

WIZO TODAY

CHANGING LIVES • SAVING LIVES

08 SEPTEMBER 2025



BUILDING RESILIENCE ONE HOUR AT A TIME

Israel is currently facing one of its most difficult and uncertain periods in recent memory. Lives have been lost, hundreds are wounded and thousands of families, children and the elderly are overwhelmed with fear. The psychological toll of war is immense and many are grappling with panic and anxiety, unsure of what tomorrow will bring.

In these desperate moments WIZO has once again stepped up to provide essential support.

One of the vital ways WIZO is helping a traumatised nation at this time of upheaval is by prioritising the emotional wellbeing of children.

WIZO's programme An Hour with a Child is

currently operating in 21 Centres across Israel. As part of this initiative trained adult volunteers are matched with vulnerable children for one hour each week, during which they receive dedicated emotional support.

Each hour is devoted entirely to emotional attention, presence and quiet connection. As well as coping with the anxiety of war many of the children referred to the programme by school counsellors also face challenges at home, in the classroom, or in their social environments.

These challenges can include emotional neglect, anxiety, instability, or behavioural struggles. For many the presence of a stable caring adult, even for

just one hour a week, provides a sense of consistency and calm, otherwise missing from their lives.

The 21 WIZO Centres offering the programme provide a calm, structured and child-centred space where trust can be built and emotional resilience can take root. There is no pressure to perform, only to be heard, seen and supported.

To date, WIZO has trained over 320 volunteers, with 485 children currently benefitting from the support. One little girl, speaking about Dvora, her group's support adult, told WIZO Today, "She has really helped us all. I miss her already."

An Hour with a Child provides more than a

Continued on page 3

**The Kennedy Leigh
Charitable Trust**

**wishes to acknowledge
the continuing support,
dedication and commitment of
WIZO to Israel - even more
so in these difficult times.**

**The Kennedy Leigh Charitable Trust Office,
853 Finchley Road, London NW11 8LX**

Continued from front page.

thousand hours of emotional support each month. The benefits of the initiative go both ways. Volunteers often describe the experience as deeply meaningful and rewarding. Many return year after year, building lasting connections not only with the children they support, but with the wider WIZO community and its mission.

According to WIZO experts, in today's Israel where conflict, displacement and emotional strain are ever-present, this programme offers a vital lifeline.

