



**בית איזי שפירא**

לשינוי באיכות חייהם של אנשים עם מוגבלויות

**Beit Issie Shapiro**

Changing the lives of people with disabilities

**בקמפוס ווילי וסיליה טראמפ**

On the Willie & Celia Trump Campus



The Jonah Press Sport and Recreation Center

# Inclusive Sport in the Community

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**Trump Institute**

Development, Research & Training

**Issie Shapiro Forum**

Social Change & Advocacy in the Community

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## **| Gratitude**

Special thanks to all the wonderful youth who participated in the project, which by them and for them it is evolving and developing.

Sincere thanks to all the families who gave me their trust and support and walked with me together along the way.

Special thanks go to Nira Stern the Director of the Movement and Sport Center for recognizing and supporting the importance of the inclusion of sport in the community.

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You have given me the opportunity to fulfill my dream.

Dekel Borovski

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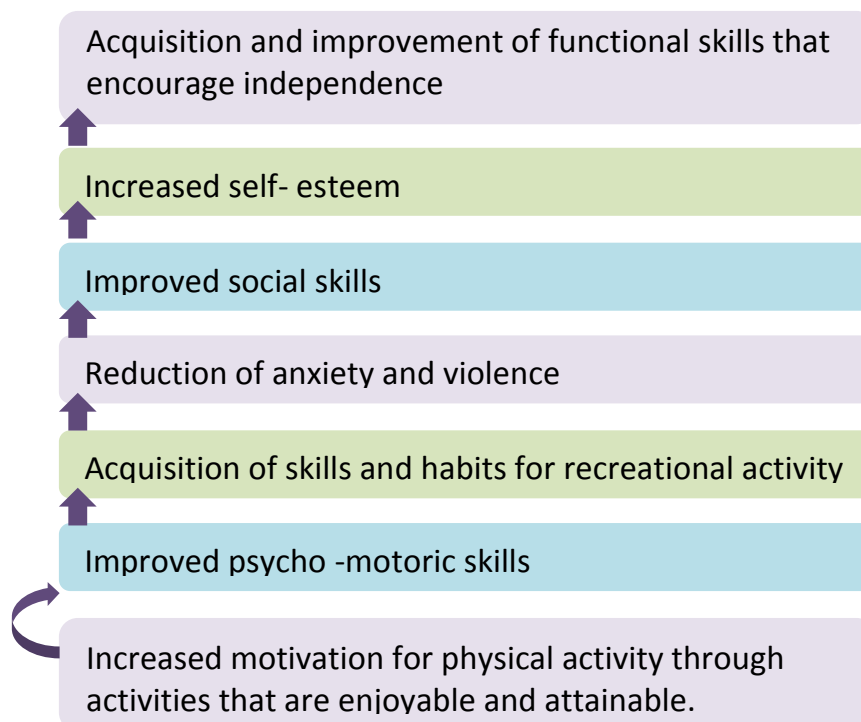
# The Vision of the Project

Young people with disabilities are entitled to participate in normative, healthy and inexpensive community sport activities. These activities should take place in an open and inclusive social environment that enriches the quality of life of all involved in the project.

## Concepts Central to the Development of the Project:

- **Inclusion:** The Sport and Recreation Center at Beit Issie Shapiro aims to encourage and promote the inclusion of children and youth with special needs into normative sporting activities in the community.
- **Maximizing motor and social potential:** The children and adolescents who participate in the Beit Issie Shapiro Sports Center programs require specially adapted physical activities that aim to minimize the gap, both developmental and social, between this population of young people and the typical population.
- **Maximizing physical potential:** These programs also strive to prevent increased functional deterioration and to improve physical fitness in preparation for inclusion into the community.

## *The Benefits of Adapted Physical Activity:*



## ***The Influence of physical activities on people with disabilities:***

The model aims to:

- Contribute to a sense of empowerment through physical activity.
- Contribute to a positive experience of mastery
- Strengthen feelings of ability, thereby generating independence
- Strengthen feelings of self-efficacy
- Improve self esteem
- Encourage more confident self-representation
- Encourage building social contacts

## **Background of the project:**

For more than 3 years, group sports activities took place exclusively at the Sport and Recreation Center at Beit Issie Shapiro. With time and experience it became apparent that with the support of the trainer and the parents, a model could be developed that would gradually incorporate the program into typical sporting activities within the community. This could be achieved by blending the improved physical abilities of the groups from Beit Issie Shapiro with existing community sporting activities.



