

# NA'AMAT Now!



A publication of NA'AMAT USA

Fall 2019

## New NA'AMAT Israel president takes helm

Every day, NA'AMAT Israel President Hagit Pe'er commutes 1.5 hours each way to and from her office on Arlozorov Street in Tel Aviv. Pe'er, who was formerly the regional NA'AMAT chairperson for the Negev region, uses the three hours in the car to work on how to better serve NA'AMAT's 300,000 members in Israel.

"Technological schools, youth villages, legal bureaus, women's centers, domestic violence centers — I want to expose our members to these services. Not all 300,000 women know about all our services and how they can benefit from them. Everyone knows about the day care centers," said Pe'er, who has been president since May 1. She plans to use events, technology and communication tools such as Facebook to achieve this goal.

NA'AMAT's 30 regions currently provide services to about 40,000 families. Pe'er plans to increase that number by informing members in workplaces throughout Israel about the organization's activities and services. In the public arena, she plans to prioritize advocacy around issues such as the exclusion of women in leadership roles throughout Israeli society, as well as



*Hagit speaks at the NA'AMAT annual scholarship ceremony in July.*

sexual harassment in the workplace and domestic violence.

As regional chairperson in the Negev since 2012, Pe'er was known for her ability to work with a wide range of stakeholders —from municipalities, academia, workplaces, hospitals and the Federation of Labor — to institute programs that support women. One of her significant accomplishments was the opening of the Alice Howard Day Care Center in Beersheba, named for the late NA'AMAT USA president

from Los Angeles.

"If Hagit had not pushed the municipality, it wouldn't have happened," said Shirli Shavit, director of the International Department of NA'AMAT. The center is now flourishing and has a wait list.

In the Negev, Pe'er brought together female leaders to address the many challenges that face women in the area. The Negev's population of 1 million people includes large numbers of at-

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Victims who report sexual harassment are not always well received. Questions such as “What took her so long?” or “Why didn’t she report it when it happened?” imply that those women handled the incident incorrectly. Often there are reasons for delay in reporting, such as fear of jeopardizing one’s position, or avoiding the stigma of being overly sensitive, conniving or deceitful.

Now, however, with the flood of #MeToo allegations that emerged in October 2017 after the Harvey Weinstein revelations, women appear more comfortable naming abusers. Companies are working to enact anti-harassment policies. What constitutes “harassment,” however, is still unclear. Where can the line be drawn? Young people are said to negotiate consent before hugging another. It is difficult for their elders to adapt to this lack of spontaneity.

The #MeToo movement demonstrates the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment that has been hidden for decades. Its aim is to bring attention to the problem and show that tens of thousands of women (and some men) have experienced that behavior. In today’s world, more people are speaking out. There is a backlash as well. Some men are refraining from mentoring women, fearing they will be falsely accused of sexual harassment.

## Israel convention a dream come true

By Selma Roffman

National Convention Chair

*“Im Tirtzu...Ain Zo Aggadab” - “If you will it, it is no dream”*  
— Theodore Herzl

These words of Theodore Herzl, the Father of Zionism, are under my high school yearbook picture. They meant so much to me then and their message resonates with me now. These words are my mantra and obviously part of the NA'AMAT vision as well. NA'AMAT has big dreams for children, women and families in Israel. While you are in Tel Aviv, notice the gleaming new Golda Meir Center and in Sderot, marvel at the new Women’s Health and Empowerment Center. NA'AMAT dreams, and its members around the world accept the challenges and make those dreams come true. NA'AMAT makes a real difference in people’s lives.

Having a convention this year in Israel started as a dream conceived by Shirli Shavit and Masha Lubelsky at our board meeting in Chicago in 2018. When I received the initial call from Chellie Goldwater Wilensky, our fearless and tireless president, I couldn’t help but answer the call to dive in to make this happen. Then when I reached out to others, I was cheered on by their dedication and commitment to contributing to this incredible event for NA'AMAT USA. With the passage of time, more and more of you joined the rallying call and decided to accompany us in learning first-hand about the progress of our organization on the ground in Israel where dreams materialize.