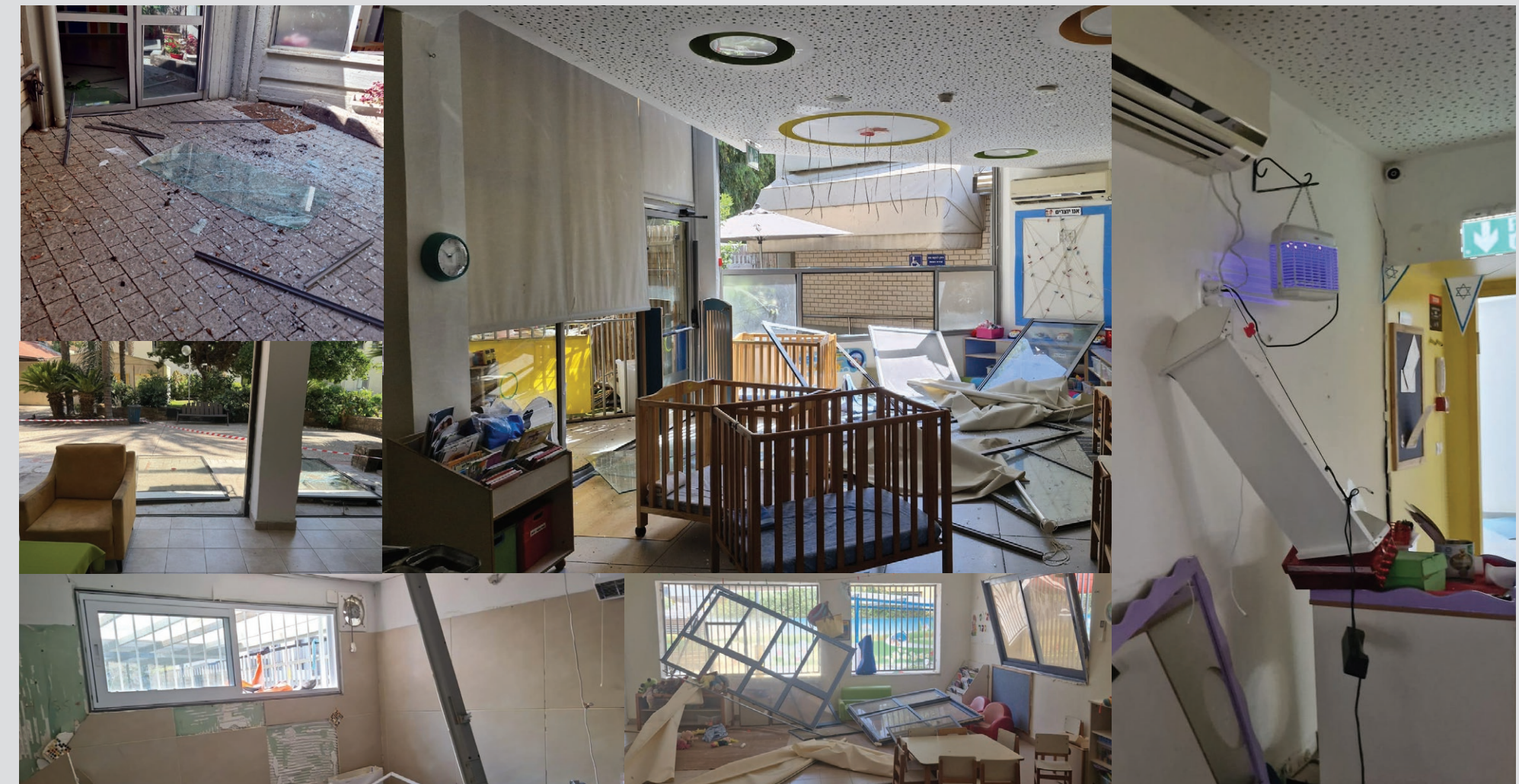
Ora Korazim, Chairperson of WIZO Israel said: "Children living through instability need anchors.

"A trusted adult who shows up, listens and provides consistency can be the difference between isolation and empowerment."

WIZO understands that emotional strength is as vital as physical safety. An Hour with a Child embodies this belief, creating thousands of small but powerful moments of healing each year.

Korazim added: "We need the generosity of our supporters now more than ever to keep this vital lifeline going. We want to support even more children in the coming months and we hope we can."

Why WIZO's physical infrastructure matters more than ever



Across Israel, WIZO's work changes lives every day from early childhood education and mentoring to trauma recovery, legal aid and vocational training. However, behind every success story lies one essential and often overlooked, foundation: the physical spaces where this work takes place.

Many of WIZO's buildings have stood for decades. They have served generations with dedication, but time and use have taken their toll. Some require essential structural repairs such as new roofs, modern plumbing, or upgraded electrical systems. Others lack accessible pathways, safe communal areas, or energy-efficient infrastructure.

Speaking to WIZO Today Ora Korazim, Chairperson of WIZO Israel, said: "Today the most urgent need is

not just about modernisation, it is about protection.

"In many WIZO Centres, there are no proper bomb shelters or fortified areas. This leaves staff, children and programme participants vulnerable during missile attacks or other emergencies. For communities living under the constant shadow of sirens, this is not an abstract concern, it is a daily reality."

When the security situation becomes volatile, the absence of adequate shelter means programmes are disrupted, essential services pause and the safety of those inside cannot be guaranteed. In these moments, the very heart of WIZO's mission, which is to provide stability, care and empowerment is put at risk. That is why WIZO's focus now is preservation and protection.

