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Afikim – Addressing Israel's Child Poverty Challenges

📅 August 9, 2018 👤 Thedreidel

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In 2008, Israeli educator and child services administrator Moshe Lefkowitz launched the Jerusalem-based non-profit Afikim, as a way to address the enormous child poverty crisis in Israel. Lefkowitz lives by his lifelong belief that tools, not just money, are needed to combat significant social issues. Like the story of the man who, instead of giving his son a fish so he would not be hungry, gave instead a fishing pole so his son would learn how to provide for not only himself, but others – all of Israel is benefiting from Afikim's work.



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A Five-Pronged Approach

The Afikim project consists of five long-term programs, which last on average six years each. Programs focus on providing educational resources for both children and parents.

- The project Afternoon Learning Centers are designed for children in the first to sixth grades and include classes and enrichment programs to acquire life skills.
- Afternoon Welfare and Learning Centers provide support for children who have been judged-at-risk by the courts. Children remain in their home environment, where entire families receive professional counseling designed to provide positive outcomes.
- Afikim also oversees Learning Centers for middle school and high school students, providing educational and emotional support. Students in the 11 th and 12th grades receive training and guidance in preparation for service in the Israeli army.
- Parent Empowering Centers provide professional guidance and counseling to parents of Afikim children, including workshops on managing money, as many Afikim families are immigrants and not prepared for Israel's high cost of living.
- The Afikim Graduate Program provides support for Afikim students who have completed their army service. Professional counselors guide students through the college application process; Afikim offers alumni scholarships to attend institutions of higher learning.

Teens are key to Afikim's Success

Tween and teen role models provide a safe and comfortable environment for younger Afikim children. American youth groups can partner with an Afikim class to complete special projects– making holiday cards, sharing children's stories or creating videos — throughout the year. American teens who travel to Israel can volunteer at Afikim and qualify for community service hours in United States schools. Fundraising activities to benefit Afikim children can positively impact Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, confirmations, birthdays and school graduations.

A 2017 UNICEF report revealed Israel has the third highest children's poverty rate in the developed world behind Mexico and Chile. One-third of Israel's children reside in poverty. Afikim and its supporters worldwide look forward to eradicating this issue. As Moshe Lefkowitz says, "Tools for empowering children and at-risk youths are crucial to help them embark on a full and independent life and break the cycle of poverty."

The Dreidel is proud to be affiliated with Afikim, and look forward to bringing you stories about Afikim's role in Israel's cultural diversity, care for those less fortunate, and policy of involving the family in these processes – Editor

For more on Afikim, visit www.afikim.org (<http://www.afikim.org>)

Afikim Talpiot Learning Center - Jerusalem, Israel



Article by Sam Heller

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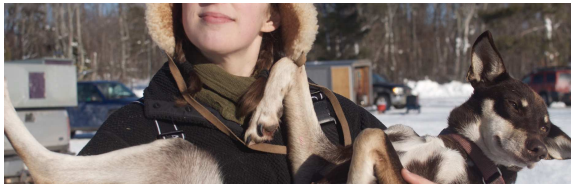
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