

# TIKVA MEANS HUGS, SMILES, LOVE, CARE, AND **HOPE**—ESPECIALLY DURING THIS UNPRECEDENTED TIME



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Dearest supporters,

To start, I want to assure you that our one and only focus during this unprecedented time is the safety and security of our children and staff. To understand how we are handling the COVID-19 crisis, please see the article to the right of this note.

In this issue of our newsletter, I wish to explore the theme of "From Darkness to Light." It was during this past Pesach, which coincided with the climax of this global pandemic, that I realized how TIKVA's story is similar to that of the Jewish Nation.

Hundreds of years before the mass exodus from Egypt, the Lord promised our father Abraham that his children would be strangers in a strange land, endure affliction for 400 years, and only then be released into great freedom. The exile from Egypt had been preordained as was the liberation, and in their darkest hours, the Israelites were able to hold on to the promise that they would one day be redeemed.

We did not have a promissory note when we came to post-Soviet Odessa in the early 90s. There was no pillar

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## Keeping our Children and Staff Safe— TiKVA's Response COVID-19

More than three months in, we continue to monitor the ever evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

The management at all TiKVA homes and schools continues to follow recommendations from the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

Our staff and students have really stepped up



during this difficult time, adhering strictly to protocols regarding personal hygiene, looking out for symptoms, and taking extra precautions. Our staff continues to use masks and gloves during working hours and everyone has 24/7 access to hand sanitizers. Our medical staff checks the temperatures of every student and worker daily. What's more, cleaning procedures at all facilities have tripled.

As public meals are still on hold, our warehouses keep food and supplies for 4-5 weeks ahead of

need. Our disadvantaged students who relied on the hot meals served in our school have been receiving them via a complex and costly delivery operation.

While schools remained closed from mid-March through mid-June, the education of our students remained intact. Via Skype and additional laptops and tablets, we established a home-schooling program that allowed our teachers to communicate with our students everyday.

The mental health of our children has also been a priority. Psychologists continue to have online sessions with students, teachers, and community members to help them



deal with the challenges of isolation.

Regarding our auxiliary staff, such as cooks, cleaners, and maintenance workers, we are so proud of our university students who stepped in to assist

with those needs while much of our staff was sheltering in place.

Because seniors are even more at risk for COVID-19, we curtailed



our regular elderly programming, through which our students visit and deliver food parcels to, the local Jewish senior citizens and Holocaust survivors. Accordingly, we are preparing meals for them in our kitchens and delivering the food directly to their homes. We have also created a system of rotation to ensure that appropriate staff members remain in constant contact with them so they receive emotional support and so we can make sure their basic needs are met.

As we do everything we can to keep our children and staff safe, the strain this emergency has put on TIKVA is immense and **YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER BEFORE.**

of fire or cloud of glory to show us the way. But we knew that there were Jewish people in need. People who for decades, could not practice their religion freely, and were oppressed by a government that would eventually vanish, leaving them lost and hungry in its wake.

Without considering the outcome, TiKVA began digging through the dirt of a fallen city and planting seeds of hope. We created homes where young homeless Jewish children would grow up and we built schools where they would become educated. We didn't know what twists and turns we would face on our journey, but we kept nurturing these saplings. And with your help—your water and your sunshine, a community sprung up. Two decades later we are seeing the fruits of our labor, as our original children are now planting roots of their own and starting families on Odessa, Israel, and around the world.

We thank you for your faith in us, and for trusting that TiKVA is pouring your support lovingly into our children while nurturing this worthy community. With your partnership, may we continue to develop programs and upgrade our facilities in order to keep up with our strong, growing family.



Refael Kruskal  
CEO, TiKVA

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW  
YOU CAN SUPPORT TIKVA AT  
[WWW.TIKVAODESSA.ORG](http://WWW.TIKVAODESSA.ORG)

# MAZEL TOV!



## TIKVA STUDENTS GET MARRIED!

Two of our children married each other! Liora, 22, recently finished TiKVA University with a degree in Economics; she came to TiKVA from a troubled home in Kiev. Gabriel, 27, came to us at the age of 8 from a state run orphanage. After graduating TiKVA's School with a bachelor's degree in graphic design, he studied Rabbinics as a Yeshiva student in Israel. We are excited about our new couple; and wish them a lifetime of happiness!



## BAR MITZVAH OF SHLOMO SHIMSHON!

Mazal Tov to TiKVA's own Shlomo Shimshon on his recent Bar Mitzvah! Shlomo was brought to TiKVA as an infant and was given the name Shlomo Shimshon in hopes that he would grow up to be wise like Solomon and strong like Samson. Our Shlomo is certainly living up to his namesake, and we are so proud of him. Thank you to the Universal Kindness Foundation for sponsoring this special milestone and giving Shlomo a proper celebration he deserves.



## TIKVA STUDENTS GRADUATE!

Despite the global COVID-19 health crisis, we are very proud to announce that 250 of our children graduated from schools this year! This includes 58 from our two kindergartens, 66 from elementary school, 47 from 9th grade, 37 from 11th grade, 32 from the university and 10 children who graduated from our emerging vocational programs. Congratulations to the graduates—may your dreams for the future all come true!

# THE IMPORTANCE OF TIKVA'S



The need for TiKVA and our work in Odessa can never be underestimated and this was underscored recently when the mother of three of our children passed away at the young age of 26. Unfortunately, she dealt with substance abuse for most of her adult life and was never able to care for her children. Still, our staff treated her with warmth and respect each time she came to our home to drop off a new baby.