The goal for the next year is clear. WIZO wants to ensure existing facilities can remain open and safe in times of crisis. The plan is to install or upgrade shelters, fortified rooms, and secure entryways as well as create spaces that provide both physical safety and emotional refuge.

Korazim said: "This work is about more than bricks and mortar. It is about ensuring that a childcare centre can keep its doors open during an air raid, that a women's support group can meet without fear and that a traumatised child can continue its therapy in a safe environment."

In a country where uncertainty can arrive with the sound of a siren, safe spaces are the backbone of resilience. They allow communities to carry on to

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

gather, learn, heal and rebuild even under threat.

By preserving these buildings and equipping them for today’s realities, WIZO is safeguarding more than just infrastructure. It is protecting the people who depend on these spaces, ensuring that no matter the crisis, they have somewhere safe to turn.

Korazim said: “Because when the walls around us are secure, the work within them can continue and hope can endure”.

Infrastructure Renewal Across the Country.
In WIZO’s Tel Aviv Branch they need an installation of a new elevator.

In the Ra’anana Branch structural renovations are needed to secure the building.

At the Savyon Branch accessibility modifications are needed to support those with special needs.

At the Pardes Hanna Branch the entranceways and access routes upgrades are not cosmetic - they are about dignity, inclusion and ensuring no one is left behind.

Many of WIZO’s branches serve communities that experience extreme weather and limited municipal funding. Summer heat and winter storms have damaged key buildings, impacting comfort, safety and functionality.

Recent and upcoming renewal efforts to address these include, structural repairs to buildings in Holon, Be’er Sheva Branch, Hadera, Karmiel as well as Haifa.

Meanwhile renovations to community rooms are needed at Kiryat Gat, Tel Aviv, Savyon, Afula, Hod Hasharon, Netanya, Azur, Modi’in, Ashkelon, Ness Ziona, Rehovot, as well as Kiryat Malachi.

Korazim said: “From new air conditioners to bathroom renovations and basic accessibility ramps, small-scale purchases can have a life-changing impact.

“These upgrades not only restore comfort and function they rebuild pride in community spaces.

“By maintaining the environments where lives are uplifted, women are empowered, and children are heard. WIZO sustains more than bricks and mortar - it preserves the stability, safety and dignity that allow people to heal and grow”.

WIZO’s Bat Mitzvah Programme Strengthens Mother–Daughter Bonds

Thousands of vulnerable young girls in WIZO’s care would love to celebrate their Bat Mitzvah but without WIZO’s help will not be able to do so. Many, from single parent and immigrant families, have suffered bereavement or other family trauma.

In a country facing extraordinary challenges, one programme is helping Israeli families reconnect at one of life’s most formative milestones. Empowered at 12, WIZO’s unique Bat Mitzvah journey, is providing mothers and daughters across Israel with a chance to strengthen their bond, build self-esteem and deepen their shared connection to Jewish heritage.

A WIZO spokeswoman said: “For generations, the Bat Mitzvah has marked a powerful transition from childhood to adolescence, a coming-of-age moment filled with symbolism, responsibility and self-discovery. But for many, it is also a time of emotional distance and growing pains. WIZO’s programme turns this moment into an opportunity for closeness.



“At the heart of the initiative is a guided exploration of values, communication, identity, and self-worth. Through structured conversations and reflective exercises, participants discover new ways to express themselves and understand each other.”

A mother from Bat Yam who recently completed the programme said: “It made me get to know the girl inside me and remember what it was like to be a teenager.



“It taught us so much about our relationship, about boundaries, how to compromise. It allowed us to put our puzzle together. I discovered so many things my daughter thinks about me and it made us rediscover each other and connect.”

For daughters, the journey offers tools for building confidence and navigating adolescence.

“It has given me confidence and I know myself better,” one daughter on the programme said.

