

Jerusalem International YMCA

Development Report September - January, 2017



Dear Friends,

I am delighted to share with you the development report for the last 6 months at the Jerusalem International YMCA and the news that many of us have been waiting for...

Our new Sports Center will be opening this summer!

The facility will be promoted as an extension of our current ethos and mission, to be inclusive of all the communities and residents of Jerusalem, both East and West. Our landmark building already brings tens of thousands of Christians, Jews and Muslims every year through our doors, appealing to a wide range of social economic backgrounds. Centered around the value of equality, we believe that our new, centrally located sports facility should not be an elitist hub, but rather a place that welcomes and caters to everyone. Here at the Jerusalem International YMCA (JIY), we are honored and excited to launch this important project that will provide access to state-of-the-art sports facilities to all the residents of Jerusalem.

All of our current health and wellness programming will be transferred to the new center. We will also launch a variety of competitive sports teams and similar to our other programs will include a dialogue component.

The impact that this center will have on the spirit of shared living in Jerusalem is limitless. We look forward to sharing our progress with you over the next few months.

In Friendship,

Elias Khoury, Chair of the JIY Board of Directors

YMCA Organizational Report

CEO Amos Gil Reflects on the Last Six Months



Dear Friends,

The 2016 year ended with four very significant steps leading the JIY into a hopeful 2017.

First, the 3 Arches hotel is flourishing with visitors from around the world. On any given day, many languages can be heard while guests enjoy delicacies from our new menu. The true spirit of people coming together in a shared and peaceful place is palpable.

Second, the newly created Children and Youth Department has managed to bring hundreds of students from East Jerusalem schools to the JIY. These children, who would not otherwise have the opportunity, are learning to swim (there are currently no local swimming pools in East Jerusalem), cook in our young chef program and are taking part in our young leaders program.

Third, we have the much anticipated green light to open our new Sports Center. The facility has been waiting too long to accommodate our big dreams and goals for the future of the city and the Jerusalem International YMCA.

Finally, after much time and work, our new bylaws were approved making the JIY a fully independent organization. The great advances and successes of 2016 were achieved through the dedication and support of our team, members and partners. On behalf of the JIY, we couldn't thank you more.

Respectfully,

Amos Gil, CEO

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Exciting Events at the Preschool

- Teachers in the preschool attended a specialized storytelling training where they learned the magic of stories and how to use them to awaken the imagination and encourage creativity in children.
- Christian, Jewish, and Muslim preschoolers expanded their cognitive skills and kinesthetic awareness through music lessons and fun with kinetic sand.
- Christmas celebrations took place in the preschool with songs, Christmas crafts, and Santa hats.
- Over 40 Israeli and Palestinian preschoolers attended the summer day camp in August. With a full program of arts, crafts, baking, and sports, it's not hard to believe that no one wanted to leave!
- Dr. Huleihel gave her annual demonstration on maintaining dental hygiene. The students practiced proper teeth brushing on large teeth molds.

YMCA Peace Preschool

Celebrating 30 Years Providing Shared Education

The YMCA Peace Preschool is dedicated to providing the best education for their students, ranging from ages one through five. They understand that healthy and adequately equipped teachers are essential for achieving their educational goals. Once a month for ten months in total, the teachers spend four hours enhancing their skills and discussing the tough topics that arise when pioneering a diverse and often controversial population. The YMCA Peace Preschool has found these meetings beneficial to the preschoolers, parents, teachers and furthering the preschool's goal of creating a shared and equal space for all. A special thanks to Knox Presbyterian Church for their support in the essential teacher training program.

In September, the preschool celebrated 30 years of providing excellent, pluralistic, bilingual education for Jerusalem's toddlers from East and West. This year our Israeli and Palestinian teachers welcomed 70 familiar faces as well as 30 new additions to the preschool for the new school year!



(Lighting a Menorah next to a Christmas tree is one of the many shared activities the students are exposed to from the earliest age at our Peace Preschool.)



