



**JEWISH
NATIONAL
FUND**

Your Voice in Israel

2012 YEAR IN REVIEW

2012 was the most successful campaign year in Jewish National Fund’s history, bringing in a record-breaking \$73 million. We could not have reached this milestone without the generosity of our supporters across the country and the dedication of our lay leaders and volunteers. Also this year, JNF was recognized with a four-star rating by Charity Navigator for its sound fiscal management, accountability, and transparency; received top ratings from the American Institute of Philanthropy and the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance; and was listed in *Consumers Digest’s* ranking of America’s top charities. We are very proud to be acknowledged for the responsible stewardship of our donors’ contributions.

With your support, JNF made a tangible difference in the lives of the people of Israel in 2012. In the Negev Desert, which represents 60% of Israel’s landmass but is home to just 8% of the population, JNF moved forward with its *Blueprint Negev* plan, a multifaceted, internationally recognized campaign to improve quality of life for all residents of the region and encourage a population shift away from crowded, expensive central Israel. To date, JNF has invested more than \$100 million in this initiative. In addition, a new plan focusing on the revitalization of northern Israel, called *Go North*, was launched.

JNF continued its leadership role in sustainable water management; made Israel safer by providing new equipment and trucks to firefighters; built playgrounds, synagogues, and community centers; planted millions of trees to beautify Israel’s landscape and improve its soil; supported agricultural research and development that enables Israeli farmers to stay competitive in the global market; offered therapeutic and rehabilitative services to people with special needs; and promoted tourism, recreation, and economic growth by creating parks and forests and preserving and developing historic sites. Thousands of children and young adults were connected to Israel and their heritage through JNF, the single-largest provider of Zionist education programs in the United States. And more than 3,000 people experienced the wonder of Israel on a JNF mission or tour.

This year JNF unveiled the results of a yearlong rebranding process, the culmination of research, focus groups, surveys, and interviews with lay leaders, staff, donors, and non-donors of all ages. With a new logo, tag line, and mission statement, JNF reintroduced itself as “Your Voice in Israel,” an articulation of the deep connection that it has always fostered between American Jews and the land and people of Israel.

The following pages give a closer look at some of our major accomplishments from 2012—all possible because of you.



BE'ER SHEVA RIVER PARK

Many years ago, JNF recognized the development and expansion of Be'er Sheva, the capital of the Negev, as the key to making the Negev an attractive place for a new generation of Israelis to call home. Its efforts in Be'er Sheva have changed the face of the city, and private investors and the Israeli government have followed suit, investing tens of millions of dollars in residential and commercial areas. In November, JNF was honored by the city of Be'er Sheva with the 2012 Be'er Sheva Lifetime Achievement Award, becoming the first organization outside of Be'er Sheva to receive this distinction.



The centerpiece of JNF's efforts in Be'er Sheva is the development of the 1,300-acre Be'er Sheva River Park, the largest metropolitan park in Israel. This innovative urban renewal project, modeled on the famous San Antonio River Walk and similar environmental reclamation projects, is becoming an anchor for tourism and commerce and transforming Be'er Sheva into a green, vibrant, modern city. Until 2000 the area surrounding the Be'er Sheva riverbed was used for illegal dumping and as a junkyard for old cars. Landscaped promenades, walking and bike trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, and restored historical sites now line the rehabilitated river. Over the past year some of the park's main attractions, all supported by JNF, began to take shape:

- Construction is progressing rapidly on the Danielle A. and Irving J. Grossman Amphitheatre, a **12,000-seat entertainment complex** that will be Israel's largest outdoor performance venue. The goal is to complete all work by May 2013, with a grand opening in June.



- **Abraham's Well**, a visitor center showcasing the life of the patriarch Abraham, is in the final stages of development. Supported by the estates of May Mann and Ella Rubinstein and the Florence Katz Trust, the center will finally harness the potential of a historical site with significance to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is expected to be a major tourist attraction and an economic boon to the city, drawing 100,000 visitors a year.