The programme emphasises the transmission of intergenerational wisdom, the quiet strength, traditions and lived experience passed down from one woman to another.

Especially during times of national uncertainty and emotional strain, these connections are a powerful source of comfort and resilience.

In dozens of communities across Israel Empowered at 12 is helping to create stronger families and Jewish identities one meaningful conversation at a time.



navera

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

Supporting WIZO’s crucial work

WIZO supporting the homefront heroes

Recognising the incredible strength and resilience of Israeli families during a period of enormous challenge and sacrifice, WIZO is demonstrating its backing through the Homefront Heroes programme.

Designed to offer practical help and maintain a strong community - particularly for the women who are often without support as their partners serve in the IDF - the initiative has benefitted participants through activities including nationwide workshops covering a diverse range of topics.

Rivka Neumann, director of WIZO’s Division for the Advancement of the Status of Women, says that the spouses of reservists serve their country on the home front by maintaining civilian life, in many cases having to juggle childcare, domestic responsibilities and employment commitments while carrying the emotional burden of the conflict.

They lack recognition for the endless effort required to maintain their families’ routine and well-being.

Some have to deal with unsympathetic employers who lose patience when they have to take emergency time off because of a child’s illness or limited childcare options during school holidays.

Yet they selflessly serve the nation by striving to preserve a calm and happy household, despite never-ending anxieties over the safety of those on the frontline.

Rivka stresses that the massive contribution of these women needs to be properly acknowledged. “Reserve families are our additional heroes. Our decision to focus on both parents and children is based on the fact that the entire nuclear family is affected. There is concern, uncertainty, longing and economic and emotional cost.

“This is our way of saying to reserve families ‘you are not transparent’. Their need

for support is especially strong during the challenging summer vacation period when there is a lack of structured activities.

“We are honouring the dedication of these wonderful women by assisting and offering support to the nuclear family through the workshops we operate.”

Run in collaboration with the NGO Anchor for Reserve Families and through grants from the National Insurance Institute, the programme has seen some 20 WIZO Centres throughout the country host summer programmes. Among the numerous issues covered were resilience and relaxation techniques and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The workshops were led by experienced group facilitators, experts in family therapy, couples therapy and art therapy. Some were for mothers with young children, augmented by activities for their offspring, led by dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers and supervised by a trained play therapist.

Others were designed to support mothers aged between 40 and 60 with children on reserve duty, offering a space to express emotions, provide information and acquire the knowledge to identify signs of distress in their children that require attention.

One reservist’s spouse said the programme had been a godsend, enabling her family to share experiences with others in the same situation.

“In the support group my children met other children they hadn’t met before, who all experienced this same difficulty. That gave them a very open and very warm place, with a lot of acceptance. WIZO’s project is so blessed.

It truly made the wives feel seen.”

And going forward, WIZO’s support for these unsung heroes will continue to be crucial.



Upsurge in domestic violence due to war: WIZO provides a Safety Net



One of the many consequences of the post-October 7 period has been an upsurge in domestic violence as the stresses of military service, bomb attacks on Israeli cities and the fate of the hostages exacerbate fraught relationships. WIZO’s Safety Net programme has long supported those impacted by abuse but now has to meet the increased demand for legal, financial and practical help. The Safety Net programme has already assisted around 160 women and a similar number of children across 10 communities.

Our Centres provide direct support, connection to professionals and a safe environment for recovery and decision-making.

They help to enable women and their children who have escaped a violent home environment to rebuild their lives, starting with a prolonged period in a shelter.

As they rehabilitate, the women have to address numerous problems, both practical and emotional. Risk factors include poverty, unemployment, alienation, exclusion from educational frameworks and an absence of family support.

Over the past eight years, the Safety Net post-shelter programme has proved a hugely effective resource for integrating domestic violence survivors back into the community to enjoy safe, sustainable and independent lives.

