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Page 1: Home page

MAGEN Center: A center for empowerment of the body and mind using the Social-Emotional Learning (S.E.L.) approach

MAGEN offers a response to children and teens who live on the margins of society and who may be at risk.

MAGEN transforms risk into an opportunity through empowerment of "mind, body, and soul" by focusing on the individuals’ strengths and by helping them form a stable Israeli-Jewish identity.

We believe that the secret to a happy and fulfilled life is the ability to receive what one needs psychologically from one’s immediate social environment. Through the “Greenhouse” method, which is designed to satisfy one’s psychological needs for connection, self-efficacy, meaning, and enjoyment, individuals can effectively face challenges, realize their inherent potential, and fulfill their dreams.

The center offers a variety of programs and activities to empower participants.

Programs:

1. The MAGEN program for empowering and assisting youth through informal education
2. The MAGEN approach at the Israeli Academy for Social-Emotional Learning

* Training educators and caregivers in the MAGEN approach
* Development of enrichment and learning materials in line with the MAGEN approach
* Teacher-training on how to create a "school for the soul"

1. Human Empowerment Clinic using the MAGEN approach

* **About Our Approach**

Many research studies indicate the essentiality of "social-emotional learning" as a part of education, beginning in early childhood. Accordingly, the MAGEN program is grounded in the five principles of social-emotional learning:

1. Identifying one’s own feelings

2. Identifying the feelings of others

3. Effective coping with emotions

4. Effective coping in social situations

5. Solving problems effectively and responsibly

We developed the MAGEN program based on these five principles, with the aim of empowering children and teens to best adapt to life in Israeli society.

MAGEN is an acronym for the Hebrew words for mind, body, and soul (*moach, guf,* and *nefesh*), which are the three levels at which empowerment takes place.

The name points to the holistic nature of the approach, which utilizes a person’s diverse strengths for the sake of psychological empowerment and optimizing social integration.

MAGEN is also an ecological approach, in the sense that it is reflected in all spheres of the child's environment, beginning with his/her inner world and extending to interactions between the child and the environment.

* **Who We Are:**

A group of professional caregivers and educators who believe that the "goal" of education is to address children’s psychological/emotional needs so that they can develop a healthy self-image and attain achievements and happiness.

Experience shows that Western society in general, and the education system in particular, emphasizes achievement as a supreme value. Despite paying lip service to mental health, addressing emotional needs is not emphasized in the education system. As a result, we have difficulty not only in achieving excellence but also in creating a society of individuals who enjoy a sense of mental well-being.

• **Dr. Simcha (Stuart) Chesner** - Founder and Professional Director of the MAGEN Center. A resident of Ma'ale Adumim, Israel, Dr. Chesner is married to Rachel and has six children. He holds a PhD in Psychology and is a senior lecturer. He established an educational network for children with special needs. He is the author of the bestselling book *The Child Within the Armor*, which describes the challenges facing parents and educators of the current generation. Previously, he developed a specialized approach to treating Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

• **Renana Alami** - Director of the MAGEN Center. Renana lives in Ma'ale Adumim, Israel, is married to Dvir and has three children. She holds a BA in informal education and a teaching certificate, with 10 years of experience in counseling and mentoring at-risk youth and managing educational projects, for youth in general and for at-risk youth in particular. She has worked with the Ethiopian community in Ma’ale Adumim for about a decade.

• **Raya Zauda** – Educational Counselor, Mentor, and Alumni Coordinator. Raya resides in Ma'ale Adumim, Israel. She holds a BA in occupational therapy and has worked for many years with the Ethiopian community in Ma'aleh Adumim. For her National Service, she served as the head of the branch of the "Bnei Akiva" youth movement in Katzrin, Israel. She has experience coordinating projects in informal education.

