

Flight school

Ridgewood resident's program helps troubled teens learn to pilot their lives

ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN

Aviva, a former drug abuser and felon from northern Israel, was attending a rehab educational center — an institution of last resort — when she was brought to an airfield on her 17th birthday. Along with 11 other students at her school, she was presented with a chance to soar, literally and figuratively.



Michael Edrei

Wings (Knafaim in Hebrew) is a unique program founded in 2007 by Ridgewood resident Michael Edrei along with his Israeli childhood friends Yafa Arbel and Zvi'ka Hess. The three Israel Air Force veterans thought that flying could help kids from desperate situations develop confidence and self-esteem, and perhaps even a sense of control over their destiny.

Aviva (not her real name) was skeptical and cynical at first. But her instructor, counselor, and teachers began noticing behavioral changes after she was persuaded to take a few spins in the glider. By her next birthday, she had dissociated from her crowd. And with the help of the Wings liaison in the Israel Defense Forces, Aviva was accepted into military service despite her previous rejection due to her criminal record. This achievement is among the program's greatest goals, because military service in Israel is key to future social and professional success.

"Anybody who flies knows its effect is profound," said Edrei. "That's something every pilot remembers from his or her first time in the air. I've been flying 45 years now and I wanted to contribute that feeling of self-confidence to really unlucky kids from miserable backgrounds. The problems of kids at these ages cannot be solved with just money. A human touch is important."

Candidates for the program must be at least 16. Edrei said his partners work solely with rehabilitation schools and prefer selecting students with particularly difficult circumstances. "These are hard-core rejects of the community, their own homes, and families." Unfortunately, he added, Arbel and Hess have no way to find those kids who have already dropped out of such institutions.

Edrei, who immigrated in the 1970s, made his mark in international publishing ventures including 24 popu-



Wings volunteers work with participants — teens in troubled lives — to give them the joy of flight and confidence in themselves. PHOTOS COURTESY MICHAEL EDREI

lar teen magazines and Yellow Pages directories. He financed the first three years of Wings out of his own pocket. Recently, Edrei set up New Course Foundation, a U.S. 501(c)(3), not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization, at his offices in Fort Lee's Mecorp Capital Markets to raise funds and awareness to keep the program afloat.

"I have the easiest job: writing checks," said Edrei, who still flies his own plane. "We need volunteers in the U.S. to do fund-raising because we want to triple or quadruple the number of kids we serve. But it's the people on the ground who are extraordinary, spending all their time and money on the project."

Wings volunteers provide instruction in controlling a glider, and along the way model interaction with peers and strangers, cooperation, teamwork, and trust. According to its website, Newcoursefoundation.org, "Wings' goal is not to train for new pilots; its ambition is to create productive and self-motivated human beings."

The organization pays for space and equipment at two private gliding centers under the supervision of the Israel Civil Aviation Authority, one in the north and the other in the south. It issues guidelines to participating schools and conducts weekly and monthly progress meetings with the educators and counselors.

Edrei felt that if Wings could turn around the fortunes of just one teen every school year, he would be satisfied. In fact, the program has shown about an 80 percent success rate among the 48 teenagers it works with annually, based on evaluations by school counselors and feedback from the kids themselves.



He is particularly gratified that the IAF collaborates fully with Wings. "The sky in Israel is exclusively the Air Force's sky, so you cannot go up without cooperation with them," he explained. "They have even changed their program for us. One place we fly is near an Air Force base, so on Thursdays they change their landing pattern to accommodate us. At the start of each school year they give tours of the base to our students, which is very exciting for them."

To donate or for further information visit www.newcoursefoundation.org.

Pinkie Nails
 Manicure & Hot Stone Pedicure \$20
 UV Gel Color Gel All Waxing 20% OFF
 PRESENT COUPON
 680A River Rd. New Milford, NJ
 (Next to Burger King. Parking in rear)
 201-265-7300 OPEN 7 DAYS

MOHEGAN SUN GETS BETTER WITH AGE



60 or over?
 Mondays are your Sun Days!
 Now — October 25, 2010

FREE GIFTS!
 First 3,000 Player's Club members each week get a free gift. New gift weekly!

2-FOR-1 BUFFET!
 And many more fabulous dining and shopping deals at your favorite restaurants and shops.

FREE LIVE MUSIC!
 Noon & 1:15pm in the Wolf Den.*

\$7,500 SLOT TOURNAMENTS!
 Play in our slot tournaments on September 27th and October 25th! \$10.00 buy-in.