The Safety Net communities are operated by professional staff and volunteers at WIZO branches. In addition to offering emotional support, the women are helped to acquire the skills and training to achieve financial independence. Parenting workshops empower them as mothers.

One mother of three who has participated in the programme describes it as life-changing.

“From the first call and the first meeting, I felt truly embraced. I had support, like parents backing me up.”

Safety Net incorporates weekly support groups and professional counselling sessions. Participants are also made aware of financial and legal resources so they can claim housing assistance and other government benefits, secure legal aid for divorce proceedings and custody battles and set up bank accounts and other life essentials.

To develop their education and enhance their career prospects, the women can also take advantage of training and certification courses and guidance on job applications and interviews. Safety Net can additionally call upon a network of employers who are ready to hire.

And appreciating that empowering mothers is a path to independence, there is hands-on assistance as participants rebuild their sense of self-worth, confidence and parental competence.

WIZO regards Safety Net as more than a programme. It’s a community staffed by a network of caring individuals, some professional, some WIZO-trained volunteers, who are all dedicated to supporting these families as they rebuild their lives.

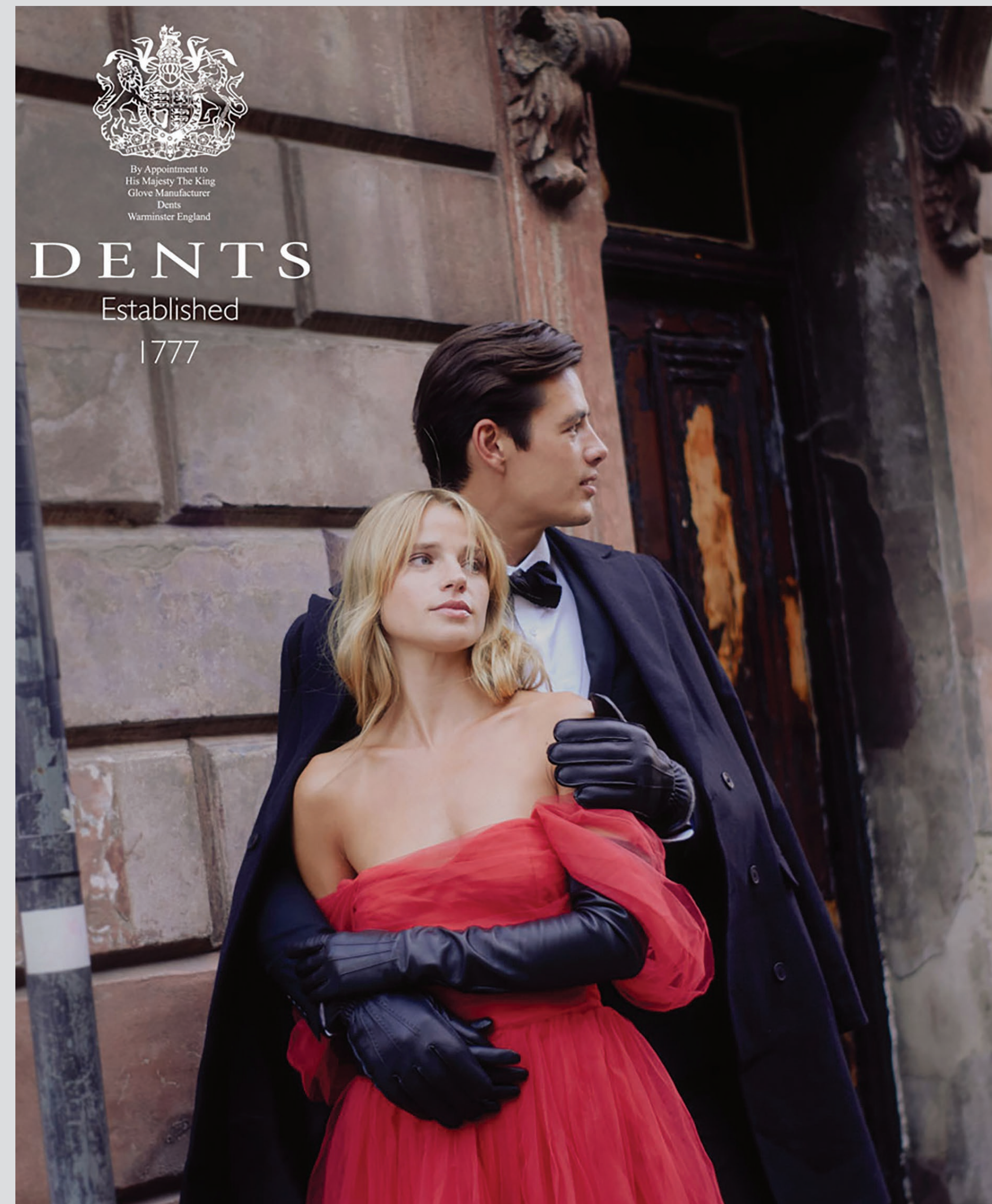
There are a number of ways help is provided, including free clothing supplied to women and families in need from the WIZO Bigudits (second-hand clothing stores). WIZO also supplies furniture and home appliances for a new apartment as well as babysitting, school supplies, food vouchers for the holidays, field trips and so much more.

