



Happy  
Chanukah!

## A SAFE HAVEN IN SPITE OF THE SHOOTING

### AMIT Beit HaYeled



For eighteen years the AMIT Frisch Beit HaYeled Childhaven has provided a safe home for its residents aged 5 to 15. They are children who come from families at risk, and from underprivileged backgrounds. Neglected and deprived, at Beit HaYeled they find security and human warmth, sometimes for the first time in their lives.



Is Beit HaYeled still a safe haven? Since shooting into Gilo began from the nearby Arab village of Beit Jala in the fall of 2000, AMIT Beit HaYeled has felt the consequences, not the least of which has been a reduction in the number of residents.

**In response to the shooting, the usual number of new children did not come to live at Beit HaYeled this fall. Despite the situation, without exception, the veteran children returned.** Explains Nitzchia Eldar, Beit HaYeled's director, "All of last year's children returned. Here we love and defend them. This is the most secure place for **them; this is their home.** Only newcomers were too afraid to come."

The security issue has affected the residence in many ways. With fewer children, Beit HaYeled reopened with one less family unit. As a result, the Ministry of Welfare and other government sources are providing fewer funds. Furthermore, Nitzchia emphasizes, "We have had to tighten our belts in every area." The drama group, choir and music program were all canceled. The children's outings are restricted to places that are free of charge. "We have cut down on all sorts of extras, like sweets for the children," Nitzchia adds.

The children have also been affected emotionally. Beit HaYeled's interdisciplinary team of psychologists, social workers and therapists are working overtime with the surrogate parents, who need to deal with the various complications of traumatic stress syndrome that have emerged in response to the security situation. Extreme changes in appetite, aggressive behavior, bed-wetting and inability to concentrate are but a few of the symptoms that have appeared in many of the children.

There is one area, however, which the security situation has not affected: the absolute dedication of AMIT Beit HaYeled's professional staff. Even in these difficult days, our outstanding team still succeeds in providing our children with a loving and nurturing home in which they continue to grow and blossom, in safety and security.