Thanks to TiKVA, the children will grow up together and in a loving and nurturing home. They will be given a quality education and the emotional support to break

the cycle of poverty and despair that brought them to TiKVA in the first place.

The three young girls, whose names are not listed, have been matched through our virtual adoption program and are funded through the generosity of Gila and Efrem Gerszberg, Mark Aber, and Gabriel Britti.

TO LEARN ABOUT OUR VIRTUAL ADOPTION PROGRAM, PLEASE

**MORE COVID-RELATED UPDATES**

**OUR FINANCIAL SHORT FALL**



As we all know, the virus has impacted people and economies globally, but some countries are able to lend more assistance to their people than others. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian government's response

has fallen short of need and our children and staff there have been affected. Typically, our critically important annual fundraising events are able to help us continue our work in Odessa and the region, but due to the virus, almost every event has been canceled. Currently, we are working as hard as we can to transform some of our physical events to virtual events in the fall, but we cannot do that with most of them. Thus, we are anticipating a financial shortfall in 2020 that is greater than ever before.

Of course we understand that most, if not all of our supporters have been financially affected by the current situation. Still, the needs of our children must be met. **AT THIS TIME, WE ARE CALLING ON ALL OUR SUPPORTERS—PAST AND PRESENT—TO HELP IN ANY WAY YOU CAN. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AS WE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE DURING THIS TRYING TIME.**

**CARING FOR OUR MOST VULNERABLE**



Part of TiKVA's core mission is to teach our children about the importance of looking beyond yourself to help those even less fortunate. As such, we have historically run an elderly food program in which our children

deliver food and pay visits to the elderly Jewish population of Odessa, Ukraine.

At this difficult time, when the elderly are for the most part stuck indoors (and many with no nearby family or state assistance), we are still able to bring food packages along with a smile and words of encouragement.



**A SURVIVOR'S STORY**

Yuhova Benja Usherozna was born on May 20, 1915 in Kamenka, Moldova. Her parents starved to death when she was 5 years old. Until she was 14, she lived in a state orphanage. At one point, she fell ill with cholera, but no one wanted to treat her.

Fortunately, she recovered on her own.

Despite a childhood filled with tragedy, Yuhova loved to dance, and that's how she met her husband, who was a soldier. They married when she was 21 and they were blessed with 2 children—a daughter and son.

During World War II, tragedy followed Yuhova—her husband died fighting, their daughter died from dysentery, and her sisters were killed by the Nazis.

After the war she moved with her son to Kotovsk. Following his military duty, he got married and made Aliya to Israel. Yuhova moved back to Odessa.

Since Yuhova was never forced into a concentration camp or ghetto, she is not eligible for funding that victims of the war receive from the state. In fact, what she receives is nowhere near enough for even basic food and medication. Without regular food packages from TiKVA her plight would be very dire. Yuhova is just one of several people over 100 years old who count on us for their very survival. Please contact us if you would like to help Jewish seniors like Yuhova.

**THANK YOU TO RABBI ZEV REICHMAN AND EAST HILL SYNAGOGUE IN ENGLEWOOD, NJ, FOR HELPING TIKVA HELP PEOPLE LIKE YUHOVA.**

**LIFESAVING WORK**



Recently, we welcomed a new child into our loving home. Like so many of our children, 5-year-old Alina's young life before TiKVA was filled with heartbreak and hardship. She lived with her alcoholic mother in a house that had little food, no shower, and only an outside

toilet. Worse, the mother's boyfriend was abusive to her.

Thankfully, Alina is doing well now. She is receiving psychological assistance as well as additional tutoring to help her enter first grade in the upcoming academic year.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Nearly 1,000 TiKVA graduates have made Aliyah to Israel and hundreds have served in the IDF!**

**More than 850 children that have been born to TiKVA graduates!**



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## WAYS YOU CAN HELP TIKVA'S CHILDREN NOW



### **VIRTUALLY ADOPT A CHILD**

At TiKVA, there is no better way to positively impact a child's entire life than with our Virtual Adoption program. Through your commitment you will be paired with a child in TiKVA's care, receive a certificate of virtual adoption, and three quarterly photo updates per year. Yuliya-Miriam (above right) recently arrived at Tikva at only two weeks old. For more information on this wonderful, life-changing program, please contact us.

### **START A SOCIAL MEDIA FUNDRAISER**

In honor of your birthday, wedding, or just to help.

### **HOST A VIRTUAL EVENT**

Facilitate a parlor meeting or cocktail party and help raise funds for TiKVA's life-saving and educational work.

### **REACH OUT TO US WITH YOUR IDEAS**

Have an idea that will help TiKVA? Contact Yanna at [YannaB@TikvaOdessa.org](mailto:YannaB@TikvaOdessa.org) or 917-517-7879.

**DONATE AT [WWW.TIKVAODESSA.ORG](http://WWW.TIKVAODESSA.ORG)**

## CREATIVE WAYS OUR SUPPORTERS ARE HELPING TIKVA NOW:

Since COVID began in March, Peter and Marina Stern have sponsored two large deliveries of food, groceries, and non-perishables. This ensured that TiKVA could continue feeding our children while Ukraine was experiencing food shortages.

In April, Olya Kislin ran a birthday fundraiser on Facebook and **MATCHED ALL DONATIONS**. Matching donations is a great way to encourage your friends,

family, and business associates to get involved and support a cause you deeply care about. Matching also doubles the impact of all donations made in honor of you for your special occasion, or just because you want to make a difference in the lives of our children.

If you're interested in any of the above programs or have ideas for your own, please contact us for further details. **THANK YOU!**