The success of Safety Net can be gauged by one startling statistic. Research suggests that up to 40 per cent of abused women return to their violent partners or end up in new and harmful relationships as independence depends on resources and support that most do not have access to. For those who have come through Safety Net, the rate is below 5 per cent.

It is testament to the way that, for more than a century, WIZO has been a pioneer in identifying critical needs in Israeli society and developing cutting-edge social and educational services to address them.

**Merlis, David Cohen
& family
of
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INVESTMENTS LTD**

are pleased to support
WIZO's crucial work
at this horrendous time.



WIZO’s Hotline Helps Violent Men Choose Change

For decades, conversations about domestic violence have rightly focused on women. When it comes to men, the discussion is mostly about punishment, and less about changing a pattern of behaviour. WIZO launched the Men’s Hotline in the hope of shifting that conversation, normalising the idea of therapy among Israeli men, and hopefully preventing further incidents.

It is the only service of its kind in Israel. Completely anonymous and staffed by trained volunteers; no one is asked for their name or personal details, and calls are never recorded. The aim is simple: to encourage men to reach out for help voluntarily, before being compelled to do so by the authorities.

Trained male volunteers work in 12-hour shifts, 8am to 8pm, with a voicemail system operating overnight and at weekends. Most calls are in Hebrew, but there are also volunteers who can provide support in Arabic, Amharic and Russian. An online chatroom is also available for those who prefer to write rather than speak. The service is designed as a bridge to therapy, helping men break the cycle of loneliness and isolation that often fuels violent behaviour.

According to WIZO experts: “Women are disproportionately more likely to be victims of domestic violence, and over the last 30 years there has been tremendous progress in addressing this. But it is harder to resolve a domestic violence situation if you only ever work with one gender. Abusive relationships can last for years, even decades, and many couples remain together despite the violence.

“Even divorce does not necessarily end violent behaviour. There is therefore an urgent need to bring men into the conversation and make them part of the solution.”

The hotline offers understanding, compassion, containment and support for the man
Continued on page 11



Wishing WIZO
הצלחה

in all its endeavours, especially
during these difficult times.

Ruth and Martin Dunitz

The Lauffer Family
is proud to support
the work of WIZO
and wishes this evening’s
Dinner every success.

Continued from page 10

on the line, while maintaining a zero-tolerance approach to violent behaviour. This is a delicate balance. As WIZO experts explain: “We must show empathy, but also make clear that certain behaviours or patterns being described are indeed violent and unacceptable.” The longer-term goal is to reduce men’s fears about therapy, helping them lower their defences enough to seek professional help, something that often requires more than one conversation. Volunteers work to build relationships with the men, encouraging regular contact. This is especially important as some perpetrators have also experienced abuse themselves, which naturally compounds trust issues even further.