Todah Rabah to our leadership in Israel for making this a special experience:

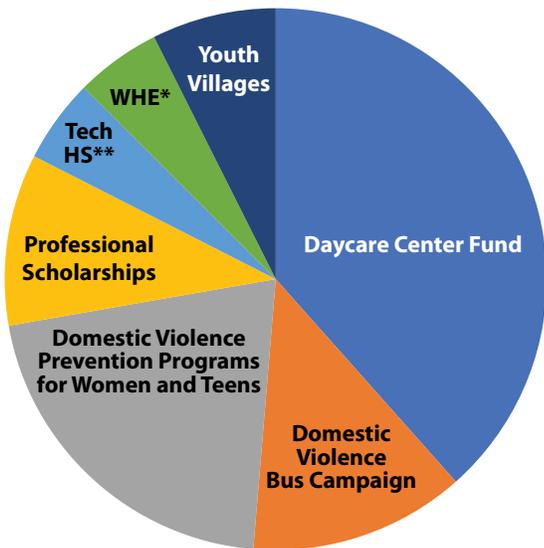
**Hagit Pe’er**, President International NA'AMAT  
**Masha Lubelsky**, NA'AMAT Representative, WZO Executive  
**Shirli Shavit**, Director International Department

Special thanks to our NA'AMAT USA National Office staff for their continual support: **Deanna Migdal, Maya Stark, Marcy McKensie** and **Gali Levi**.

We want to make dreams come true for our NA'AMAT family in Israel, while making your dreams come true of experiencing the sights and sounds of this precious country.

**Welcome home members of NA'AMAT USA!**  
**Welcome from “generation to generation” in continuing the legacy and accepting the challenge of making dreams come true!**

**Funds Sent to Israel**  
**July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019**



\* Women’s Health and Empowerment  
\*\* Technological High Schools (Including Tech4Teens)

*This chart represents the \$933,050 NA'AMAT USA transmitted to Israel in the last fiscal year, of which \$593,100 came from wills and bequests. We are very grateful to our dedicated and loyal members who remembered NA'AMAT USA in their wills. Much of the money is specified for particular programs, which is why the amounts vary. We thank you all for your past support and hope you will continue to be very generous in the coming years, so we can continue to help the women and children of Israel who depend on NA'AMAT.*

# Message from the President



**By Chellie Goldwater Wilensky**  
*President*

As we approach Rosh Hashanah, we begin to think about the past year and the coming year: what have we accomplished and what we hope to accomplish. NA'AMAT USA has had many achievements in 5779, but of course we hope to be even more successful in this New Year.

NA'AMAT established a new scholarship this year for Doctoral Students in Gender Studies in memory of Nehama Rivlin, late wife of Israel's President Reuven Rivlin. She was an author and a champion of women's issues. We are proud to be able to honor her in this way.

We're also proud of a very successful program supported by the Raymer Domestic Violence Fund. The fund was established in the name of the late Eleanor Raymer, a member of NA'AMAT USA in Los Angeles, who left NA'AMAT USA more than \$5.5 million in her will for domestic violence prevention. The education program is staffed by both teachers and social workers and presented to women all over Israel. There is also a special program geared to teens in our high schools, intended to raise awareness about domestic violence and educate participants about prevention and treatment, including the factors portending violence in a relationship. The program is so successful that the government has asked NA'AMAT to present it to the Supreme Court of Israel.

This past year has been a difficult one for Jews around the world and especially here in the United States. Twice, Jews just trying to pray were murdered in synagogue. The world as we know it has changed. Security guards surround our synagogues, community centers and day schools. Our sense of safety has been taken from us. We mourn the loss

of these victims, and all others who have been randomly murdered because of who they are or what they believe.

NA'AMAT USA has been working hard to modernize, so we can stay strong and vibrant, and continue to support NA'AMAT ISRAEL in its important work of helping Israeli women and children become educated, progress to complete equality and live productive lives. We are working on a strategic plan that will centralize some of our offices so we can become more efficient, enabling us to send even more money to Israel.

During my three years as president, we have transmitted a little more than \$3 million to Israel, which is certainly an amount to be proud of, but much of this is due to many dedicated Chaverot remembering us in their wills. We are very grateful for this, and we hope members will continue to do so. But to continue to be successful, we must find different ways to attract young women and educate them about the importance of NA'AMAT. We must revitalize NA'AMAT USA so we can continue our work with at-risk teens, traumatized toddlers and abused women. That is what we are hoping our strategic plan will accomplish. When you hear more about the plan, remember our goal is to keep our organization healthy and relevant.

Thank you for allowing me to represent you as president of NA'AMAT USA. I have considered it an honor and a privilege. Thank you to all the members of the National Board for their dedication and hard work; and a special thank you to the national office staff (Deanna Migdal, Gali Levi, Maya Stark and Marcy McKenzie) for all their help. Finally, thank you to my family, especially my husband Yankee, for sharing me with NA'AMAT these past three years without ever complaining.

