

Talia Trust newsletter July 2010

After 3 months on the other side of the world, during which kind members of the Talia Trust's committee made sure everything was in order, Maurice and I are now back in Israel and checking on the current state of the projects at the end of the academic year. Here is the first of our reports.

You may remember that the Talia Trust is one of two sponsors of the "Circles of Strength" project in S'dot haNegev regional council area, near to the border with the Gaza Strip.

Last week we received two very encouraging reports from schools which take part in the project. To quote the first principal:

One of the children who joined our first grade class this year had been found in kindergarten to have difficulties in all aspects of functioning within the classroom, including motor difficulties, problems in organization, difficulty in recognizing letters and numbers. He already seemed to have low learning motivation and stuttered.

Thanks to the professionals (a speech therapist, occupational therapist and remedial teacher) who were made available to the school within the project, this child received systematic attention in many spheres within the school premises. Now, at the end of the school year, the child can be seen to have advanced substantially in all respects. He manages to put the organizational techniques he learnt into practice, succeeds in reading and in writing clearly, and can feel successful. Of course there is much work to be done but, it is already clear that he does not need to go into the special education framework. We can see that available and comprehensive professional help can advance a child dramatically.

I will paraphrase the report from the class teacher of the second school:

We were fortunate to have a remedial teacher who came into the classroom three times a week, for 5 hours in total. The children who needed her help received both emotional and strategic support and we saw a definite improvement in all of them. The project gives tools both to the children and to the teacher. I now understand how important it is for me as a first grade teacher to stop racing ahead and to be aware that each individual child needs to acquire basic learning habits at his own pace and according to his needs. I certainly hope that the project will continue.

Considering that the project's aim is to strengthen children who not only have specific learning difficulties but whose world is periodically in crisis due to the local defense situation, it seems that these professionals are working dedicatedly and successfully.

Enjoy the summer weather and holidays.

Marilyn Hyman
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