

**NEVE HANNA
CHILDREN'S HOME**

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**AMERICAN FRIENDS OF
NEVE HANNA**

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Hanukkah 2025

Dear Friends,

Neve Hanna is going through many changes these days. Some of them are joyful. This summer, quite a few of our children graduated and moved on to the next chapter of their lives and other changes mark transitions among our long-time staff, who retired or chose new professional paths after many years of devoted work in our home.

Among these changes, we also faced a deeply painful loss.



Haim was more than a respected housefather of one of our family groups. Across Israel he was known as a singer and radio host, and he brought this gift into our home as well. For decades, he led and nurtured every imaginable singing project at Neve Hanna. His voice, his warmth, and his joyful energy filled our halls. And well beyond music, Haim poured his heart into countless projects, always guided by the desire to do good for others.

He is survived by his wife, Ricky and three young children. Ricky grew up in Neve Hanna and later returned as an adult to care for one of our family groups as a housemother. Together, Ricky, Haim and family lived on our grounds for many years. To honor his memory, Neve Hanna has decided to transform part of our grounds into something beautiful — a green, vibrant garden, full of life. Our stage will be moved there, so in the future all our major gatherings and celebrations will take place in this renewed space. In this way, Haim ז"ל — may his memory be a blessing — will continue to be with us. His spirit, his music, and his endless kindness will accompany us at every performance and in every moment we come together as a family.



Location for the
Haim Suzanna Memorial Garden

Generational Transition at Neve Hanna — Antje C. Naujoks, *PR Director and Resource Development*

As at the beginning of every new school year, the summer of 2025 also brought changes. At our end-of-year celebration, we bid farewell to seven young adults who had come to Neve Hanna as children and who are now stepping out into life as independent



Itzik Bohadana with
David (Dudu) Weger

adults. Only a short time later, we began caring for the admission of younger children. There was also considerable turnover within the team this year, as Neve Hanna is currently undergoing a kind of generational transition. Alongside long-standing staff members who entered well-earned retirement or early retirement, some younger colleagues likewise left the children's home after many years to reorient themselves professionally. The greatest change stems from the decision of David (Dudu) Weger to conclude his engagement for Neve Hanna after more than forty years of dedicated work. His first decades as director were accompanied by the voluntary engagement of our legendary founder, Hanni Ullmann, who passed away in 2002. For over four decades,

Dudu shaped Neve Hanna both as an educator and as a director with a clear vision for its future. Dudu assumed the leadership of the children's home merely six years after its founding. Roughly eight years ago, he handed over the position of Director to Itzik Bohadana. Since then, Dudu has served as President of Neve Hanna and as a member of the Board, acting as Itzik's mentor.



Dudu Weger among "his" children, holding the Golden Dove of Peace awarded in recognition of the coexistence projects he initiated

Step by step, Itzik—who assumed his first role at Neve Hanna twenty years ago—took on more areas of responsibility. This summer, Dudu, who had formally retired at the start of this decade and thus served on a voluntary basis in recent years, withdrew entirely. Itzik, who continues to follow in Dudu’s footsteps, remains supported by Chaim Appel, who has served as Chairman of the Board since Hanni Ullmann’s passing.

Itzik, a married father of three, grew up in Ashkelon. He was still studying at the renowned Adler Institute in the field of pedagogy when he took on his first positions at Neve Hanna—initially as a youth counselor in one of the family groups, later as a housefather. Over the years, he was responsible for security matters, coordinated affairs concerning our former children, and supervised activities at our youth club, now named Street Light. Prior to his appointment as Director, Itzik headed Neve Hanna’s daycare center program. During these years, he continued his academic studies. He completed his MA in the field of supporting at-risk youth in crisis situations. He is currently pursuing further training in coaching and psycho-therapy.

In a brief interview, he shared his goals and vision for Neve Hanna:

“When I began working at Neve Hanna, Dudu handed me a book about Janusz Korczak, his life, and his educational approach. Among Korczak’s pedagogical principles were the ‘allowing’ of each child’s individuality, responding to their individual challenges, and fostering the child’s autonomy. When I meet with children today, it resembles a team meeting in the spirit of Korczak, who repeatedly emphasized the need for self-administration. We do not make decisions over the children’s heads—we decide together with them. Participation is essential for us, ensuring that they feel respected and valued, that they are part of our community and of the world beyond the home. Neve Hanna places great importance on focusing on the healthy and positive development of each individual child, and my task is to devote myself fully to the educational principles that guide our children’s home.”

A prestigious award for Neve Hanna’s Yeladudes Bakery — Dudi Danino, Director of the Yeladudes Bakery

We are thrilled to announce that our bakery has been awarded the “Golden Challah” by the Museum of the Jewish People “Anu” at Tel Aviv University. During the museum’s Challah Festival, Yeladudes was honored for the *dedication, generosity, care, and heart* that the bakery team—and the children—pour into every single challah. This award truly belongs to *every child at the Neve Hanna Children’s Home*, every Shinshin (Israeli volunteer serving a social year before the army), every volunteer from abroad, and everyone who believes in our mission. It is a celebration of *community, learning, and giving*.



Founded nearly three decades ago, Yeladudes Bakery is much more than a bakery — it’s an educational enterprise. Here, children and teenagers learn not just how to bake, but how to cooperate as a team and at the same time to fulfill personal responsibilities. They get a taste of adult work responsibilities, and develop professional ethics. Our skilled team, including former Neve Hanna children, bakes bread, cakes, pastries, and, of course, challot every Thursday. The children help with *packing, labeling, and marketing*, earning a *monthly salary* that teaches them independence and money management.



Dudi with a former Neve Hanna child active in the bakery

A few years ago, we took it a step further by establishing the Yeladudes Bakery School, a new program specially designed for our children to explore the *professional side of baking* and discover opportunities for their future. The Yeladudes Bakery looks back on many prestigious awards, but especially this award is a reminder of what happens when *heart, skill, and education come together*—and we couldn’t be prouder of our Yeladudes family!

(above photos: Itzik Biran — all other photos by Neve Hanna staff)

Happy Hanukkah to all!