

THE YA'AL CLUB



JERUSALEM...YA'AL VOLUNTEERS AT HADASSAH HOSPITAL PREPARE POSTERS AND DECORATIONS, AND MAKE TOYS AND GAMES FOR HOLIDAYS, BIRTHDAYS AND EVERY OCCASION THAT CHEERS UP PATIENTS IN ADDITION TO THEIR OTHER ACTIVITIES.

JERUSALEM -- Volunteers serving in Ya'al, the Women's Auxiliary Service of the Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center in Jerusalem, range in age from schoolchildren to retirees; they include Jews and Christians, groups and individuals, men and women -- all united by a common commitment to help the sick.

One of the most successful have been schoolchildren from a deprived area. Last year when Dalia Grossman, chairman of Ya'al, was asked whether a group of 17 girls from the school in that area could volunteer one morning a week she was reluctant to accept them because another such group had not worked out.

However, after discussing the project with the principal, Mrs. Grossman agreed to give it another try. The girls came with their teacher and visited every department in the hospital. "As they took on their assignments we watched them," Mrs. Grossman said. "They were a great success, and we realized that this volunteer work is not only educational for them, but it contributes to their own self-esteem because it gives them the opportunity to contribute to the community."

As a result of the successful pilot project Hadassah has increased the number of school volunteers, and serving in Ya'al is now officially recognized by the school as part of the curriculum, because of the benefits to the students.

Another group of youngsters, from a religious school, assist during the rush hours of 8 to 10, one morning a week.

There is a daily corps of 100 Ya'al Juniors who help from 4 to 6 every afternoon: They read to the blind, feed those who need assistance, play with the children, and do a host of other things to fill in for the Ya'al Seniors who must return home to prepare dinner for their families.

Ya'al volunteer services include helping patients to adjust to the new and perhaps frightening

atmosphere of a hospital. They write letters, make telephone calls, and even make toys. A library division provides books in many languages. Those volunteers who cannot be physically active roll bandages and prepare other items of equipment. Ya'al runs two gift shops and a cafeteria, and circulates a trolley with toiletries, writing equipment, confectionary and other items in the mornings, and with tea, coffee, cold drinks and snacks in the afternoons after the cafeteria has closed.

Adult Groups Are Doing a Fine Job.

There is a group of Pentacostal Christians from East Jerusalem who administer to cancer patients. Even though they speak very little Hebrew, their loving kindness overcomes all language barriers. They sit with the patients while they are tensely awaiting radiation treatments, serve them tea, hold their hand and chat to them.

"Of course, they do not proselytize," Mrs. Grossman says.

Geriatric Patients Have Outings.

Mary Vosen, former chairman of Ya'al, heads a group of retired persons who volunteer in the Geriatrics Department.

In close cooperation with the head nurse and the socialworker they provide as many experiences to the elderly patients as possible. They take them on outings in wheelchairs into the hospital gardens, or through the corridors in bad weather. All holidays are celebrated, and on birthdays their families are invited to join the festivities, making it an important event. Twice a week a volunteer who is an expert on the Bible holds a study group.

Men Work as Well as Women!

Men play an important role -- even though it is still called a "women's auxiliary." Some of them are new immigrants, often Americans, and others are retired. Those who knew Hebrew help at patient reception and in filing. Some work in the pharmacy; and other wheel the trolleys.

No Task Is Too Small.

Mrs. Grossman tells of a little boy, seven, who had been hospitalized for several months and had fallen behind in his studies. The hospital's socialworker asked Ya'al for help, and it arranged for a Ya'al Junior boy to go to the child's house three times a week for tutoring.

In another instance, a young mother had a child in the Pediatric Surgery Department for an extended period and was exhausted from spending long hours at his bedside. One of the volunteers, a retired pediatrician, was sent to relieve the mother who was overcome: The doctor had been her doctor when she was a child! The mother now takes off time to rest while this doctor takes care of her child.

Even the volunteers become patients: "One of the Ya'al old-timers became depressed after surgery and chemotherapy. Her volunteer associates immediately involved her with helping other patients in the Oncology Department. The treatment worked, and a few days later she admitted that helping even more seriously ill patients had given her courage.

"Volunteers give with a full heart," Mrs.

Grossman concludes, "but they also receive, for in addition to the joy of giving, they experience the pleasure of good fellowship with each other in a spirit which binds old and young, and people of many different backgrounds. In fact, Hadassah volunteers boast that they belong to a very exclusive club -- the Ya'al Club!"

RELIGIOUS LEADERS MEET

WASH. (WNS) -- Ten Orthodox rabbis and 15 leaders of the Christian Evangelical movement met for nearly two hours at the Israel Embassy here and emerged expressing a "communality" of interest in support of the State of Israel.

The event was called an "historic get-together" by Rabbi Abner Weiss, of New York, chairman of the Israel commission of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), the Orthodox rabbinical group. He explained that while Jews, including some rabbis, have participated in joint meetings with Evangelicals in recent years, this was the first under the "official framework" of a rabbinical organization.

At a press conference held at the Shoreham Hotel after the Embassy meeting, Weiss said the RCA had initiated the meeting in an effort to develop a joint agenda with the Evangelicals. While none was developed at this meeting, it will be at future meetings in order to demonstrate grass roots support for Israel, Weiss said.

Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, president of the RCA, said the two groups feel they can "create significant, positive real pressure" among grass roots religious Americans so that the

White House, where, he said, President Reagan was a "real friend of Israel" and the State Department "will respond as it should."

Ed McAteer, president of the Religious Round Table, said Evangelicals support Israel not only for "spiritual" reasons but because it is in the interests of the United States to do so. Both the Jews and the Christians at the press conference voiced concern at what they said was "pressure" by the Reagan Administration on Israel over Lebanon and the West Bank.



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