The Daniel Centers also receives support from many individuals, synagogues, and organizations through contributions to Friends of Beit Daniel, a charitable nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization.

Address: Friends of Beit Daniel, 4108 Leland St. Chevy Chase, 20815, MD
friends@beit-daniel.org.il. Phone 301 654 1259.



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The Daniel Centers in Numbers – 2008

- ⇒ 2 Centers
- ⇒ 3 Shabbat minyanim
- ⇒ 4 rabbis
- ⇒ 4 Kabbalat Shabbat services every week
- ⇒ 15 preschools in Tel Aviv
- ⇒ 30 Schools work with our education department
- ⇒ 34 Congregation missions visited Beit Daniel (over 60% of ARZA world tours to Israel)
- ⇒ 40 Tot Shabblers weekly
- ⇒ 50 young adults and students attend weekly activities
- ⇒ 55 preschool teachers, educators and caretakers work in the preschool network
- ⇒ 100 attend our conversion school weekly
- ⇒ 200 Senior Citizens regularly take part in specially tailored programs
- ⇒ 200 bar and bat mitzvahs are celebrated at Beit Daniel annually
- ⇒ 220 Reform weddings
- ⇒ 300 NFTY kids took part in MRD's educational experiences
- ⇒ 350 joined us for Tet B'Av service and learning
- ⇒ 515 preschool families send their children to our preschools every day
- ⇒ 900 elementary school pupils study weekly Judaic classes with our education staff
- ⇒ 1,500 visitors from around the world visited Beit Daniel
- ⇒ 1,500 participated in Tikkun Leil Shavuot Festivities
- ⇒ 2,000 Israeli participants in walking tours and seminars at Mishkenot Ruth Daniel
- ⇒ 2,500 visitors from abroad took part in walking and educational seminars of Jaffa that included groups from NFTY, Birthright, Young Judean, federations, congregations, and others.
- ⇒ 7,500 students take part in School & Schul programming
- ⇒ 22,200 attended services

On any given week 2,500 children, families, senior citizens, students, pupils, young adults and visitors make the Daniel Centers their Jewish home.