- Earthwork is underway at the site of the largest project within the park, a **23-acre man-made lake** that will be surrounded by 150 acres of parkland and ringed by a pedestrian and bike path, restaurants, shops, galleries, boat rentals, bird watching spots, and picnic areas. It will double as a reservoir, supplying recycled water to sustainably irrigate the park. This project has been spearheaded by JNF Greater New York.



- The **J. Lew Schepps Recognition Center** is being expanded. The new design of the plaza—which welcomes visitors to the Be'er Sheva River Park and honors major donors to *Blueprint Negev*—will include seating areas, water elements, and proper facilities for dedication ceremonies.

NEW NEGEV COMMUNITIES

A hallmark of JNF's *Blueprint Negev* campaign is the creation and expansion of new communities designed to attract young, energetic residents to the Negev and strengthen the economic and social fabric of the region. In 2012, some milestones in this effort included:

- Opening a new playground in Bnei Netzarim, a town in the Halutza region of the northwest Negev. The playground was a welcome addition to this community of 100 families, each with an average of six children. An addition to the playground is already in the works.



- Completing the **Robert and Shirley Levitt Synagogue in Carmit**, a new community being developed in the northern Negev. Carmit will be home to 2,500 families—a diverse population of new immigrants and native Israelis, both religious and secular.



- Completing a **community center in Merchav Am**, a growing Orthodox town 30 minutes south of Be'er Sheva. The center was supported by Andy and Jayne Klein, the Ralph and Shirley Klein family, the estates of Frank and Zelda B. Silverman, the Ben and Esther Rosenbloom Foundation, and the Harry and Harriet Grandis family.

REVITALIZING ESTABLISHED NEGEV COMMUNITIES

Building new communities is just one aspect of JNF's work to encourage population growth in the Negev; it goes hand-in-hand with initiatives to revitalize established cities, towns, and regions that have long been neglected. Development towns are being seeded with employment opportunities and are undergoing infrastructure upgrades, while kibbutzim and moshavim whose growth has stagnated are being bolstered.



- JNF's commitment to the **Central Arava**, a remote region along Israel's Jordanian border, continued in 2012 with the Central Arava 2020 Task Force traveling there to evaluate needs and determine where JNF's assistance can be most effective. Led by Beckie Fischer and Lauren Mescon, the task force works to support key projects that will help the Central Arava reach its goal of doubling its population by 2020. On November 15, after two years of planning, a cornerstone laying ceremony was held for the **Danielle A. and Irving J. Grossman Arava Medical Center**, which will serve the 3,700 local residents who until now have had to travel 80 miles to receive proper medical attention. The center is also being supported by the vision and generosity of Alan Fischer and Barbara Sommer. Construction is scheduled to start soon and will take an estimated 18-24 months to complete. JNF is working with Nefesh B'Nefesh to relocate two North American doctors to the Arava to staff the medical center.

- Work moved forward on the **upgrade of five flood-capturing reservoirs** in the Central Arava, which is not connected to Israel’s national water system and receives an annual rainfall of just one inch. Supported by Nancy Simches, the rehabilitation work includes infrastructure upgrades as well as the removal of silt that accumulates in the reservoirs after flooding. In addition to decreasing the reservoirs’ capacity and impacting water quality, this soil often contains dangerous land mines that have been swept there by floodwaters. Once the soil is removed and rid of mines, it is used to prepare new agricultural plots, enabling farming families to move to the Central Arava.

- JNF’s **Yerucham 2020 Task Force** was established in 2012 to focus on increasing the population of Yerucham. Led by Geri Shatz, the task force visited Yerucham in August to help the municipality prioritize its needs, which include rebranding itself as an attractive tourist site, retaining families and attracting new ones by assisting with innovative housing options, developing a first-rate school system, and many more. In August, Geri spent the day touring Yerucham with Israeli President Shimon Peres in honor of his 89th birthday. In the future, the task force plans to convene a roundtable for all of the ministries and organizations with interest in continuing Yerucham’s development.



- In Arad, JNF’s President’s Society Mission dedicated a skate park that has already become a favorite hangout for the town’s youth. A task force is being formed to focus on the needs of this development town as well.