Album Release - The YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus

The YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus has recorded their first album! The album, to be released in April, was recorded in-house at the YMCA, one voice at a time, to maximize sound quality of solos and harmonies. In the process, we trained two of our alumni as sound engineers. For post-production, we have the honor of working with two of the best sound engineers in the business (they mixed for Pentatonix and GLEE, and are donating a large portion of their time to the cause).

Stay tuned for updates regarding the launch events and release dates!



YMCA Children and Youth Department

300+ New Children Enter the YMCA's Programs

The YMCA Youth Department made significant changes in 2016 and are excited to announce that year round programs will now be offered to children as well as youth. The Youth Department will be called the YMCA Children and Youth Department. After much research to find the best way to serve youth and children in East and West Jerusalem, The JIY Children and Youth Department has decided to work directly with local schools.

They noticed many students were not emotionally or socially ready to start programs that include conflict resolution dialogue. Instead, the department will form two groups of Israeli students and two groups of Palestinian students to help address the discrepancies between communities. After one to two months, the four groups of students will be combined together to dialogue and build relationship. The department is hopeful that these changes will strengthen their existing programs while expanding their sphere of influence.





INTRO at the JIY

Many people gathered on the JIY lawn in October for a multi-cultural music event. A community project ensemble, INTRO, performed under the stars. They played darbuka and sitar, among many other instruments, while singing songs in Arabic and Hebrew. JIY members sipped on strong, black coffee cooked on a "medora" (small bonfire) while enjoying the ensemble. The music was so luring, many members joined the fun after finishing their workout in the gym.



YMCA Events

A New School Year Together

The Jerusalem International YMCA hosted a back to school festival. Over 450 students and families celebrated the new and upcoming school year on the YMCA grounds. Consistent with the YMCA's mission, the 450 attendees of the back to school festival were made up of Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The students carried balloons shaped as letters from both the Arabic and Hebrew alphabets. As seen in the photos, the face painting was a huge success! Students wore beautiful art on their smiling faces and also created their own masterpieces at the gift card workshop. Students helped make a large sign during the festival that said, "charity/giving" in three different languages. The fun didn't stop there. Students and families were able to take retro style photos at the festival as a keepsake. Thanks to Kids4Peace and the Zion Community for helping us bring in the new academic year in the spirit of unity!





Christmas Giving

The JIY supports a giving spirit all year round, but there's something special about giving during Christmas. This year, the JIY hosted hundreds of under privileged, blind and orphaned children for a special event that has been a tradition for over sixty years at the JIY. Children enjoyed a fun show performed by Fuzzy-Muzzy in the beautiful concert auditorium and received Christmas parcels packed with goodies to take home with them.



YMCA Events

Holiday Events at JIY

For three days, the Jerusalem International YMCA was bustling with children and adults all excitedly gathered for the annual bazaar. The holiday spirit had already been sparked after 400 families gathered earlier in the month for Christmas tree decorating and carol singing. Families from East and West Jerusalem joined the inspiring YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus to sing Christmas carols, a celebration that has become an annual tradition for many Christian families in Jerusalem.

Over 5,000 people browsed through the Christmas bazaar at the JIY. Handmade goods were displayed for purchase throughout the numerous stalls. The festive participants were able to buy goods from both East and West Jerusalem. ASAF Association Club, a project for youth ages 8-19 from among refugee communities in Israel, also hosted a booth at the bazaar.





Highlights

- Raed Abu Liel (Hotel Director), Michel Sabat (Assistant Hotel Manager), Amos Gil (CEO), and Hannah Rendell (Development Director) recently met with the Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center. The Notre Dame is owned by the Vatican and shares Christian values with the JIY. The two organizations met to discuss possible partnerships and ways they can work together in the future.



