

Winnick Family Foundation Renews Support for Special Needs Program at Jerusalem Zoo

The children served by the program represent a cultural and ethnic cross-section of Israel, but all have special needs like autism, deafness, learning disabilities or mental problems. Special needs children like these are enrolled in the Jerusalem zoo program to learn concentration and self-discipline by forming a connection with the animal.

LOS ANGELES CA – September 23, 2009 – The Winnick Family Foundation announced today its continuing support for a unique program serving special-needs children at the Tisch Family Zoological Gardens in Jerusalem. The Animal Assisted Therapy Program, begun in 1998, matches children in safe and organized sessions with animals living at the zoo.

Education and child welfare are a central part of the Winnick Family Foundation's mission.

Said Winnick Family Foundation Chairman Karen Winnick: "We are very pleased to support a program like this that teaches special-needs children to care for animals and, at the same time, enables them to progress in their own abilities."

The children participating in this unique education program in Jerusalem, now in its second decade, represent a cultural and ethnic cross-section of Israel, but all have special needs like autism, deafness, learning disabilities or mental problems. The program has become a global model in education methods and has been repeatedly honored for its measurable track record of success with children dealing with emotional problems because of disabilities.

According to program administrators, special-needs children enrolled in the zoo program learn concentration and self-discipline by forming a connection with the animal. Each child participating in the project is monitored and coached while feeding, petting, and cleaning the animal – learning in that way to do things for others, perhaps for the very first time.

The program is resident at The Tisch Family Zoological Gardens, which is a main attraction in Jerusalem with more than 500,000 visitors a year. It has also become one of the most important educational centers in the Middle East with 100,000 students of different ages and background coming yearly to learn conservation, ecology and the importance of nature preservation.

About the Winnick Family Foundation

The Winnick Family Foundation encourages project-specific programs but also selectively supports capital campaigns and unrestricted gifts to grantee organizations. There is a preference for projects in Los Angeles and New York – or those having an international component.

Foundation naming grants include:

- Winnick Family Clinical Research Institute at Cedars Sinai Hospital
- Winnick House and Arnold S. Winnick Student Center at the C.W. Post campus of Long Island University

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- Winnick International Conference Center at the Simon Wiesenthal Center / Jerusalem
- Winnick Children's Zoo in Los Angeles
- Winnick Faculty Scholar at the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University
- Winnick Hall at the Skirball Cultural Center
- Arnold & Blanche Winnick Popular Library and Karen Winnick Children's Gallery at the Los Angeles Central Library
- Winnick Hillel House at Syracuse University
- Winnick Board Room at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City
- Winnick Winners Mentoring Program for the Los Angeles Unified School District
- Winnick Fellows at UCLA School of Medicine
- Winnick Gallery at Yeshiva University Museum, Center for Jewish History

Karen and [Gary Winnick](#) and the Foundation have endowed university and high school literacy and scholarship programs at Brown University, at Mrs. Winnick's alma mater Syracuse University, and at [Gary Winnick](#)'s alma mater, Long Island University.

They have also funded the transformation of the on-campus C.W. Post mansion administrative center – renamed Winnick House – as well as the main cafeteria which is now named in honor of [Gary Winnick](#)'s late father.

In California, the Foundation has supported educational programs at the California Science Center, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, KOREH L.A., the Los Angeles Zoo, L.A.'s Best Afterschool Program, the Wonder of Reading, the Fulfillment Fund and Noah's Ark at the Skirball Center.

Among the many other Foundation grantees are the Special Olympics, The Center for Jewish History, Children's Scholarship Fund, Partnership for Better Schools, Teach for America, The Gettysburg Foundation, The National Parks Foundation, Best Friends Animal Society, The Los Angeles Police Foundation, Shoah Foundation, and the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University.

The Foundation also supports charities operating outside the United States, including the International Medical Corps, Flora and Fauna, World Wildlife Fund, the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, the Israel Museum, the Israel Philharmonic, the Jerusalem Zoo, Heifer International and the Bloomfield Science Museum at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. For more information on the Foundation and its work, visit <http://www.winnickfamilyfoundation.com> on the Web.

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