Shana Tova! May 5780 be a healthy and happy year for you, a successful year for NA'AMAT USA and a peaceful year for Israel and the world.



*Art and Bari Verity (center couple), from Sherman Oaks, CA, visited the Glickman Center in Tel Aviv earlier this year. Art said, "It was really eye opening to see first hand how the center helps mothers and their children who are in crisis. And it was gratifying to know that NA'AMAT is there to help where the government assistance ends." Also shown are Ruthi Uzeri (left), head of the NA'AMAT Department of Violence in the Family; and Shelter Director Yael Levin (right).*

# Club activities



Cleveland members held their annual fund-raiser and honored Debbie Rothschild with the Golda Meir Award. Pictured (from left) Linda Schoenberg, Recording Secretary on the National Board; Marci Curtis, Cleveland Director; and Deanna Migdal, National Executive Director.



The Long Island Shalom chapter had an outing to the Arboretum on Earth Day. Pictured (from left): Diane Hershkowitz, Carol Knecht, Florence Lefkowitz and Tal Ourian.



The Greater Chicago Council honored outgoing National President Chellie Goldwater Wilensky (right), shown with National Board Member Sandy Silverglade, at Ravinia.



The Philadelphia Rimonim Chapter celebrated Israel's 71st birthday with a program called "My Israeli Story - The Voices of 4 Women." Pictured (from left): Randye Sable, Laura Teitell, Osnat Reichert, Ivy Mermelstein, Sharona Drury, Linda Abrams, Selma Roffman, Esther Toledano, Pnina Feiner, and (kneeling) Bat El Trabelsi (Representative from Israel).



NA'AMAT marched in the rain to celebrate Israel's 71st birthday in Los Angeles. The event was sponsored by the Israeli American Council.



Members of the Western Area/San Fernando Council participated in a 5K Walk for NA'AMAT at Balboa Park in Encino, CA.



Members walked in the Celebrate Israel parade in New York City in June. Pictured (from left): Richard Heideman, American Zionist Movement president; Jan Gurvitch, NA'AMAT Vice President; Francine Stein, AZM national chair; Herbert Block, AZM executive director; Alicia Post, AZM program director; and a figure representing Theodor Hertzl.

For more photos, visit "News and Events" at <https://naamat.org>



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## President

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risk women and children in Beersheba, Arad, Dimona and other communities.

“I was able to form a group of women leaders who did everything together with me,” said Pe’er. She was in constant contact with the women, who included representatives from workplaces, municipalities, hospitals, volunteer organizations and other institutions. She noted that she had the opportunity to work with Arab and Bedouin women, including from Ra’hat – the only Bedouin city in the world.

One of the accomplishments she is most proud of was the creation of a group of ambassadors for women’s health, including physical, emotional and mental health. “Health issues relate to all aspects of wellbeing –family wellbeing, children’s wellbeing, relationships between couples,” Pe’er said. The ambassadors have reached 18,000 women in workplaces throughout the Negev.

Pe’er left her “comfort zone” in Beersheba because she wanted “to do something to make a breakthrough; do something more influential. That’s why I decided to step up,” she said. In addition to her work in the Negev, Pe’er also brings her experience in the Israel Defense Forces and in the private sector to her role as president.

As a young woman in the Women’s Corps of the IDF, Pe’er was responsible for addressing women’s issues in the Israeli Air Force. She was inspired by Hedva Almog, who headed the Women’s Corps as Brigadier General from 1987 to 1991. Almog is a former president of NA’AMAT Israel.

Asked why she made the transition from a telecommunications company to a non-governmental organization, Pe’er said, “I wanted to do something that will change the world and make a difference. My parents educated me to see the good in every person and to work hard and contribute to society.” She added that her experience in the business world, including balancing a budget, helped prepare her for her role in NA’AMAT.

Pe’er and her husband Yossi, who works for the U.S. Navy in Israel, have two children. Their 21-year-old daughter is in the army; their son is a high school student.

Although NA’AMAT is the largest women’s organization in the world, Pe’er emphasized the importance of getting more women —especially young women — involved in NA’AMAT USA. She said she looks forward to working together, in both countries, to raise awareness about women’s issues such as domestic violence and to help women attain leadership positions.

“We very much appreciate your help,” Pe’er concluded, noting that she is looking forward to meeting many U.S. members at the NA’AMAT USA national convention in Israel in November.

## Correction

The Spring 2019 print edition of *NA’AMAT Now!* stated incorrectly that the Pittsburgh synagogue massacre took place on Oct. 26. It should have said Oct. 27. We sincerely regret the error.