- Construction was completed on **Yahel Park**, a five-acre tourist complex and park at the entrance to Kibbutz Yahel in the southern Arava. Supported by JNF through a lead gift from Jack Freeman, the park will create scores of jobs for kibbutz members and local residents and have a major impact on the Arava’s economy. JNF is also supporting the expansion of Kibbutz Yahel with the development of **39 new housing sites**.



- Construction began on a youth club in the northern Negev community of **Even Shmuel**, which was established in 1956 and has set a goal of absorbing 280 new families. Central to this plan is the creation of local institutions that will provide religious, community and cultural services to enhance the area’s appeal to new residents.

PROMOTING TOURISM IN THE NEGEV

Another key component of *Blueprint Negev* is harnessing the potential of tourist sites in the region. As part of this effort, construction began on the **Chudnow Visitor Center at Timna Park**. Located 17 miles north of Eilat, Timna is a red rock valley filled with extraordinary geological formations, ancient rock drawings, and remnants of the world’s oldest copper mines. JNF, together with the Chudnow family and other generous donors, has been instrumental in Timna’s development into a major tourist attraction.



GO NORTH

In August, 60 people gathered in Israel to offer their thoughts on JNF’s *Go North* campaign, a **strategic plan for the development and revitalization of northern Israel** led by Bud Levin, JNF Vice President of the Negev and Galil. The meeting brought together representatives from many organizations and non-profits already working in the Galilee as well as mayors and regional council heads. The ultimate goal of this collaborative effort is to attract 300,000 new residents to northern Israel, which represents 17% of the country.

WATER RENEWAL

The JNF Parsons Water Fund, a \$100 million initiative to increase Israel's supply of high-quality water, had numerous accomplishments in 2012:

- A new project called **MYWAS (Multi-Year Water Allocation System)** officially started in July. The goal of this national water management model is to achieve the most efficient water resource management possible. It incorporates demand functions by different water users, information on water infrastructure systems and their costs, and social values regarding water usage. Water management policies, such as water prices for farmers, can also be set with MYWAS.
- JNF signed on to support the **restoration of the Besor River**, a three-year transboundary project in conjunction with USAID and the European Union. The Center for Transboundary Water Management at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies will tackle the restoration of the polluted Besor River Drainage Basin, which originates in the West Bank near Hebron, flows southwest across the Green Line through Be'er Sheva, and enters the Mediterranean Sea in Gaza. The project brings together Israelis and Palestinians at a grassroots level as stakeholders outside of the political arena.



- The **Shamir Drills** project was completed, granting access to a unique new groundwater resource in northern Israel that is expected to increase Israel's annual water supply by 1.5%—the largest exploitation of natural underground water resources in the past decade. Water will be extracted from three drill sites reaching a depth of 4,500 feet and supplied year-round to farmers in the Galilee and Golan Heights, replacing the freshwater currently drawn from the Jordan River for irrigation. The initiative was made possible by a generous gift from the EGL Charitable Foundation.

- Construction began on the **Gomeh recycled water reservoir** near Kiryat Shemona, which will provide two million cubic meters of water to farming communities in northern Israel. Supported by Anita Gordon and family, the reservoir will be an important part of a comprehensive regional plan for water recycling.

- Upgrades began on the **water treatment center in Arara**, a Bedouin municipality in the Negev. Once operational, the plant will effectively deal with the town's wastewater as well as effluents from the nearby Nevatim Air Force Base. The IDF will pay the Arara municipality for use of the recycling plant, providing an economic benefit to the impoverished community. Treated water will be stored in a reservoir and allocated to farming communities in the area, as well as for a variety of water attractions in the Be'er Sheva River Park.

- Together with its partner, the Green Horizons youth movement, JNF operated a **rainwater harvesting education program** at 22 schools throughout Israel, empowering more than 4,000 students in grades 1-12 to use resources responsibly and be proactive about combating the water shortage. JNF plans to add four more schools to the program next year.