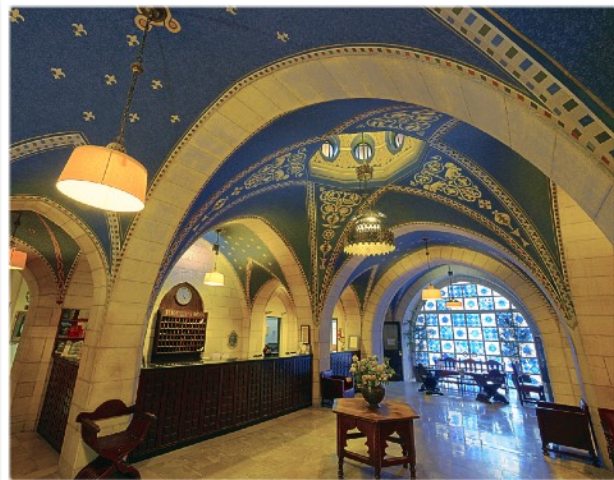
(JIY CEO and Notre Dame CEO)

- Director, Raed Abu Leil, keeps innovation and development at the top of his "to-do" list. He and the senior Three Arches managers recently attended a Dale Carnegie training to sharpen his leadership skills and look at the possibility of hosting more trainings at the Three Arches Hotel and Restaurant.

Three Arches Hotel and Restaurant

Becky Brown, Professional Hotel Reviewer, Says...

"My dad and I recently stayed at the Three Arches YMCA for 8 days before meeting up with a Holy Land Tour group. Upon meeting our group and staying at a local 5 star hotel, we mourned for the YMCA. And why is this? Not only does the Three Arches offer you amazing local decor, spiritual significance and meaning at every turn, the ambiance is simply magical. Specifically, we woke up daily and sat eating a wonderfully prepared breakfast with fresh fruits, vegetables, omelettes, pastries, yogurt, a variety of breads, hot items and juices. Birds chirped in the trees above. Staff greeted you with smiles and excellent service. They knew us by name after talking with them once. This impressed me, as I have traveled the world and rarely seen staff that care so much. I even had the pleasure of meeting the hotel manager, Raed Abu Liel, who was attentive to my questions and is definitely a hands-on manager... erase all preconceived notions of staying at a YMCA. This is a luxury Y. No joke! You will be in awe at the ceiling mosaics, etched stone art, arches, pillars, stained glass, full workout, gymnasium, sauna and pool facilities (extremely rare for Jerusalem). They even offer hotel patrons the chance to attend their exercise classes like Zumba and yoga." - Becky Brown, Professional Hotel Reviewer





Highlights

- Over the last six months, there has been an increase in Muslim women attending group fitness classes. It is a beautiful sight to see religious women of all faiths smiling and dancing Zumba shoulder to shoulder with each other. We are proud that all these women consider the JIY a safe place to improve their health and achieve their fitness goals.
- One of the men's fitness classes spontaneously decided to take advantage of the beautiful weather and held their class outside in the beautiful backyard garden. They enjoyed running around in the fresh air and now want to hold classes every week in the garden. Located on the west side of the YMCA complex, the backyard garden is a peaceful oasis for the public to enjoy.



YMCA Health and Wellness

Update from Rena Sered

At the Jerusalem YMCA Health and Wellness Center, the members totaling roughly 1,000, receive cutting edge exercise instruction and training. The Center also offers self massage classes using foam rollers and tennis balls to help rejuvenate muscles and alleviate pain. Members express that they, “get here feeling achy or stiff and leave feeling light on their feet and energized.” Many of the group fitness classes incorporate suspension training, a fabulous way to use posterior muscles to improve posture. Yoga, Zumba, and HIIT classes are offered daily to fire up, energize, empower and wind down the YMCA's valued members.





Sports Center at a Glance

- 93,635 square feet spread over three levels
- Indoor 10-lane swimming pool
- Large Health and Wellness Center
- Gymnasium
- Three squash courts that can be transformed to a large multi-purpose room
- Six group exercise rooms
- Martial arts studio
- Creche (child care)
- Juice bar
- Spa with six treatment rooms
- Three separate lobbies for social gatherings
- Sport shop selling swim suits, sports clothes and accessories
- Men's and women's locker rooms
- Rooftop plaza (designed to help cool the building as well as provide a gathering space)