The Men’s Hotline now receives around 1,000 calls every year. Running the service costs £280,000 annually. Just £20 helps provide telephone counsellors and translation services, ensuring men of all backgrounds can access support to control their anger and protect women and children from domestic violence.

As levels of violence against women continue to rise globally, WIZO is using its expertise across more than 800 projects to protect women and girls of all races, religions and backgrounds, while empowering them to reach their full potential.

Accessing the Hotline
The Men’s Hotline: 1-800-39-39-04
Website (Hebrew and English): kav-hagvarim.org.il
Facebook: [facebook.com/MenHelpLine](https://www.facebook.com/MenHelpLine)

This life-saving advisory service is just one of many ways in which WIZO leads the fight to eradicate gender-based violence in Israel from prevention to rehabilitation.



Accessibility: Now More Than Ever, It's a Matter of Urgency



In times of war and trauma, accessibility is not a luxury, it is a lifeline. WIZO's programmes reach across Israeli society. But for too many, these opportunities remain physically out of reach.

Many of our facilities are still inaccessible to people with disabilities or limited mobility including growing numbers of wounded veterans, elderly participants and parents with buggies. The result is stark entire communities excluded from safety, support, and belonging.

Since the outbreak of the war on 7 October 2023, the urgency of accessibility has never been clearer. Thousands have been injured, displaced, or left living

with deep psychological scars. The need for safe, inclusive spaces where people can heal, connect and rebuild their lives has surged dramatically.

Over 9,800 newly wounded soldiers have entered Israel's official rehabilitation track since the war began. For them and for many others navigating life with physical challenges, accessible community spaces are not optional, they are essential.

For WIZO, this is a call to action. We must upgrade a number of facilities in order to meet the needs.

Continued on page 13

APPLETON INVESTMENTS

wishes WIZO continued success in all that it does.

Wishing WIZO continued success in all its wonderful endeavours.

Maureen Shenkin,
St Ouen, Jersey

Continued from page 12

A spokesperson said: "Accessibility is about more than ramps and lifts. It is about dignity. It is about ensuring that every individual regardless of their physical ability can participate fully in the life of their community.

"It means creating trauma-informed environments that offer both security and inclusion. It means making sure that someone in a wheelchair can attend a support group without barriers, that a wounded veteran can join a training session without fear or discomfort. And that a parent with a buggy can reach a safe shelter without delay."

WIZO needs help to upgrade facilities with accessible pathways, entrances and sanitary facilities. It has plans to install lifts and automated doors in multi-storey buildings. As well as ensure that bomb shelters and safe rooms are accessible to all.

In the face of ongoing conflict, accessibility becomes a matter of survival as much as social responsibility. When community centres are truly open to everyone, communities become stronger, more resilient, more united, and more able to respond to crisis.

WIZO is committed to making sure no one is left behind. But to do this, we must act now.

A spokeswoman said: "Together, we can ensure that every person, regardless of mobility, has the chance to heal, to participate, and to belong."



Winners of WIZO’s Entrepreneur Awards Announced

WIZOUK has announced the winners of its inaugural Entrepreneur Awards, a new initiative following WIZO’s successful Commitment Awards. Nominees were judged by a panel of experts, including The Apprentice’s Claude Littner and will be presented with their awards at WIZO’s Dinner by David Dangoor and Linda Plant.

The awards celebrate entrepreneurs who have demonstrated both exceptional skill and vision, while enacting positive change in society and impacting the future. With categories spanning innovation, creativity, public service and purpose-driven business, this year’s winners represent the values WIZO likes to champion.