# The Goals of the Project:

The project aims to:

- Include young people with developmental disabilities in sporting activities that exist within the community
- Train young people with developmental disabilities to integrate into community sports in an outdoor environment.

## *Uniqueness of the Project:*

This unique project aims to open up new opportunities for the population of young people with disabilities.

This can be achieved by:

Planning group outings for sporting activities within the community

Encouraging partnership with the parents in the planning, execution and evaluation of the project

Creating training programs to improve the physical fitness of adolescents with disabilities

Character building, adherence to instruction, perseverance, determination, will power and consistency

Confronting physical challenges in preparation for integration and independence

Encouraging enjoyment and satisfaction in routine typical sporting activities

# Target population:

At the present time there are 50 people- youth, volunteers and parents, involved in inclusive sporting activities in the community.



## **Description of the Program:**

The foundation of the project was based on the idea of a “mini triathlon”:

This incorporates:



Training in the fitness center



Bicycle-riding



Walking

### *So How Does this happen?*

At the outset of the program the professional staff meets with parents to present the concept of the project. Parents are then requested to give permission for the child’s participation.

- During the first trimester the program only takes place in the fitness center at Beit Issie Shapiro. At the same time meetings take place with the parents so as to motivate their involvement in the project.
- The next four months brings a schedule of 3 weeks of activities in the fitness center and a once a week walk in the environs of the community.
- The following trimester involves 3 weeks of activity in the fitness center and once a week cycling.

### *Activities in the Fitness Center:*

*The fitness program works on motor and physical skills that contribute to walking and cycling.*

The goal is to build endurance capacity (heart-lungs), coordination and strength.

A parallel program works on developing appropriate behavior patterns that will contribute to participatory activities within the community. This focuses on developing the abilities to pay attention to instructions, to persevere, to develop determination and will power in order to succeed in meeting the goals of the program.

Once the above two goals are achieved the participants are introduced to activities within the communities.

### **Every class has the same designated structure:**

#### ***Sport and Recreation Center***

- 40minutes in the fitness center where each participant is given guidance by a volunteer instructor.
- Transition to the movement studio: This process facilitates the ability to progress from one environment to another
- Movement Studio: 10-15 minutes of relaxation and stretching to encourage flexibility, good posture, muscle extension, relaxed breathing and knowledge of body parts. This activity takes place in a circle encouraging a sense of comfort within the group. Parents are invited to attend if they so wish.

The issue of leaving the fitness center to activities of walking or cycling in the community creates changes for the children. The ability to accommodate to these changes helps ease the process of changes in other areas of life.

#### **Walking**

Walking is the most popular physical activity worldwide. It is a healthy, normative and inexpensive sport, available to everyone.

#### ***Structure of the walking activity:***

- a) Meeting of youth, parents and volunteers at the entrance of Beit Issie Shapiro
- b) Walk to the predetermined destination
- c) Return walk to Beit Issie Shapiro
- d) Activities to release tension
- e) Formal closure



Sport walking requires motivation, something lacking in youth with special needs. Walking in a group with friends, parents and volunteers increases motivation and gives an added opportunity for parents to share a healthy and positive experience with their children. The program is flexible and takes account of the mood of the group, the energy level of the individuals and is sensitive to all variations that occur within the group.

### Cycling

Cycling has become a popular sporting activity. Cycling encourages aerobic activity, improves fitness, strength, and heart- lung functioning. It creates a general sense of well-being and energy, influences the quality of sleep and promotes health of body and mind.

### ***Structure of cycling activities at the Raanana Park***

- a) The group members meet at the “cycling center” at the park
- b) Organization: Matching the bicycle to each participant, fitting the suitable safety helmets, taking the bikes to the cycling path
- c) Cycling around the lake or taking different routes around the park according to the progress of the of the group
- d) Gathering for release of tension
- e) Formal closure accompanied by healthy refreshments provided by parents.
- f) Increasing the involvement of parents

## **Work with the parents:**

Over a period of years parents became comfortable and familiar with the Sport and Recreation Program at Beit Issie Shapiro. They developed relationships with the therapists, trainers and one another, and enjoyed the hour of viewing their children through the one way screens and relaxing with people in similar situations.

