



לשכת ראש העיר
Office of the Mayor

June 10, 2024

Recommendation letter for the “Am haZikaron” event “My Jewish Roots” for evacuated individuals in Israel

On 15 April 2024 we had a pleasure to host the event “My Jewish Roots” by “Am haZikaron” Institute for Science, Culture and Heritage of the Jewish People. The event took place in the hotel “Prima Park” in Jerusalem where the majority of the participants resided. These individuals live there after evacuation from their homes in the North of Israel due to the ongoing war. The rest of the participants were also evacuated individuals who lived in another hotel, called “Ein Karem”, and were brought to “Prima Park” for the event. It is hardly possible to convey all the gratitude that these people felt for the workshop. Many of them said that this was the best event that they had during the half a year that they spent in the hotel.

The individuals present at the workshop were evacuated from the Israeli Northern towns of Kiryat Shmona and Shlomi. Some of them were urgently evacuated and put in the vehicle when they were taking out garbage. By the time of “My Jewish Roots” event, these evacuated, senior, people lived in the hotel for half a year, detached from their homes and not having much to do. It is well-known that a large number of such individuals face psychological problems and depression which makes it especially significant to find for them an engaging occupation. “My Jewish Roots” fit ideally!

The first hour of the event – the interactive performance involving various scenes from the millennia of Jewish history – made these senior people

laugh and jump as if they were young again. They participated actively and enjoyed their interaction with the actors, Gennady Yusim and Maria Belkin, so much that they requested the continuation. I responded to this request, and organized a cultural evening for them where they successfully met the actors separately on May 28 in the same location. The main gem of the evening was the family history part conducted by Ms. Nelly Rosenberg. It engaged everyone most strongly. These elder people born in the former Soviet Union, many of whom lived in Israel for about 30 years, for the first time in their lives were discovering their families' Jewish past which was taken from them by the Soviet authorities and which they did not know about: the shtetls in which their families lived in the 19th century, the noble Rabbinical roots of many of them, completely surprising Sephardic origin of some of them, and finally, for some, - descent from King David! We were in a different world during the workshop and we wanted to stay in this world.

There are no words strong enough to recommend the event "My Jewish Roots". It takes a completely fresh outlook on Jewishness, which fits Soviet Jews perfectly. It engages, it teaches, it makes people laugh and cry. We cordially thank "Am haZikaron" Institute for this unforgettable event in our lives and hope that we will have a chance to interact in the future.

With warm wishes,

Advisor of the Mayor of
Jerusalem for Aliya and
Integration



Elena Zharovsky