



WIZO. Doing What Matters



WIZO'S IMPACT REPORT

IRON SWORDS WAR

A Year of Challenges, Resilience, Recovery and Growth

October 2023 - October 2024

Dear WIZO chaverot and donors,

The State of Israel is currently experiencing a historic time: a tumultuous year of war, which began at an unprecedented low. Israel is in the process of recovery, working to stabilize its security in the southern and northern borders, aiming at reinstating the communities along its borders. The country is gradually overcoming terror and devastation, transforming tragedy into strength and unity. This year has intensified the immense challenges already facing WIZO and calls upon us to shoulder even greater national responsibility. In such times, we must stay focused and unwavering, and as they say in sports, "we cannot take our eyes off the ball."

Indeed, there is much to be proud of at the end of such a challenging year. Even in the most difficult times, under the heaviest burdens, WIZO has stood out among the national "carriers of the burden," demonstrating professionalism, sacrifice, and an uncompromising dedication to society's diverse needs.

Our gratitude goes to our professional team, led by CEO Mira Mines, who works relentlessly, sometimes under fire—both metaphorically and literally—to achieve the organization's goals and vision; to the incredible women of WIZO Israel, who answer every call and meet every need; to our generous donors and to our dear chaverot around the world, who—without hesitation—rose like lionesses to stand by our side. Together, you turned yourselves and us into a stronghold, giving strength and spreading winds of faith and hope.

In the impact report presented to you today, our External Relations Division summarizes WIZO's extensive activities during this year of war. A year of impactful work by a nonprofit women's organization dedicated to education, welfare, and women's status, all while navigating the perils of war amidst smoke-filled borders, grief, and pain. This impact report should be read through a lens that adds depth, reminding us of the human stories beyond the statistics and the national survival struggle beyond the project headlines.

Those who read the report carefully will find not only an organization that is alive, active, and fighting to fulfill its mission but also the story of a people coming together in the hardest of times, looking toward the horizon, and building robust social support systems that will shape the resilience of future generations.

WIZO is very proud of its members and supporters worldwide. Let us continue jointly to fulfill our mission. Your support is paramount, and our success relies on this continued partnership. With great thanks and appreciation to all our partners,



Anat Vidor
WIZO President



Anita Friedman
WIZO Chairperson

THE IRON SWORDS WAR

ADDRESSING NATIONAL CHALLENGES

On October 7, 2023, Israel experienced the deadliest terrorist attacks in its history. The attack began with a barrage of rockets launched from Gaza and a coordinated ground assault by Hamas militants, breaching Israel's borders and causing devastation among civilian populations. The toll on the nation has been profound, with both physical destruction and psychological trauma affecting countless lives.



While people heroically try to return to everyday life, WIZO is committed to accommodating their needs through its vast infrastructure. WIZO's daycare centers, high schools, youth villages, support groups, practical support, emotional support, and post-trauma therapy are all in place to assist individuals, families, and entire communities. The following pages will tell the story of WIZO since October 7th. **We are here to restore hope.**

YIZKOR – IN THEIR MEMORY

WIZO remembers those who have lost their lives in this war, including 24 graduates and members of the WIZO family. May their sacrifice inspire our efforts for a peaceful, prosperous future and a safe Israel for us all.



The WIZO family stands in solidarity with the hostages' families and pray for the safe return of their loved ones.

WIZO - MAKING A DIFFERENCE



The war that broke out on October 7th led to enormous difficulties on the home front and a broad demand for aid and professional intervention. WIZO stepped in right away. The organization utilized its far-reaching capabilities, highly experienced personnel, and volunteers, harnessing its systems to support all sectors of Israeli society.

WIZO provided tailored support to help communities adapt quickly and effectively during crises. This diverse support added to the resilience in our communities. WIZO's activity significantly contributed to the rapid return to normalcy in Israeli society, a process we are still in now.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering dedication of our staff and volunteers, and the generous support from federations worldwide, to whom we extend our deepest gratitude.