• **Elisheva Polinsky** - Educational Counselor, Mentor, and Project Coordinator. A resident of Ma'ale Adumim, Israel, Elisheva immigrated to Israel at age 8 from New York. She holds a BA in special education and communication. Recently, she has worked in various frameworks for special education and behavioral disorders, as well as in a post-hospitalization settings.

• **Tal Diamant** - Educational Counselor, Mentor, and Coordinator of Therapeutic Cooking Activities. Tal resides in Jerusalem and holds a BA in special education and communication. For her National Service, she served as the head of the branch of the "Bnei Akiva" youth movement in Yeruham, Israel.

• **Shalom Guyat** - Educational Counselor, Mentor, and Employment Coordinator. A resident of Ma'ale Adumim, Israel, Shalom is married to Nava and has four children. He holds a BA in Education and an MA in Educational Counseling. He has extensive experience in formal and informal education and in working with at-risk youth.

• **Yael Hayun** - Educational Counselor and Mentor.

• **Renana Melamed** - Educational Counselor and Mentor. Renana holds a BA in Education and a teaching certificate. Her experience is in formal and informal education, with an emphasis on working with at-risk youth. In the past, she served in various supervision capacities in informal education for at-risk populations.

• **Dr. Reuven Ben Haim** - Head Chef in the Therapeutic Kitchen and Therapeutic Cooking Instructor. A resident of Ma'ale Adumim, Israel, Dr. Ben Haim is married to Michal and the father of five children. He holds a BA in archeology, a teaching certificate, and an MA in education. He is currently completing a PhD in education at Hebrew University. He is one of the founders of the Na'ale program. For around ten years, he worked as the principal of a primary and secondary school. He is a lecturer at Levinsky College with the “Teach First Israel” program, is director of practical training at the Jerusalem College’s Ramim Program (Torah studies), and has worked as a teacher for the past 13 years.

• **Mulo Katla** – Soccer coach. A resident of Ma'ale Adumim, Israel, Mulo is married to Mazi and father of one child. He immigrated from Ethiopia at the age of 15. He serves as a mentor for at-risk youth in the city of Ma'ale Adumim.

**Page Three: Programs**

1. **The MAGEN Youth Program**

**MAGEN Program**

**Mission Statement:** The natural essence of a person is a combination of the spiritual and physical. A person’s psyche naturally adapts to the world according to the laws of natural selection. The spiritual soul transcends natural selection and directs a person towards a goal that is beyond the limits of their egocentric physical reality.

**Vision:** Integration of at-risk youth into Israeli society can best be achieved through self-empowerment and by strengthening their sense of national and communal belonging by engaging in three key areas: mind, body, and soul.

**Goals:**

1. To develop each individual’s awareness of their own physical and spiritual strengths.

2. To develop each individual’s ability to recognize the physical and spiritual strengths of other people.

3. To teach skills that enable these strengths to be exercised in a positive way.

To teach skills that enable the individual to choose his or her path according to the insights described in Objectives 1-3.

**Objectives:**

1. Empower and nurture students’ strengths and improve their self-image.

2. Improve learning skills and educational integration.

3. Improve economic security.

4. Strengthen sense of belonging with one’s community and connection with one’s roots.

The MAGEN program is beginning its third year of activity as a pioneering program for social-emotional learning in the Israeli education system. The program is designed for students in grades 7 through 12 who require socio-emotional assistance beyond what formal schools have the means to provide. MAGEN students experience a program that addresses their mind, body, and soul, and offers intensive training to enable them to function optimally within and outside of the school setting.

