

בית התפוצות
מוזיאון העם היהודי
BEIT HATFUTSOT
THE MUSEUM OF THE
JEWISH PEOPLE



Jewish Identity Programs For IDF Soldiers and Officers

"Israeli Society was created from the stories of numerous communities that arrived from different cultures, yet were rooted in their Jewish heritage. In the Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot, and in the framework of the Koret International School for Jewish Peoplehood within the walls of the Museum, soldiers are given an exceptional opportunity to experience an exciting and inspiring encounter with their families' roots and heritage. This meeting strengthens their Jewish identity, and their deep connection to the Jewish homeland.

The youths of the Jewish people serving shoulder to shoulder in the Israel Defense Forces are exposed to and united by the intensity of the Nation's Story which they experience at Beit Hatfutsot.

Thanks to this encounter, the security forces become aware of their national mission in safeguarding and defending the State of Israel, by strengthening their sense of belonging and mutual commitment. I consider it a national duty to afford all soldiers the opportunity to visit Beit Hatfutsot at least once, and discover their family and nation's history, via a powerful and impressive program. They then return to their respective units with a better understanding of their partnership in the fate and destiny of the Jewish people, and are more determined to become active participants."

Major General (Ret.) Eitan Ben-Eliahu

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Beit Hatfutsot – The Museum of the Jewish People

Beit Hatfutsot-The Museum of the Jewish People, is more than just a museum.

A global center for Jewish communities, Beit Hatfutsot provides visitors with a deep understanding of Jewish Peoplehood. Our mission is to promote a sense of belonging, strengthen identity and perpetuate our rich heritage through engaging and dynamic programs for individuals and groups alike, within Israel and throughout the world.

From its inception in 1978, Beit Hatfutsot has been telling the extraordinary and unique story of the Jewish people, exposing visitors of every age and background to an incomparable narrative that spans 4,000 years. The Core Exhibition takes guests on a journey across eras and lands while celebrating the countless diverse contributions of world Jewry. Those who tour the museum are inspired to explore and discover the many ways in which they, too, are part of the story. With 200,000 visitors annually, we strive to present all our stories in a manner that strengthens Jewish identity. Our educational initiatives seek to connect Jews from various lands and cultures while embracing the value of the individual experience.

In 2005, the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) designated Beit Hatfutsot “The National Center for Jewish Communities in Israel and around the world.” A home for all Jewish communities and individuals, the Museum of the Jewish people invites visitors from all over the world to discover what being Jewish has meant in different times and cultures, and to celebrate what it means today.

The Koret International School for Jewish Peoplehood

The Koret International School for Jewish Peoplehood at Beit Hatfutsot educates towards a sense of belonging and commitment to the Jewish people, rooted in inspiring educational content, and impactful enough to build meaningful change across the diverse global Jewish family. Innovative and inclusive, the Koret School is the sole educational center anywhere in the world focused centrally on the experience of being a part of the Jewish people, in all its depth and diversity.

Faced with a growing global disconnect that divides Jews - geographically, religiously and culturally –The Koret School offers a wide range of creative educational programs, all built to emphasize the unifying elements and common denominators shared by Jews from all corners of the world. Through this, we strive to **promote a substantive, impassioned and shared vision of Jewish life, in which the entire Jewish people** feels connected, validated and engaged.

The Koret School works in cooperation with the Israeli Ministry of Education, multiple teacher training institutes, the School of Education at Tel Aviv University and dozens of Jewish educational groups around the world. On an annual basis, the Koret School touches on the lives of over 90,000 students,

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educators, community leaders and program participants, with bold plans to grow this figure in the years to come.

The Koret School within Beit Hatfutsot

Established in 2006, the Koret School has served as the in-house educational wing of Beit Hatfutsot, dedicated to cultivating a sense of belonging, commitment and identification with the Jewish people.

At its core, the Koret School is the scalability and implementation arm of Beit Hatfutsot - now re-imagined as the Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot - designed to realizing the museum's core mission:

"To forge a path for renewed connections across the Jewish people through a diverse, innovative celebration of 4,000 years of Jewish life, culture and history, engaging to those of any age, background or lifestyle."

Essentially, while the physical centerpiece of the Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot will be its new three-floor core exhibition, it's through the Koret School that the Museum's values are transmitted globally, leaving a profound impact on the Jewish people today.

The Mission and Vision for IDF Programs at Beit Hatfutsot

Soldiers, Cadets, Officers

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers are at a critical stage and juncture in their identity development. When they begin their military service, similar to many young Jewish people their age worldwide, many of them, both immigrants and native Israelis, are somewhat detached from their Jewish Identity.

This disturbing trend has definitely been noted and is of great concern to Israel's security establishment. Israel's National Security Council recently issued a report stating that the lack of identification with the Jewish people on the part of young Israelis is a strategic threat to the Jewish state. Indeed, the security establishment today recognizes the need to strengthen Jewish identity as not only critical to preserving Judaism in the modern age but as inherent to the security of Israel.