Featured Article

Opening Summer 2017

The Jerusalem International YMCA is thrilled to be opening the largest underground fitness center in the Middle East! The Sports Center will be designed and operated as a sports mall, hosting sports clubs and teams, schools, and sporting events from all over the city and beyond. Swim and basketball teams, dance groups and many other organizations will lease space in the YMCA sports mall. The current YMCA Health and Wellness Center will be transferred to the new facility and will have full use of five of the ten swimming lanes, the two story fitness room, and two of the six exercise studios. Members will receive the same access to swimming, group exercise classes, showers, saunas, etc. with no changes in membership fees. The new center will offer more space and all new, state-of-the-art exercise equipment and facilities. The JIY will maintain its priority of inclusivity by offering accessibility to all resident of Jerusalem.

“Centered around the value of equality, we believe that our new, centrally located sports facility should not be an elitist hub, but rather a place that welcomes and caters to everyone.” -Elias Khoury, Chair of the JIY Board of Directors





Featured Article

Opening Summer 2017

Sports Center Impact

"Having grown up at the YMCA, from kindergarten to summer camp, it is exciting to see the organization take its next step. I am excited to see the Y finally putting a fitness landmark in the Middle East." -Aviva Goller, YMCA Trainer

"The new sports center will add value and experience to our hotel guests' experience. Imagine staying at the hotel and having access to fitness classes and one of the largest pools in the city!" - Raed Abu Leil, Three Arches Hotel Director

"I've been promising our athletes the biggest and best sports center in Israel for a decade already. This is IT!!" -Natalie Ben Ami, YMCA Trainer

"I witnessed the very first foundations of the new sports center nearly 20 years ago when we helped design the layout! I can't wait to be part of the most beautiful sports centers in Israel" -Lara Rachlin, YMCA Trainer

"YMCA is the oldest sports center in Jerusalem and now it is also the most up to date!" - Laine Katz, YMCA Trainer





US Trip Impact

"What a great visit last night with Hannah Rendell and Raed A. Leil, colleagues from the Jerusalem International YMCA. They're doing amazing work, bringing together people of different religions, cultures and backgrounds. A beautiful, living example that we are strengthened by our differences." -Andrea Plaza (Red Bank YMCA)

"...Hannah, it was a pleasure meeting you and Raed and learning about the impactful work of the Jerusalem Y... I plan to follow-up with my fellow CEO's to gauge their interest in a trip to Israel." -Rhonda Anderson (The Community YMCA)

"A big thanks to Hannah Rendell and Raed Abu Leil from the Jerusalem International YMCA for a very interesting and informative discussion last night on shared living for divided Palestinian and Israeli communities. The Jerusalem International YMCA does wonderful work." -Megan Turner (Ridgewood YMCA)

YMCA Development

Connecting with World Wide Y's

Hannah Rendell, the JIY Director of Development, along with Raed Abu Leil, the JIY Hotel General Manager, recently took a trip to the United States on a speaking tour discussing the current situation in Jerusalem. Rendell (Israeli) and Abu Liel (Palestinian) spent time with the senior staff of the Greater New York YMCA and six other Y's in the New Jersey region. The visits were important for developing relationships and future collaborations. All the audiences were incredibly engaged and most presentations continued with lengthy questions and discussions. The JIY is making serious progress in establishing critical and sustainable infrastructure for the resource development department. The department is dedicated to cultivating relationships and expanding resources for the JIY.

"I arrived to the USA on election day and over the past week I have met so many people doing so many great things. I have seen the huge impact of the YMCA movement and how each "Y" is helping and serving their communities - I am proud to be part of this network of people. ALSO I have seen the strength of Americans who are dealing with the pain, fear and divisiveness that the recent election has brought. Family members who do not want to speak to one another just before thanksgiving. I am grateful to those who came to our talks and who found comfort in our YMCAs mission of bridging political divisions. Tomorrow I leave the US to return to Jerusalem with more friends, more respect for the global YMCA and with a lot of compassion for America." -Hannah Rendell, Director of Development

Hannah and our other senior staff, including the JIY CEO, Amos Gil, will be visiting the USA a number of times over 2017. For more information about their trips, email, hannahr@ymca.org.il.



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