POSITIVELY ISRAEL

This year, JNF launched **Positively Israel**, an initiative to change the conversation about Israel and showcase the country's many contributions to the world. At positivelyisrael.org, visitors can learn about the different ways that Israel makes the world a better place and find resources to spread the message in their communities, including sample letters to their congresspeople, speakers to invite to their homes, synagogues, and schools, and door hangers to educate their neighbors. JNF is utilizing the resources of its various Zionist education programs to bring Positively Israel events to 50 colleges and universities around the country, and Chuck Fax, JNF's Vice President of Israel Action, is touring the U.S. speaking about Israel's achievements. In October, JNF co-sponsored the first-ever Broadening the Conversation conference with the Consulate General of Israel in New York. Please contact JNF if you would like to bring the Positively Israel message to your alma mater.

FRIENDS OF ISRAEL FIREFIGHTERS

As the official U.S. fundraising arm of Friends of Israel Firefighters (FIF), JNF supplies underfunded fire departments across Israel with urgently needed equipment and fire trucks. This support proves vital during times of calm and times of conflict, when firefighters are called upon to respond to routine emergencies as well as rocket and terror attacks. To date, JNF's efforts and donor support have helped purchase almost 150 state-of-the-art fire trucks, build several fire stations, and buy millions of dollars of new life-saving equipment and protective gear. In 2012 alone:

- Eighteen fire trucks and \$500,000 worth of equipment were donated.
- The Miami-Dade community began fundraising for a **new fire station in the Carmel**, site of the worst forest fire in Israel's history. The 2010 tragedy highlighted the critical need for a central fire station in the Carmel to reduce the response time for fire and rescue incidents in the region. As of now, the closest fire station is 20 minutes away in Haifa.



- JNF funded a **Fire Scouts volunteer program** for 350 high school students in five locations throughout Israel. After the Carmel fire, JNF and FIF established a fund to revitalize and expand the 50-year-old program in memory of Elad Riven, the 16-year-old scout who died in the fire. As part of the program, a **garden was dedicated in memory of Elad** at the Reali School in Haifa, where he had been a student, and a **new scouts clubhouse** was built at the Beit Shemesh fire station. In the future, JNF hopes to expand the program beyond the initial five regions.

GREEN INNOVATIONS

As an innovator in ecological development and a pioneer in forest creation, JNF has planted more than 240 million trees in Israel, providing lush belts of green covering more than 250,000 acres. JNF's parks and forests are enjoyed by millions of people each weekend and holiday. Through agricultural infrastructure development, research, and soil conservation, JNF has been able to create and extend the presence of fertile land where there was once endless desert.

- In 2012, earthwork began at the site of the **Wadi Attir** project, a sustainable desert farming operation in the Negev. An initiative of the Bedouin community, Wadi Attir showcases a breakthrough model of sustainability practices in an arid environment that is replicable locally as well as in other regions. It is designed to leverage traditional Bedouin values, aspirations, and experience with sustainability principles, modern-day science and cutting-edge technologies.

- Together with the American Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (ASPNI), JNF supported **four ecological projects in Jerusalem** to make the city greener and engage citizens in safeguarding the environment. Projects include the creation of a protected urban park in the Gazelle Valley, the establishment of a wildflower sanctuary and a community garden, and the overhaul of the Jerusalem Green map website, which highlights natural, environmental, and cultural sites and activities in Jerusalem.



- JNF continued to support active **coral reef restoration** through the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) in Haifa, helping to address the rapid degradation of coral reefs worldwide over the past three decades.

EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

As the single-largest provider of Zionist education programs in the U.S., JNF offers myriad ways to connect young American Jews to Israel, from trips to Israel to b'nai mitzvah projects to advocacy programs on college campuses. In addition, JNF supports leadership development and environmental education programs in Israel.



- Four hundred 18-30-year-olds volunteered in Israel on JNF's **Alternative Winter and Spring Break** trips in 2012. To be eligible, participants must raise at least \$1,100 using an online fundraising tool to reach out to family and friends. The trip is then subsidized by JNF donors. In total, participants raised \$350,000 this year. Their community service projects included preparing land for urban farming in Be'er Sheva, painting subsidized and rent-controlled housing complexes, and collecting surplus crops for soup kitchens.