The vision of the Koret School points to three opportunities during an individual's life span for engagement at Beit Hatfutsot:

- As a student or youth movement trainee, he is exposed for the first time to his family's roots and heritage and to his Jewish identity, resulting in a strengthened connection with the Jewish people.

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- As a soldier in the IDF, he deepens his knowledge of his nation's heritage. He is exposed to the power of the National Story, which strengthens the bond with peers in his army unit and with military service in general.
- As an adult, he understands his responsibilities in addition to his active involvement, both personal and practical, in maintaining and ensuring the continuation of the Jewish story

We believe that the most opportune time for visiting the Museum is during a soldier's army service. It is a most crucial period and leaves a profound impact. We see it as a must for every officer and soldier who serves in *Zahal*, to visit Beit Hatfutsot during his tour of duty, and familiarize himself with the roots of the Jewish people and the unique texture of Israeli society founded on the national narrative of a variety of Jewish communities. This encounter will be an invitation for the officers and soldiers to be both excited and inspired by their family roots and heritage, thereby strengthening their commitment to their army service, leadership and social responsibility, and to appreciating the directions their families had taken throughout the generations.

Investing in the IDF is an Investment in Israeli Society

The IDF is Israel's platform for socialization, and many of the soldiers and officers identified in the IDF as leaders, become stewards of Israeli society as a consequence of their service in the IDF. These programs are of crucial value. Israel's future political and social leaders emerge from the IDF and this specific investment in them is of strategic importance to future relations of Israel and world Jewry.

The programs take into account the diverse makeup of the Israel Defense Forces. Members of the Druze, Bedouin, Muslim, and Christian communities serve in the IDF. These programs are designed to raise the awareness of their own identity and to increase their understanding of the Jewish people.

It should be of no surprise therefore that the IDF Education Corps recently established a special Department for Israeli-Jewish Identity. Its main purpose is to strengthen the attachment to, and understanding of, Israeli-Jewish identity among soldiers and officers and consequently, fostering knowledge and understanding of Judaism and the Jewish people. An internal study by education officers highlighted this need for civilian professional organizations that could initiate, supplement, and perform Israeli-Jewish identity programs.



Seminars Content and Annual Reach

The programs developed by The Koret School provide Jewish identity seminars and professional development opportunities based on the values of Jewish Peoplehood. Our goal is to focus on the meaning of belonging to/identifying with the Jewish people and to the State of Israel, while exploring key obstacles, themes and aspects of contemporary Jewish life. Working through the prism of Jewish Peoplehood enables personal/collective dialectic, by engaging the individual, group, family, and community.

The Koret School approaches this endeavor through open conversation that allows for multiple voices. This approach facilitates inclusiveness, multiculturalism, belonging patterns, and multiple identities. Through person-centered methodologies, IDF soldiers and officers are invited into a meaningful, insightful, and beneficial dialogue – both internally and with their peers.

Soldiers and officers visiting Beit Hatfutsot will encounter the unique and ongoing story of the Jewish people as well as Israeli and Jewish identity through the Museum's permanent and temporary exhibitions. The Museum's New Wing, which recently opened this May, has had a profound effect on visiting soldiers who were exposed to the pluralistic reality of Jewish life in the 21st century around the world. This encounter consistently incites curiosity on a subject that has otherwise been deemed as boring or irrelevant by many of Israel's youth. The variety of resources available at Beit Hatfutsot; audio, visual, interactive computer programs that are user friendly, and an expansive database open to the general public, allows for an experience that is both intellectual and emotional, one that contributes towards a better understanding and internalization of each participant's Israeli-Jewish identity from a variety of angles and perspectives.

During 2016, 6,000 soldiers and officers visited Beit Hatfutsot.

Engaging soldiers in Army Bases: The Beit Hatfutsot and IDF Genealogy Project.

"The History of my Family is Where my Identity Begins"

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

We believe that the journey to one's roots begins by getting to know one's own family, and that the most immediate way to connect to the Jewish Story is through creating a family tree. We are aware that we do not have the ability to reach out to all soldiers in the army and bring them to Beit Hatfutsot because of their military agenda; national security is of top priority. We therefore created a project that allows us to reach out to soldiers by holding significant educational activities through utilization of our extensive online genealogy database, at their army base.

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Beit Hatfutsot has amassed a wide range of information on Jewish life through a variety of media. Our collection includes photographs, films, audio and video recordings, genealogical material, family trees, community histories, music and explanations of Jewish family names. The databases and archives are digitized and are accessible via a single interface.

Beit Hatfutsot, in cooperation with the educational wing of the IDF, has created a new mobile-optimized website for the creation of family trees for newly recruited soldiers.

The mobile site looks and feels like an application, and is tailor-made to be a part of the routine acceptance process of the young soldiers, in their initial stage of integration with military life. The service is aimed at providing a way to explore one's identity, family roots and sense of belonging, while keeping it fun and easy-to-use.

In the first pilot of this project (2016) 5,000 soldiers participated.