- Mira Mines, CEO



870M NIS

ANNUAL BUDGET



6,000

EMPLOYEES



2,300

VOLUNTEERS



70,000

PEOPLE
SERVED DAILY



45

BIGUDIYOT



161

DAY CARE
CENTERS



40

WIZO
CENTERS



9

SAFETY NET
COMMUNITIES



8

YOUTH VILLAGES
& SCHOOLS

Hospital Day Care Centers

Since the onset of the Iron Swords War, Israel's hospitals have been inundated with **thousands of injured individuals**, placing enormous pressure on medical teams working day and night to save lives. WIZO stepped in with a swift and crucial initiative to support these healthcare professionals by opening **11 emergency day care centers** within and in the vicinities of Israel's major hospitals. These centers cared for 300 children from birth to 3.5 years of age — children of doctors, nurses, and other medical staff, allowing them to focus on their life-saving mission without worrying about their children's safety.

One of the most poignant moments of the war was when a **missile struck** the day care center at Barzilai Hospital, damaging the exterior wall. Despite the destruction, WIZO reopened the center within 24 hours, demonstrating its unwavering commitment to supporting healthcare workers and their families in the most challenging circumstances.



Newly constructed shelter, WIZO Nachlat Yehuda

50 Life-Saving Bomb Shelters Across WIZO Institutions

WIZO has been building and renovating 50 life-saving shelters across Israel, providing secure refuge for our day care centers, high schools, and youth villages. These shelters offer room for dozens of people to sit together, share their fears, hold onto each other, and find strength in the presence of their community. These shelters protect from missile strikes, provide safety, and support the struggle to rebuild strength and resilience.



"WIZO is my first home, second home, and third. I've trusted this day care center with my six children for the past 15 years. There is nowhere else I would feel comfortable putting them. Thanks to WIZO, I go to work daily with a clear mind and a calm heart. Knowing my child is safe in WIZO's day care gives me the peace of mind to focus on saving lives."

- Orit, Management Team, Assaf Harofeh Medical Center

Sheltering Evacuated Families

The war created a totally new phenomenon, a precedent in Israeli history: entire geographical areas were evacuated, and people became refugees in their own country overnight. Hundreds of evacuated families found refuge at WIZO's Gan Vanof and Hadassim youth villages, as well as at our Parents Home in Tel Aviv. WIZO's professional staff provided personal and psychological support, childcare services, activities, clothing, personal hygiene items and met any need that arose.



Displaced children participate in a baking activity



"On October 7th, I woke up at home to explosions and continuous sirens, with terrorists just minutes from my home. Our building has no bomb shelter. After two hours, a missile hit the entrance of the building, shattering my bedroom window. It was terrifying—I felt completely helpless, terrified and unable to breathe.

My mom took me to the hospital, there were soldiers bleeding, families crying. There wasn't even space in the emergency room for everyone. I spent two sleepless days there, overwhelmed by the trauma.

Living here at WIZO Gan Vanof, I'm getting the support I need. I have people to talk to, they're caring and patient, and they've helped me feel safe and calm again."

- Nivit, 18 years old, student at WIZO Gan Vanof

**Nivit will enlist in the army this year.*

WIZO RESPONSE - FOSTERING RESILIENCE

WIZO's resilience efforts extended to providing vital emotional and psychological care to vulnerable populations, including children, seniors, and all those suffering from the mental health impacts of the war. These projects aimed to restore a sense of well-being and help individuals cope with trauma.

Restoring Communities in the South

WIZO has dedicated significant resources to supporting the southern communities on the border with Gaza. Following an extensive process of mapping the needs in partnership with the Tekuma Directorate, our professional teams launched a range of projects offering practical, social, and emotional support to residents deeply affected by the war and who face trauma and post-trauma challenges.

WIZO is serving both evacuated and gradually returning communities in Sderot, Nir Oz, Sufa, Maslul, and surrounding towns and kibbutzim. These initiatives aim to build personal, familial and community resilience, addressing the various needs of all segments of society, including families, children, teens, women, and seniors.



