



# NEWSLETTER

## From Sarah Gordon...

With the holiday of Chanukah behind us, I cannot help but reflect on the message the Maccabees left with us. To create change, one does not need to be the strongest and mightiest, one simply needs to care enough to champion the cause. That was true then, and it is true now. With so much chaos going on in the world, I consider myself so fortunate to spend my everyday working with those willing to champion change. Volunteers are people who are willing to shine their light to benefit others and ensure that the path to the future of our people is illuminated by education.

**Sarah Gordon**

## From the principal...

Just a few words to express my heartfelt pleasure in seeing the smiles on my students faces while they are engrossed in the "Israel Connect Experience"! As you can see by the video that was taken, LIVE, the smiles, laughter and actual speaking of English with pleasure. Each student is giving his total attention to the volunteer he is in contact with. He is totally engrossed in what he is reading or discussing!!!

It is both moving and a wondrous event for me as a principal to experience with my students.

This program not only improves their English skills but it also prepares them for life, as they represent our school and our country discussing places in their homeland with those on the other side of the ocean which in and of itself is a valuable lesson.. Furthermore, I see it building self-confidence in my students and improving their ability to communicate, another highly valuable skill acquired through talking to their volunteers.

I am therefore looking forward to expanding this fabulous program as much as possible in my school.

I appreciate all those in Israel Connect that are working hard to make this program possible and all of the many volunteers who give of their time in such a touching and kind fashion for our students.

**Ariel Ben-Baruch  
Principal**

## OUR FEATURED SCHOOL

Tichon Achiya is a Torahani Boys Maritime Junior High and High school located in Herzliya.



**Tichon Achiya  
Herzliya**



**Ariel Ben-Baruch  
Principal**

## From the teacher...

I was at the National Conference for English Teachers of Chemed this past summer and heard Sarah's wonderful presentation of the Israel Connect program. I thought to myself that this is exactly what my students need to help motivate and improve their English speaking skills. So immediately I spoke with Sarah after her presentation and asked what my school needs to do, and what equipment or software it needs in order to be a part of this program. After gathering all the info from Sarah, I immediately passed it on to my principal Ariel Ben-Baruch who strongly supports the English program in our school and realizes the importance of being articulate in the English language for our students' future. Furthermore, I was lucky as my principal is a strong believer in innovative educational methods, so he agreed without hesitation, to register our school Tichon Achiya. In addition, he pledged that he would personally make sure that we would have everything we need so that the program could run smoothly. His immediate agreement and support financially was not to be taken lightly as we are a relatively new and growing 6 year Data Maritime school where every department could use the funds the principal so readily agreed to give the English department. Together with his support and Akiva's (from Israel Connect in Israel) in conjunction with Zev our computer lab instructor's help and our school secretary Michal, we were able to acquire and set up everything we needed in the computer lab to start the program.

The first day of the program arrived and we met the wonderful Galia and all her volunteers. My students have just not been the same. They speak English with a smile and look forward to talking to their volunteers every week. They are always disappointed when their speaking session ends and wish it would last longer. The time just flies when they are on line with their volunteers. In fact, they were quite disappointed when they were told last week that Roberta was not continuing with them as they had come to be so connected to her and looked forward to chatting with her.

All in all, this program has done wonders for us at Tichon Achiya and students keep asking when can they receive a volunteer as well and join the program.

I would therefore like to thank you Sarah Gordon, Akiva, the patient and dedicated Galia and your lovely caring group of volunteers for allowing us at Tichon Achiya to be a part of such an inspiring educational experience.

I would like to take this opportunity as well to thank our wonderful principal Ariel Ben Baruch for his support and our amazing 10th grade students Dovid Farkash and Lior Caspi who kept the computer lab running for the program while Zev our computer instructor, whom we thank as well, was in military reserve duty for a month!

Without each and every one of you this program would not be the GREAT SUCCESS that it is at our school.



**Reva Davidpur**  
**English Coordinator**

## FROM ONE OF OUR VOLUNTEERS...

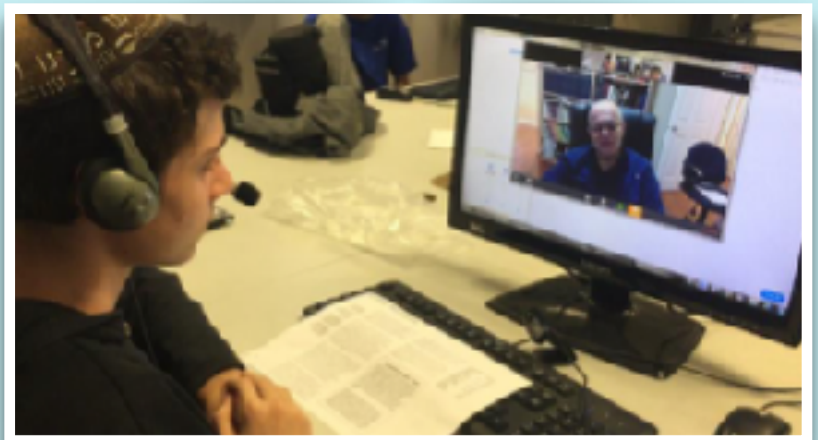
First, a few words about myself: I am a retired policy analyst who spent his career in the Canadian foreign aid program. Originally trained as a forest engineer, I spent one year, at the end of the 1960s, working in the Israeli forest service. I speak reasonable Hebrew which is helpful. This is my third year volunteering in the Israel Connect program. I have now tutored eight students regularly and occasionally have subbed for a few others. Without exception, I have found the students to be very nice kids who were interested in improving their English. My students this year in Herzliya have fairly good English and are looking forward to finishing up high school and joining the army. As you would expect, with any pair of students, one will be more advanced than the other and in all the pairs I have dealt with I have had to be careful that one student doesn't dominate the airtime. Having the text, which they can read in turn, is a big help. I have found the tutoring to be fun and interesting and I am sure that it helps the students with all aspects of their command of English – pronunciation, fluency, grammar and vocabulary.



**David Steinberg**

## FROM ONE OF OUR STUDENTS...

I'm Amir, a 10th grader at Tichon Achiya in Herzilya, Israel. I want to tell you about my experience with the program Israel Connect in my school so far. Every Monday, I speak with David Steinberg a warm hearted volunteer in Canada. We read the subject matter of the week, discuss the ideas and facts presented about the place in Israel we are studying while relating our personal experiences. It's a lot of fun especially since my friend Roie is part of the conversation and learning experience. In my opinion, the program definitely improves my English, although we have only had a few meetings. In each lesson I feel that I have learned something about a place in Israel that I didn't know before.



Furthermore, there is always new vocabulary and my grammar...well let's just say it needs improvement! I appreciate the self-denying deed (The Road Not Taken - Robert Frost) of the volunteers from Canada and the USA who get up early in the morning and give of their precious time to help me and my fellow classmates succeed and better our English. In addition, I want to say that I have become quite attached to my volunteer, Mr. Steinberg and would NOT change him for the world just as my fellow classmates have become attached to their volunteers as well. Mr. Steinberg, David has become like family, that you look forward to meeting every week on Monday. In summary I would like to say THANK YOU for giving me and my classmates this opportunity... ISRAEL CONNECT!!!!!!!!!!

**Amir Gillette**