British businessman and philanthropist David Dangoor, supporter of these awards and the Commitment Awards said: “WIZO has a long history of shining a spotlight on special people whose hard work and creativity add so much value to society. This opportunity to highlight the entrepreneurial spirit and talent of young people alongside established entrepreneurs promises to be transformative.”

After a competitive semi final event Judges picked their winner for the Young Entrepreneur of the Year title. Andrii Cherkashyn, a Ukrainian national fencing champion and European bronze medallist, won this award for co-founding an AI-powered algorithmic trading start-up.

Having raised £500,000 in investment, he and his co-founder are developing infrastructure for global markets all while studying economics at Queen Mary University, London.



From (L/R) Lisa Kay (Judge), David Dangoor (Judge), Maureen Fisher (CEO WIZOUK), Stephen Pollard (Judge), Daniel Schwammenthal (Judge) and Charly Young MBE (Judge)

César Roden won in the Innovation Entrepreneur of the Year category. Founder of Ice Kitchen, César has redefined the frozen dessert market with handmade, additive-free ice lollies made from high-quality, natural ingredients. His vision has since expanded into cooking pastes, reflecting his flair for spotting market opportunities and commitment to sustainability. By combining premium quality with eco-conscious practices, César has built a brand that is as responsible as it is successful.

Winning in the Creative Entrepreneur of the Year category was Jonny Caplan. Caplan launched his first business at 14 and his production companies Tech Talk Media and Impossible Media, have created award-winning documentaries. His work has spotlighted over 50 start-ups, helping them raise more than £350,000. Founder of Porto & Bello, cancer survivor Alexia Baron was named Purpose Entrepreneur of the Year. Alexia turned her personal health battle into a mission:

creating beautiful, port-accessible clothing for people undergoing treatment. Her designs restore dignity, warmth, and confidence to patients during some of the hardest moments of their lives.



From (L/R) Stefanie Daniels and Alexia Baron

Winning the Public Sector Entrepreneur of the Year title is Dr Deborah Hirshler. Dr Hirshler has revolutionised GP access in Hertfordshire by introducing same-day triage for all patients. She leads women’s health services, safeguards vulnerable patients and manages a practice serving over 50,000 people, all while balancing family life and caring for a child with additional needs.

Women’s Entrepreneur of the Year, Stefanie Daniels, won for her inspirational work as the founder of Life Begins at Menopause. Stefanie transformed her personal journey through surgical menopause into a thriving wellness business. Combining nutrition, coaching, and innovative therapies, she empowers women to navigate midlife with strength and vitality, challenging outdated narratives about ageing.



From (L/R) Emma Sinclair MBE (Nominator), Stephen Pollard (Judge) and Andrii Cherkashyn

Start-Up Entrepreneur of the Year Tash Grossman was awarded for her work as the founder of Slip. The company is transforming the post-purchase experience with digital receipts that combine sustainability, data empowerment, and customer convenience. She has raised significant investment in a sector where women founders receive less than 2 per cent of UK VC funding, earning a place on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list.

WIZO NEEDS YOU!

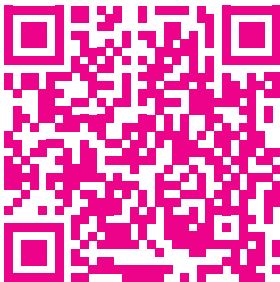
Israel is currently facing an unimaginable crisis. Lives have been lost, hundreds are wounded, and thousands—families, children, the elderly—are huddled in shelters, overwhelmed with fear.

Tragically, **10 of WIZO’s vital institutions have been damaged.** Centres that support women, children, and vulnerable families — now bearing the scars of this conflict. This has only deepened the urgent need for support.

And yet, even at this time of fear, **there is resilience.** WIZO is still here. Still standing.

Still supporting those who need us most. We **can’t** do this alone. Now, more than ever, **your help makes a difference.**

Please support our emergency appeal and donate now at wizouk.org or call 020 7319 9169



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