11,000

TODDLERS



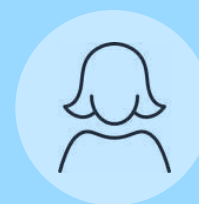
5,000

CHILDREN



4,000

YOUTH



7,000

WOMEN

Populations served by WIZO during the war

Support Groups for Women

WIZO launched 22 critical support groups, helping women find strength, safety, and the tools to rebuild their lives after traumatic experiences.

WIZO's experienced professionals and numerous volunteers provided vital legal, psychological, and emotional support to **7,000 women**, including army reservists, women in life crises, and survivors of domestic violence.

Participants of these groups, in their own words:

"I am safe here, I can say things and be understood."

"I need this hour for myself even when it is hard to get here."

"It is the only place which lets me be me all the time."

"I do not have to wait until I am retired to take care of myself. It is not something to be taken for granted."



Students at Rehovot High School take part in a resilience training program

Programs for Children & Youth

The war and its emotional implications significantly impacted young children and youth -- rate of alcohol abuse, drug abuse, violence and behavioral problems spiked dramatically across Israel. WIZO implemented educational and emotional resilience programs for **5,200 children and 4,120 adolescents**, including at-risk children, boarding school students, and youth in the hardest hit areas of Israel.



A group of women create inspiration boards in a group therapy class

Supporting Families of Reserve Soldiers

Tzav 8 (reserve service) has been sent to 3% of Israel's population but it impacted the entire community particularly women who are left to manage households and care for their families while their loved ones go to war.

WIZO has responded by launching 10 support programs for the wives and mothers of soldiers, as well as establishing 8 therapeutic playrooms for their children, providing essential emotional care. These initiatives aim to strengthen the emotional resilience of families, offering psychological support and coping tools through workshops across the country.

So far, 120 women and 160 children have benefited, making WIZO the only organization addressing emotional resilience for reserve families on a national scale.



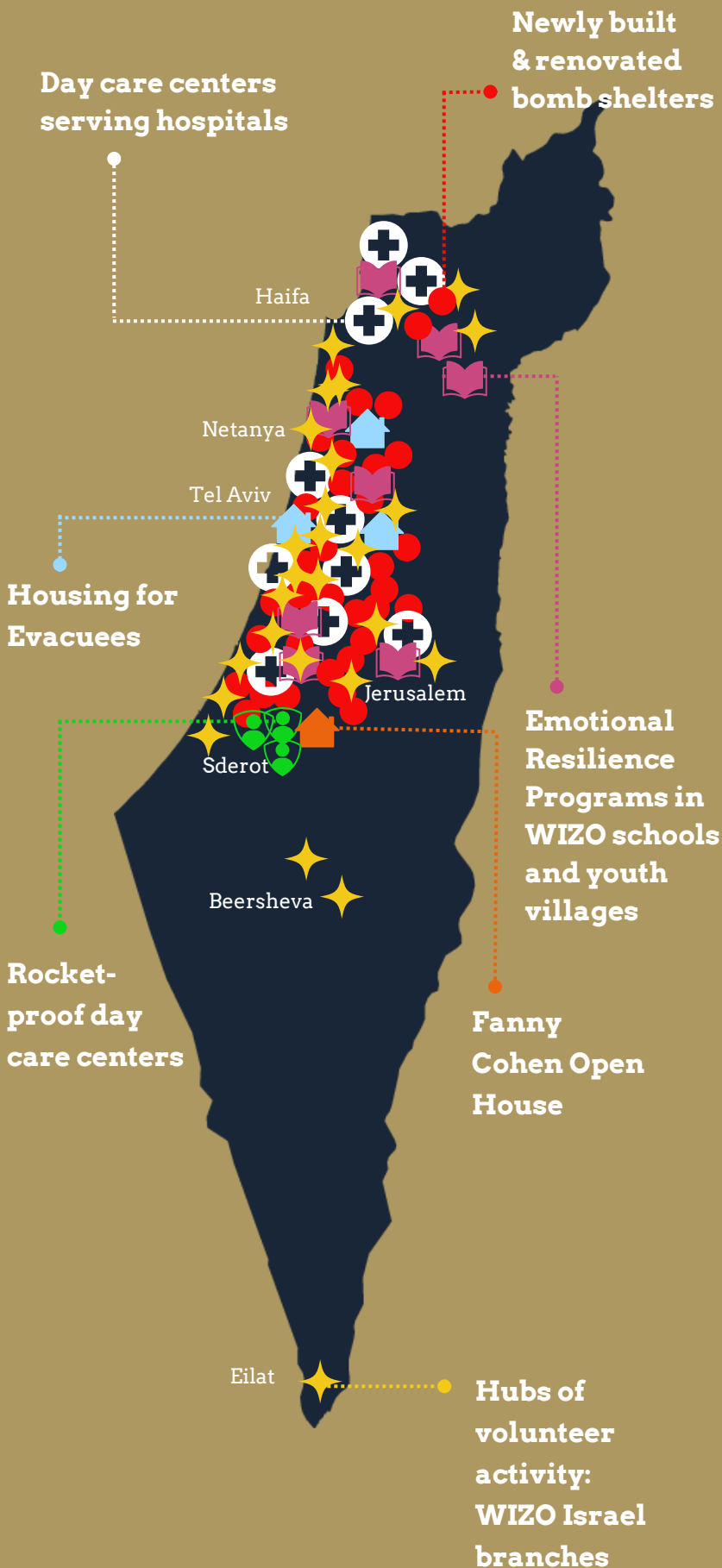
Student using her laptop during remote learning

