

Keeping People Connected

There's no (social) distance so wide that good friends can't bridge with a little creativity. The Jewish Agency for Israel and its *shlichim* (Israel emissaries) successfully gathered 400,000 of their closest friends from around the world to enjoy an intimate [mini-concert with renowned Israeli musician Idan Reichel](#).

[World ORT](#) students have come up with a number of initiatives to stay connected with each other. In South Africa staff send ideas directly to students and interns, while in Russia youngsters are posting images of their distance learning experiences on social media with the hashtag #ORTstudy. Students in Mexico have launched the My Friend From ORT project that creates Whatsapp groups of like-minded students to enjoy virtual hangouts.

JDC is hosting a [series of webinars](#) highlighting their global response to the coronavirus pandemic. On Wednesday April 1 at 2pm EDT you're invited to hear from JDC staff in some of the hardest hit locations in Europe and Latin America on how they are responding professionally and personally during this time.

Federations and their Partnership regions have ramped up their connectivity. Whether it's [women from Lehigh Valley and Yoav Region](#) swapping "silver-lining" stories, or youth delegations past and present from Nesher sending love via a [cute video to their friends in Broward County, FL](#), our communities are [#FacingCorona2Gether](#)!

Speaking of gathering together, mark your calendars for **April 29th at 2pm – 3pm EDT** and join our global happening to [celebrate Israel's 72nd birthday](#) with music, celebrity performances, interactive activities, and more!

NGO News

The Israel Trauma Coalition (ITC) has produced a suite of materials providing psycho-social care givers, parents and rabbis with useful information and guidelines. **Join Taly Levanon, Director of ITC, on a [JFNA webinar today](#), Tuesday, March 31st at 1pm EDT, as she shares resilience-building tools gleaned from almost 20 years of experience helping people cope with trauma and crisis.**

The Weinberg Foundation has [announced \\$4 million in emergency grant funding](#) as the Foundation's [initial response](#) to the developing COVID-19 public health crisis, and in Israel the Masorti Movement is [operating in emergency mode](#).

The Coronavirus in Israel

I am inspired and heartened by the outpouring of concern from North American Jewry about the welfare of Israelis during this crisis. Especially for you, we've created a [roundup of key information](#) on how the coronavirus is affecting life in Israel and Israelis, and we'll be updating it regularly.

As part of the economic package announced by the Israeli government last week, significant assistance has been allocated to Israeli nonprofit organizations. Included in the benefits are a state-guaranteed loan fund with up to 85% credit being provided by the state in an extremely simplified and expedited process; advances to non-profits of over NIS 500M; a freeze on audits of public institutions; and a change to the upper threshold of administrative costs permitted by NGOs. While we need to see how this actually play out, it is certainly a hopeful development.

In addition, a small working group of senior nonprofit leaders and staff in the Prime Minister's Office has been created to ensure open communication and a forum for raising issues.

For more information on how Israeli nonprofits are trying to cope during the crisis, as well as a peek into how the IDF's Home Front Command is assisting civilians during the lockdown, tune in to a [JFNA webinar](#) on **Monday April 6 at 1pm EDT**.

Wishing you all good health and good humor!

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