



## FALL 2023 SEMESTER YEAR END REPORT

(January 2024)

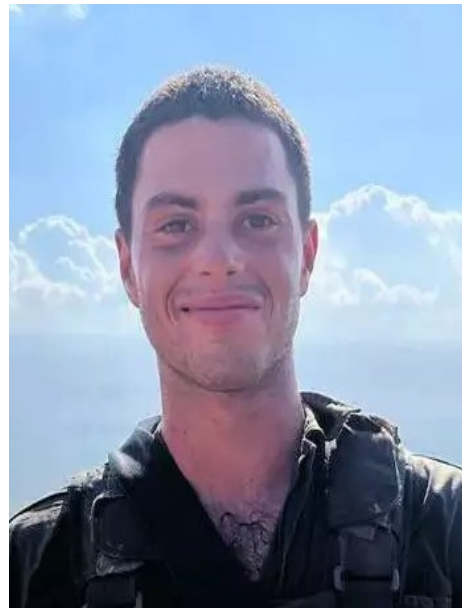
The events in Israel and Gaza are still reverberating across Israel—and at IASA, much of the Fall Semester was spent dealing with the aftermath of October 7<sup>th</sup>. While fighting engulfed the South and rocket fire raged across the country, IASA teachers and staff slowly began carving out a routine for students—even with the prevailing atmosphere of concern for the fate of the abducted and grief at the loss of both civilians and soldiers.

### IASA MOURNS OUR ALUMNI

We are very saddened to report that two IASA graduates, Amir Lavi z'l (class of 2023) and Lavi Lifschitz z'l (class of 2022) lost their lives in the war in Gaza - may their memories be a blessing to all. The Eretz Israel Museum is currently featuring an exhibition of Lifschitz's artwork.



*Amir Lavi – age 19 – class of 2023*



*Lavi Lifschitz – age 20 - class of 2022*

By November, the school year at IASA began to assume an air of normalcy. A new student council was also elected. The dorm social areas were rejuvenated by adding new games (including pool and air hockey, updated lighting, ample beanbag chairs, etc) and the Gaming Club launched their activities this year. A number of other regular boarding school activities including: Knitting with Neta," watercolor painting,



“Tea in Pajamas” and IASA’s Basketball team—all commenced their activities for the school year, as well.

### **CROWN COMMUNITY SERVICE ADAPTS TO THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

With arrangements made for additional security detail, students participated in several donation and volunteer drives throughout November and December. One of these was a drive for army reservists, which we oversaw in early November. Our students delivered donations directly to a branch within the IDF, that we have a close relationship with. Another drive for reservists in mid-November brought groceries and supplies to the Alon and Givati Reserve Battalions. Students were also very active helping the thousands of displaced families from the North and South of the country.

IASA students arranged packages of clothing for evacuees, 15,000 of whom are currently in hotels across Jerusalem. Students also opened a ‘situation room’ for the elderly in the city, allowing them to check-in with them regularly and assess their well-being and needs. During the last week of November, boarding school students hosted evacuee children from a nearby hotel. They engaged them in sports games, board games and more. This was a welcoming break for everyone involved. IASA 11<sup>th</sup> graders also volunteered at the national volunteering HQ in Jerusalem (the “Hamal”) which distributes essentials to soldiers around the country.

IASA students’ volunteer work contributed substantially in the agriculture industry. With so many field workers called up to army duty, farms simply can’t keep up with harvesting their crops. Our students stepped in and were able to provide the necessary “manpower” to help many farms save and/or restore their yields. They worked tirelessly picking olives. They also picked fruits and vegetables in time for distribution. The alternative would have meant flattening the greenhouses/fields and waiting for the summer to replant – which would have been an economic disaster. They truly helped many farmers move forward during desperate times.