- JNF sent 1,200 young adults to Israel for a free 10-day trip on **Taglit-Birthright Israel**.
- More than 300 new students registered for JNF's **Plant Your Way to Israel™** program and 1,600 students actively raised funds for a trip to Israel. As participants collect money for JNF's forestry projects, half of each donation is placed in a special account that can be used to fund any trip to Israel. This year the program brought in \$132,000.



- In the spring, 10 academics from colleges and universities around the U.S. participated in the fourth annual **Faculty Fellowship Summer Institute in Israel**, supported by Monroe and Peggy Wingate. Sponsored by JNF, the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Media Watch International, the program links scholars from diverse disciplines with their Israeli counterparts for the purpose of initiating exchanges, collaborations, and joint research. It has created a cadre of new advocates for Israel who are committed to changing the conversation about Israel once they return to their campuses. More than 50 fellows have participated in the program since its inception.

- Twenty college students participated in JNF's first annual **Caravan Leadership Mission to Israel**, a highly-selective 10-day program for top student leaders of all faiths who have never visited Israel. Sponsored by Joan and Sam Ginsburg and the Milton and Beatrice Shapiro Scholarship Fund, this important educational experience includes touring, meeting political, cultural and community leaders and exploring Israel's diverse democracy. A new group of students was selected to go on the second trip, which will take place in the beginning of January.

- In November, JNF and the **Arava Institute for Environmental Studies** celebrated the grand opening of a new environmentally friendly dormitory on the school's campus at Kibbutz Ketura. Supported by JNF Mountain States, the dormitory accommodates 32 additional students and features a student lounge donated by the estate of Danielle A. and Irving J. Grossman.



- Nearly 700 high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors attended the **Alexander Muss High School in Israel (AMHSI)**, an academic adventure where the country of Israel is transformed into a living classroom. AMHSI's new campus at the Eshel Hanassi youth village in the Negev welcomed its first group of students this year, and five AMHSI scholarships were awarded by the Milton and Beatrice Shapiro Scholarship Fund.



- More than 1,450 children participated in the **Green Horizons** leadership development program in 2012, 250 of whom received partial or full tuition subsidies. The program—primarily funded by JNF and KKL, with additional funding from participants and the Israeli Ministry of Education—utilizes hiking and nature excursions to build interpersonal and leadership skills and foster a strong connection to the land of Israel. Over its 40-year history, Green Horizons has educated more than 20,000 young Israelis. Alumni include top-ranked IDF officials, political figures, and some of the country’s most successful executives and professionals, such as the chairman of the Israeli Bar Association, the mayor of Akko, the Israeli Ambassador to Nepal, and the CEO of Avis.

PROJECT: BASEBALL

JNF’s **Project: Baseball** is a campaign to foster the growth of baseball in Israel, where the number of fans and players is on the rise but adequate fields are in short supply. It involves building state-of-the-art baseball and softball fields throughout the country as well as teaching the fundamentals of the game to Israeli youth through little leagues, summer camps, and clinics. In 2012:

- A soccer field at **Moshav Ma’or** in central Israel was converted into a **softball field** through the generous support of Marcy S. Levin in memory of Alvin M. Levin. A “Ball and Glove” little league program, also funded by Marcy Levin, was established to foster a love of the game among the children of the region and ensure that the fields built by JNF are used and enjoyed.



- JNF was a proud sponsor of **Team Israel’s** bid for a spot in the World Baseball Classic (WBC), an international event held every four years by Major League Baseball. The team, led by former MLB catcher Brad Ausmus, won two out of three games in the October qualifying round but failed to secure a spot in the tournament. Nevertheless, its inclusion in the qualifiers was an acknowledgement of baseball’s increasing popularity in a country better known for its avid soccer and basketball fans and a huge boost for the sport’s future in Israel.

- Planning began for a **minor league-style baseball complex** in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ra’anana.

HERITAGE SITES

JNF is committed to the preservation of historical sites associated with Israel’s struggle for independence and ensuring that the stories behind these sites are properly documented and told for generations to come.