Accommodating to the new concept of inclusive sport was not easy for all parents. There were many concerns and fears for their children and for themselves.

To allay parent's concerns, individual meetings and a group evening were organized to explain the advantages of the project, and ensure parents that this program would only take place once a month; all other activities would take place in the familiar format.

- Throughout the year the professional team works with the parents.
- There is a constant stream of communication via telephone call, email, SMSs, individual discussions and group meetings.
- After activities the trainer is available for communication with parents, and guides parents on how to respond appropriately to their children, very often enriching the quality of the relationship between the parent and child.

Activities that take place in the community require more intensive parent participation and require that:

- Parents are given prior information regarding the activity so that they can organize their schedule and arrive properly equipped
- Parents actively participate in the activity
- Parents are encouraged to participate in designing the activities
- Outdoor activities in which the parents participate give the trainers additional opportunities for dialogue, feedback and suggestions from the parents.

## **Work with volunteers involves:**

- Recruitment and selection of suitable volunteers
- Matching the tasks with the abilities and personalities of the volunteers
- Instructing the volunteers so that they perform their tasks to the best of their abilities
- Giving special attention and incentives to volunteers
- Developing independence whilst defining limits.
- Encouraging the adoption of appropriate behavior (including dress code)

### ***Volunteers with Special Needs***

The volunteers with special needs are recruited by the trainers from amongst the graduates of the Sport and Recreation Center. These volunteers must take pleasure in giving, and must be prepared to adapt to the position of giving to others rather than receiving from others. Volunteers with special needs require the same training and incentives as other volunteers. However they require extra support and encouragement throughout the project. This requires careful planning and attention on the part of the trainers.

### ***Feedback:***

After meeting with parents it became apparent that the project succeeds in giving children and youth with special needs the ability to enjoy physical activity in the community, and not only in the protected confines of the Beit Issie Shapiro Sport and Movement Center. Most of the children experience increased motivation and improved motor skills. The encouragement of trainers and volunteers is vital to the success of the program, and the experience of being an individual amongst equals was comfortable for the youth and the parents. The parents recognized that the project gave them an opportunity to bring their children into the community in a way they could not have accomplished on their own

## **| Suggestions for the Future:**

1. Examine ways to integrate sport activities of youth with special needs, with youth from normative groups.
2. Encourage a desire for competition within the groups
3. Teach the youth skills to organize themselves at the beginning of the meeting
4. Introduce social activities of different kinds, such as an outing to a restaurant or a communal picnic. .

# Appendix 1

## *Extract from a letter from Tamar's mother*

In the beginning when Dekel told us of the idea that parents and children join in outings into the community, I felt a slight resistance to the idea. I felt so familiar, almost addicted to the meetings with the other parents during the times that our children were involved in activities in the fitness center. The idea to give up on this, even for one meeting, seemed too large to contemplate. I felt unwilling to disconnect from the warm and safe nest of the special supportive group which had become a precious asset in my life.

I was also worried as to how my daughter Tamar would react to taking walks outdoors as Tamar has very heightened auditory sensitivity to hooting cars and sometimes reacts with anger and outbursts.

The second outing was in the same spirit as the first, but more organized. The guys and girls wore T-shirts bought for the group with the help of a donation, and looked, in every respect, like a sporting team. The atmosphere was as good as the first time- even better, and the excitement and joy of the young people, the trainer and the volunteers spread from one participant to the other, and allowed Tamar once again to stand up to the difficulties with courage. This time there was loud hooting from the cars on the road. Tamar responded to this verbally and encouraged herself to overcome the noise and to confront it, and indeed succeeded to the very end of the activity.

It turned out that walking in a group is a completely different experience to walking alone or in pairs. I believe that the strength of the group is really what helped Tamar to overcome her problems with less difficulty, and that the experience was stronger than I had expected, both on the level of enjoyment and excitement that the two of us experienced , and also as an experience of success that was important for Tamar.

*Tamar's mother*

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**Beit Issie Shapiro impacts over 30,000 people every year and is Israel's leading innovator of new therapies, changing attitudes in society, advocating for better legislation, and sharing knowledge internationally through research and training.**

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