### **Music Department**

Music majors opened the semester with a project for all students, dedicated to the poetry of the late Natan Yonatan, honoring the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. Each student chose one of his poems and wrote an arrangement to be sung and performed by fellow major and accompanied by musicians from the entire school. Weekly shows were also held throughout the semester. Students staged arrangements of Alessandro Marcello’s *Concerto for Oboe in B Minor* for soprano saxophone and piano and the *2<sup>nd</sup> Partita for Solo Violin* by Johann Sebastian Bach, arranged for marimba.



## **Humanities Department**

By December, 10th grade Humanities students completed their first course in the major, "Choice and Freedom". The course ended with a conference on English history, at the end of which the obligatory tea-time was enjoyed by all and accompanied by traditional English pastries and sandwiches.

11<sup>th</sup> grade students visited the Humanities and Social Sciences Library on the Hebrew University's Mount Scopus campus where they received bibliographic instruction and a crash course in using the 'Huji' system to search and locate materials. The exercise was very helpful for students in writing their research proposals and projects.

The students also went to a conference at the Van Leer Institute on the subject of the future of Judaism, where they participated in lectures by experts and researchers at the Institute, among them Prof. Moses Halbertal. (*Prof. Halbertal served as a visiting professor at Harvard Law School, University of Pennsylvania Law School, and Yale Law School. Currently he is a professor of Jewish thought and philosophy at Hebrew University and the author of many books.*)

## **Art Department**

After a month and a half of studio time, Art students went on a tour of the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art where they visited a selection of exhibitions on illustrators and the Israeli illustrative tradition. Once finished, students stopped in at the Eretz Israel Museum to see the late Lavi Lifshitz's art exhibition. They also participated in a lecture on documentary photography. The trip concluded with a visit to the Tel Aviv Museum.

## **Science Departments**

In mid-November, chemistry majors celebrated a belated "Mole Day," (the international day in celebration of Avogadro's unit of measure). Participating chemists taught students about the meaning of "the opposite" in chemistry with the help of activities, entertaining experiments and spectacular demonstrations, culminating in a quiz, featuring prizes.

During December, 12th Grade Biology students finished their "on-line bioresearch" experiments. Students studied the effects of various spices used on different strains of bacteria, resulting in fascinating and surprising discoveries. Students are currently writing their final papers, summarizing their findings.



Meanwhile, IASA's robotics team has developed a robot that can automatically generate mosaics and patterns. Designed from scratch, "Everglow" will be entered into a series of national and international competitions in February, hopefully qualifying for the FIRST competition world finals.

### **Celebrating the Holiday Season**

As with the original Hannukah, the holiday season at IASA this year was a celebration of the resumption of normalcy and a truly blessed routine. On December 20<sup>th</sup>, IASA students held a celebratory lighting in which the student's Social Engagement Committee set up games and sales booths. The proceeds were donated to the "Keren Or" organization in support of children from the evacuated conflict areas. Later in the evening, a variety of workshops and classes were held by the parents and teachers. The evening ended with a beautiful and moving ceremony about finding "light in the darkness".

The Hannukah season brought with it the heartwarming promise of a next generation of students: Over the vacation, a special "Hannukah Camp" was held for 9<sup>th</sup> grade graduates of IASA's summer camp program; and on December 18<sup>th</sup>, we held our first Open Day for prospective students from all over the country, in preparation for the opening of registration for the 2025 school year.

***As we look to the year ahead***, it is with an air of hope and optimism at IASA. Evenings dedicated to each Major have begun, with the Art Department hosting the first event. Special events for each major will soon follow. The students always look forward to sharing their "fruits of labor" through in-depth presentations, interactive and engaging displays of their discoveries, with all the students and staff at IASA.

No doubt, the past few months have been among the most difficult in memory for all Israelis. For us at IASA, however, they have been something else, as well: A time to re-discover our commitment to the principles by which we were founded, to engage and give back to the wider society and—in so doing—to shine our own light in the darkness.

We look forward to sharing more student and alumni accomplishments during the coming year.