- A cornerstone ceremony was held this spring for the **Gush Etzion Visitor Center**, a memorial to the heroic defenders of the Etzion Bloc during the War of Independence. The existing museum will undergo an extensive renovation and expansion—supported by the Gurtman and Fischer families—that will transform it into a modern, sophisticated, interactive visitor center.

- The **Bruce K. Gould Amphitheatre** was dedicated at Ammunition Hill, site of the decisive Six-Day War battle that led to the reunification of Jerusalem. The ceremony was part of the official commemoration of the 45th anniversary of the city’s reunification.

- Renovations were made to the entranceway of the **Atlit Detention Camp**, enhancing the visitor experience at this fascinating museum that tells the story of illegal immigration to Palestine from 1939 to 1948. A highlight of the Atlit experience is a replica of a typical boat used to transport immigrants to Israel, donated by Sy Israel.



INCLUSION & THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

JNF is dedicated to ensuring that no member of Israeli society is left behind. Through a variety of initiatives, JNF provides cutting-edge rehabilitative services, special education, and medical care for people with special needs and makes its forests, parks, picnic areas, playgrounds, nature trails, and recreation facilities inclusive to visitors of all ability levels.



- In 2012, the **Aleh Negev** rehabilitative village had 133 full-time residents, 250 employees, and 120 regular volunteers, and provided 6,000 outpatient sessions to residents of the Negev. Construction began on two residential buildings as part of a campaign to accept 100 new residents, and plans were also developed for a rehabilitation hospital, the first of its kind in the Negev.

- JNF continued to support the activities of **LOTEM**, which offers field trips, nature excursions, and creative workshops for people of all ages with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities, at-risk

youth, and mothers and children living in shelters. With JNF's assistance, LOTEM served 22,000 participants during the past year.

- JNF continued its support of the **Red Mountain Therapeutic Riding Center (RMTRC)** at Kibbutz Grofit. The women of JNF's Sapphire Society provided scholarships to RMTRC's "Day of Studies" program for children with mental and physical disabilities from kindergarten through high school. JNF's assistance ensures that this unique rehabilitative therapy is available to children in need whose families are unable to afford the treatment.



- JNF continued its commitment to building **inclusive parks** throughout Israel.

EMERGENCY RELIEF DURING GAZA CONFLICT



Within hours of the escalation of violence between Gaza and Israel in November, JNF jumped into action to provide relief to communities in rocket range, raising more than \$1.2 million. With wonderful staff in Israel and committed partner organizations, those funds allowed JNF to give more than 15,000 residents from southern Israel opportunities to relax, escape the chaos and brave the conflict:

- The **Sderot Indoor Recreation Center** was kept open around the clock, serving as a safe haven for 350-500 children and adults each day.

- Free trips were arranged to attractions outside of the fire zone, and JNF hosted 300 children for a movie in its Jerusalem office building. Together with the Society for Preservation of Israel Heritage Sites (SPIHS), JNF opened more than 50 historical sites for 5,000 residents of the Negev, including the Ayalon Institute and Atlit, and arranged special tours and activities at the Neot Kedumim biblical reserve, Ammunition Hill in Jerusalem, and Timna Park near Eilat.



- JNF coordinated activities with **LOTEM** for people with special needs from southern Israel, and worked with **Green Horizons, Shorashim, and AMHSI** to organize nature excursions for children in Jerusalem. Groups also visited Neot Kedumim, Ayalon Institute, City of David Visitor’s Center, and The Israel Museum, and nearly 100 children slept at a camp in **Mitzpe Ramon**, giving them respite from the rocket attacks.



- JNF purchased toiletries and food for the **250 firefighters in southern Israel** who worked around the clock to save lives as well as for their 750 children, boosting their morale and letting them know they were not alone.



- **The Central Arava**, an area that was relatively far from the fire zone, took in families living in rocket range with the help of JNF.

While this list is extensive, it represents just a fraction of what we were able to accomplish together over the past year. If you would like more information, please contact your local JNF office at 888.JNF.0099. Thank you again for your support of the land and people of Israel.



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