Program Components:

1. Individual meetings with a MAGEN counselor, a professional in the field of informal education who are closely supervised by Dr. Simcha Chesner, a clinical psychologist and founder of the holistic youth program.
2. Liaison between MAGEN instructors and the school's educational and therapeutic staff, in order to enhance students’ functioning within the school framework.
3. Group meetings on "identity formation." Students participate in a series of sessions during which they are exposed to role models and introduced to insights geared towards developing a healthy and stable personal identity.
4. Identification and development of students’ individual strengths. The participant, together with the instructor, identifies an area of strength and receives training, enrichment, and practice in this area through weekly meetings with experts in the relevant field. Areas in which MAGEN students will participate this year include soccer, athletics, off-road cycling, dance, cooking, and art.
5. Developing opportunities for beneficial employment. Through partnership with business owners in the Ma'ale Adumim region, MAGEN students over 16 years of age are provided with work opportunities in order to help them financially, under reasonable conditions that do not impair their ability to function as students. In addition, MAGEN students attend seminars and workshops on essential skills to help them succeed in employment and financial management.

In the past year, MAGEN established a “social restaurant” setting and sold food at public events to help fund program activities and allow trainees to earn a salary as they learn the basics of business management.

1. Youth leadership - MAGEN students in grades 10-12 participate in the program's training by acting as mentors for the younger, middle-school groups, working in partnership with the program’s educational and care staff.
2. MAGEN Alumni - We at MAGEN continue to accompany program graduates in their pre-military preparatory programs and their subsequent military service. During the preparatory program, we provide monthly scholarships to graduates of MAGEN for the entire period.
3. Training workshops for parents of program participants and guidance for families in need, new citizens, immigrants, etc.
4. Dr. Chesner and the MAGEN staff offer workshops and training on the topic of social-emotional learning using the MAGEN method to school staff members, by request of the principal.

**MAGEN’s Unique Approach**

MAGEN is a holistic program that addresses the child as an individual and also provides services to the entire school and community environment. The MAGEN program provides solutions for teachers, parents, and children to work together, using a common language, that empowers the student spiritually and offers a path towards achievement and excellence, rather than one of risk.

All activities of MAGEN are conducted under the professional supervision of Dr. Simcha Chesner, a clinical psychologist and the founder of the program.

1. **The Israeli Academy of Emotional Social Learning**

Studies have shown that when a school or other educational setting adopts a social-emotional learning program, the environment within the educational setting improves significantly. There is a decline in incidents of verbal and physical violence, greater collaboration, more connection between staff and students / participants, and a significant increase in the level of happiness among students and staff in the educational setting. Furthermore, there is an 11 percent improvement in the level of academic achievement.

Training courses for Teachers and Educational Professionals on the topic:

"Transforming School: From Achievement Factory to a Place for Psychological Empowerment"

Mission Statement: The purpose of school is to empower students’ mind and soul. The student’s basic psychological needs must be fulfilled: connection, self-efficacy, meaning, and enjoyment (the “Greenhouse” method).

Vision: Schools focus on psychologically empowering students as an essential goal. Learning methods and pedagogic skills are tools for empowering students.

Goals:

1. To develop the school’s awareness of experiences that satisfy students’ emotional and psychological needs.

2. To develop the strengths of the educational staff in order to create a system that addresses the emotional and psychological needs of their students.

3. To teach skills that allow educators to impart the material using methods that empower students' psychological abilities.

Objectives:

1. Design a work environment that allows each team member to recognize his/her own strengths.

2. Design a work environment that allows each team member to utilize his/her strengths.

3. Design a learning environment that allows teaching and learning to serve as a therapeutic tool that strengthens the students psychologically.

4. Design a learning environment that leads to improved achievement.

1. Hotline – MAGEN: A Voice from the Heart

We recently upgraded the “Heart of Our Ancestors” program, which has a new name "MAGEN: A Voice from the Heart".

The phone number for parents is: 0522944164

Calls to this phone number are answered by a psychologist / social worker.

The primary purpose of this hotline is to listen to the caller and evaluate the seriousness of the situation. In some cases, an immediate solution can be offered over the phone, while in other cases, referral is made for continued professional care.

1. MAGEN News
2. Our Library:

*The Child Within the Armor*

*The Concentration Coordinator*

*School for Empowerment*

1. Donations
2. Contact Us

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