Technology for Education

The evacuation of towns and the scattering of communities in temporary places of residence posed multiple challenges to students. To facilitate these challenges and ensure continuity in education, WIZO distributed laptop computers to high school students, enabling them to continue their studies remotely during the conflict.

Doing What Matters: Therapeutic Project for women and children

There is no doubt that the war, the changed lives, and the instability and temporary conditions imposed on many people have negative emotional and mental consequences. WIZO comes to the aid of those who need care and support. WIZO created eight new therapeutic projects that benefitted 80 women and 160 children. These interventions focused on addressing trauma, grief counseling, and promoting emotional recovery.



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"When you have children and the "Red Alert" siren goes off, and you don't know what's going on with them, the fact that they are in a rocket-proof day care center built by WIZO makes all the difference."

**- Daphna Gershkowitz,
mother from WIZO Sderot DCC**



WIZO President Anat Vidor with Sderot Mayor Alon Davidi

Resilience in Sderot

The terror experienced by the people of Sderot on the devastating morning of October 7 only compounded the years of trauma. The 30,000 residents of the city, including the families of nearly 200 children who attend WIZO's three day care centers and 50 professional staff who cared for them, were forced to flee their homes, refugees in their own country, piling trauma upon trauma. On March 3, WIZO re-opened our three rocket-proof day care centers, amongst many challenges, and enabled the families to return to their homes and community.



Mothers at a Fanny Cohen Open House activity

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"We made a pact with the city of Sderot, we made sure that every family has whatever they need to keep their daily routine. WIZO is deeply invested in the city of Sderot with three rocket-proof day care centers and the Fanny Cohen Open House. We are making sure that citizens emerge more resilient."

- Anat Vidor, WIZO President

"Returning to normal life was essential. I think that the responsibility lies in our hands, WIZO and its employees. We are the ones who can make sure everyone returns safely and that we can ensure that normal life resumes."

**- Ziva Korsia,
Director, WIZO Bruce and Ruth
Rappaport Day Care Center**



Resilience workshop for seniors

Resilience Programs for Senior Women

The war has had a real impact on the health and well-being of senior citizens. Two hundred sixty senior women participated in resilience programs to combat loneliness and promote emotional well-being. These programs provided a sense of community for seniors isolated due to the war, offering emotional and social support during a difficult time.

Safety & Child Development

WIZO installed **19 sensory motor rooms** in bomb shelters in our day care centers, transforming what are usually intimidating, spaces into welcoming environments. The rooms are designed to advance gross motor skills and promote physical, emotional, cognitive and social development.

With a large variety of padded materials and soft toys such as mini-trampolines, foam inclines, tunnels, ball pits and more, WIZO's sensory motor rooms offer a safe and supportive environment for children to explore, play and strengthen their sensory processing skills.