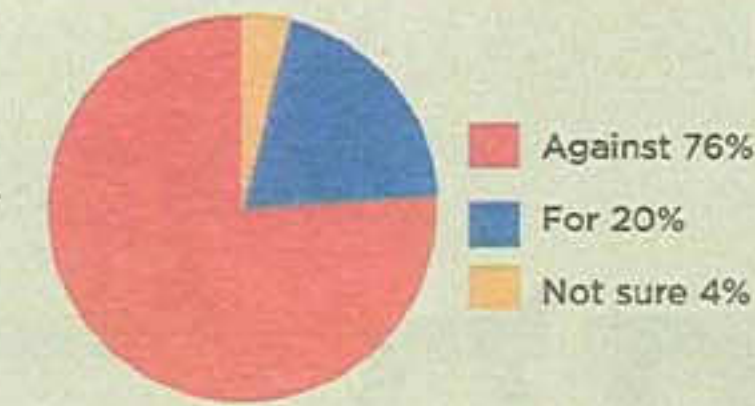
BRING A FRIEND!
 Bring a friend who is also 60 or over to sign up for a new Player's Club card and they will receive a free gift and \$10.00 in Free Slot Play Bonus!

For more information, visit mohegansun.com/forever-young or call 1.888.770.0140 for bus package information.



*There is no entertainment in the Wolf Den on October 4th. Must be 60 years of age or older and a Player's Club member to participate. Proper identification required. Membership is free. Join the Player's Club today!

How do you feel about the proposed 9/11 burning of the Koran by a Florida pastor?



To participate in our next poll, log onto jstandard.com

Contents



HOLIDAY FEATURES

Resolving to be brave 24
 Yummy treats for Sukkot 25
 Searching for schach 28

WEB EXCLUSIVES AT jstandard.com

Random Kinds of Blogging: Rebecca Boroson
 The Big Lipowsky: Josh Lipowsky
 Boroson's Anecdote: Warren Boroson
 Looking back at 5770: JTA Staff
 5770 in Israel — Diplomatic crises, but economic prosperity: Leslie Susser

NOSHES	5	TORAH COMMENTARY	39
COVER STORY	9	ARTS & LEISURE	40
OPINION	14	LIFECYCLE	44
LETTERS	16	CLASSIFIED	46
HEALTHY LIVING/ ADULT LIFESTYLES	30	REAL ESTATE	48
		GALLERY	50

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This atrocious abomination [burning the Koran] demands a significantly more effective and compelling response. So where are the public protests and demonstrations?
 Zvi Henri Szubin, Teaneck



COURTESY, ROBERT AND SHIRA GRUNSTEIN

FYI Sukkah designs that shoot for the stars

Last Sukkot the Grunsteins went to Oz. Three years ago they went to space.

It's almost Sukkot and that means it's time for Robert and Shira Grunstein of Teaneck to come up with another concept for their sukkah.

"The whole theme of Sukkot is to make the chag more mehudar," meaningful, Shira Grunstein said. "We do that by decorating the sukkah."

While at a kibbutz in 1992, Robert Grunstein was amazed to see his host family build a sukkah out of bales of hay. In 2000, he and his wife tried to replicate the Israeli style with, mixed results.

"We realized why it's a very good idea in Israel and a very bad idea here," Robert Grunstein said, noting that rain and hay sukkot don't mix well.

Each year since (including one when Shira was sick and they had "The Minimalist Sukkah"), the sukkah has been covered in mylar, posters, and Christmas lights. In 2008 they held the "Festival of Voting Booths" and their daughters, Kayla and Lielle, ran on a ticket against them.

The kids won in a landslide. The family is planning an Israel theme this year. While Robert thinks about building a replica of the Kotel, Shira and the children plan to decorate with yellow ribbons for captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

The Grunstein kids — Kayla, 9, Lielle, 6, and Judah, 4 — "really get a chance to participate," their father said. "It's exciting, it's different, they love to bring people back for the sukkah hop."

To see more pictures of the Grunstein sukkahs, visit www.jstandard.com.

— Josh Lipowsky

CANDLELIGHTING TIME: FRIDAY, SEPT. 17, 6:45 PM
 SHABBAT ENDS: SATURDAY, SEPT. 18, 7:42 PM

PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT
 Jewish Standard (USPS 275-700 ISSN 0021-6747) is published weekly on Fridays with an additional edition every October, by the New Jersey Jewish Media Group, 1086 Teaneck Road, Teaneck, NJ 07666. Periodicals postage paid at Hackensack, NJ and additional offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to New Jersey Jewish Media Group, 1086 Teaneck Road, Teaneck, NJ 07666. Subscription price is \$30.00 per year. Out-of-state subscriptions are \$45.00. Foreign country subscriptions are \$75.00. The appearance of an advertisement in The Jewish Standard does not constitute a kashrut endorsement. The publishing of a paid political advertisement does not constitute an endorsement of any candidate political party or political position by the newspaper, the Federation or any employees. The Jewish Standard assumes no responsibility to return unsolicited editorial or graphic materials. All rights in letters and unsolicited editorial, and graphic materials will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyright purposes and subject to JEWISH STANDARD'S unrestricted right to edit and to comment editorially. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without written permission from the publisher. © 2010