Toddlers play in a sensory motor room



A student and counselor in a one-on-one session

One-on-One Support

Many families were forced to relocate to temporary housing, separating children from their familiar environments, schools, and friends. Recognizing this vulnerable group, WIZO offered weekly individual emotional support to 500 youth, aiding them in processing the trauma they experienced. These sessions provided children with a secure environment to express their fears and concerns, and equipping them with the tools to move forward.

WIZO RESPONSE – VOLUNTEERING

WIZO's 2,300 active volunteers became a lifeline for Israeli society, offering everything from food deliveries to childcare to emotional support, ensuring no family was left behind. The volunteers provided around the clock essential aid to families and communities most impacted by the war. WIZO branches from Kiryat Shmona to Eilat became critical

support hubs, where volunteers worked to support displaced families and their immediate needs. The dedication of WIZO's volunteers, many of whom had family members directly affected by the conflict, was felt everywhere. Their grassroots initiatives reflect WIZO's ability to pivot quickly to meet the needs of Israeli society.



WIZO volunteers host bbq for soldiers



Key Contributions of WIZO Volunteers



**55,000
volunteer hours**



**5,000,000 NIS
worth of in-kind
contributions**



**WIZO's 45
Bigudiyot**

WIZO's Bigudiyot (secondhand stores) were transformed into distribution hubs, providing crucial supplies to survivors, evacuees, and soldiers. Volunteers collected and distributed **5,000 boxes** of clothing, toys, personal hygiene and Supplies for pets. They even established a "Laundry Hub" where volunteers washed clothes for evacuees and soldiers.

The "**WIZO With You**" Project engaged **80 volunteers** who supported **135 women and children** whose partners had been drafted into the military. Volunteers helped with childcare, grocery shopping, and emotional support, ensuring these families received the care they needed to cope with their bewildering circumstances.



**Support for
Military Wives
and Children**



Support for Soldiers and Bereaved Families

Volunteers visited injured soldiers and worked closely with families who had lost loved ones, offering compassion and support during an incredibly challenging time. Volunteers also distributed donations to soldiers, such as mobile chargers, allowing soldiers to stay in touch with their families. WIZO hosted relaxation events to provide much-needed respite for soldiers returning from the front lines.

WIZO mobilized hundreds of our high school students to volunteer on farms in the north and south, helping alleviate the manpower shortages caused by the war.



WIZO Students Mobilize to Assist Farms



Acts of Kindness and Community Solidarity

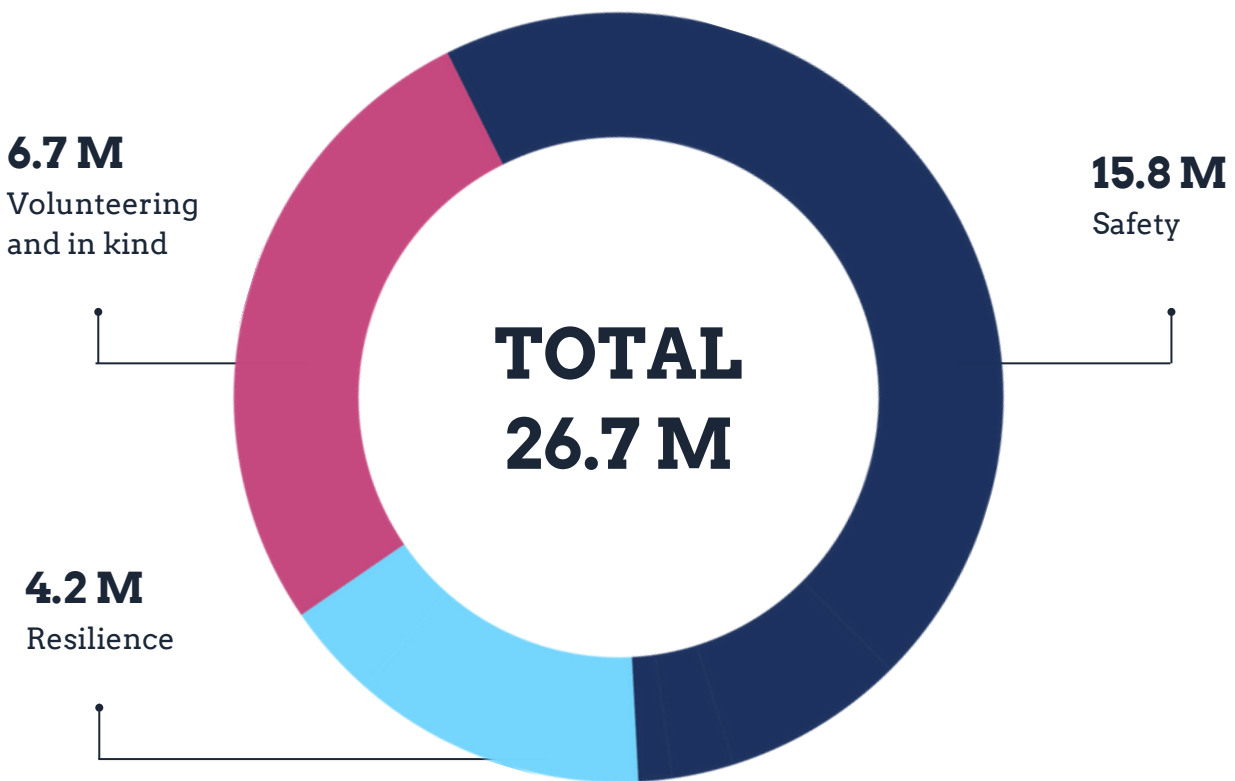
Volunteers knitted **2,500 warm clothing** items including hats for soldiers in combat. Volunteers crafted funeral wreaths to honor fallen soldiers, and exhibits were set up in WIZO secondhand stores to raise awareness for the hostages, fostering community solidarity in a time of national mourning.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS GO A LONG WAY

We are immensely grateful to all of our supporters for their generosity to the people of Israel during these challenging times. Your contributions were utilized to address the most pressing needs. During this challenging year, WIZO directed a significant part of the donations to enhance security for our institutions, build additional shelters, and help Israeli citizens maintain a regular life routine under harsh conditions.

WIZO also invested diverse efforts and countless work hours to develop resilience in vulnerable populations. WIZO's programs provided social, mental, and emotional responses to communities nationwide. We are very proud of our Israeli volunteers who contributed 55,000 hours of dedicated work and for the massive in-kind support from the community, companies, and private donors.

WIZO's Investment in war-related projects (NIS Millions)



PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE - GENERATING IMPACT OVER TIME

As Israel embarks on the long path to recovery, WIZO is steadfast in its commitment to nurturing emotional well-being, fostering community strength, and promoting resilience. Through its ongoing programs and future initiatives, WIZO will continue to play a pivotal role in helping Israeli society emerge from the war stronger and more cohesive than ever before.

WIZO is leading efforts to support Israel's recovery by providing essential services to large sectors of society and by empowering the individuals under our care. Our programs will address the needs of children, students, and women, alongside vulnerable populations such as evacuees, families in crisis, senior citizens, and survivors of domestic violence.

We understand that physical security is intrinsically linked to emotional wellbeing, and hence we place safeguarding our institutions and communities as a top priority at all times.

In the coming months, we will broaden our partnerships and expand our programs to support the communities of southern Israel. We will deepen our collaboration with key partners such as "Iron Mothers," "Mom is Awake," and "The Anchor," as well as local authorities, while developing the Fanny Cohen Open House into a central hub of resilience in Sderot and the surrounding southern region. Additionally, we plan to implement similar initiatives in northern Israel to meet the dire challenges faced by those communities devastated by the war.

To further strengthen our professional teams, WIZO will provide nationwide training courses for day care employees, empowering them to fulfill their role as caretakers for our youngest citizens. This year, in partnership with Lewinsky-Wingate College, we are also launching a master's degree program for preschool teachers, reaffirming our commitment to educational excellence.

Your contributions make a difference. Your support enables WIZO to fulfill its mission and ensure a brighter tomorrow for Israel.

