

S T A R T U P R O O T S

WELCOME

TO A HEALTHIER PLANET



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

• 052-831-3375 ROBIN KATZ rivkabkatz@gmail.com •

How ?

1. Can we empower children to become enterprising and creative, learners and leaders?
2. Can we connect children to nature and in so doing, connect them to Torah values?
3. Can we imbue Torah values in our sciences, mathematics, social studies and language arts courses?
4. Can we grow healthy, delicious vegetables in a minimal amount of space utilizing minimal resources and recycled water?
5. Can we create a way for children to involve their families, friends and communities to live healthier, more understanding, and connected lives?
6. Can we advance the Agro-Technology field in Israel by encouraging development and further study in our schools?
7. Can we advance unity of the Jewish People, and increase dialogue and mutual respect with other nations?



We believe we can.

Starting here

PILOT SCHOOL:

Ohr Batya

Ohr Batya is a school for girls located in the Bucharian section of Jerusalem. Girls from varied backgrounds come to Ohr Batya from all over the city. Many come with little or no Torah knowledge and other familial challenges. These girls are underprivileged in many ways, but the love, learning and Torah guidance they receive at Ohr Batya, is giving them a chance to chart a new course in life.¹

We intend to help.

Ohr Batya, you might think, is the most unlikely school to pilot a Hydroponics project. They are girls. The school is located in an ultra-religious neighborhood. Their families have a lot of difficult issues.

So why here?

Schools, dignitaries, community leaders, rabbis, politicians, residents and visitors will be invited to tour Ohr Batya as the flagship school in Hydroponic growing. The girls will serve as proud tour leaders of their Hydroponic greenhouse and their school.

This opportunity will promote immense pride in their school and achievements. The girls will learn that they can actually grow food from a seed, eat it, and even sell it, if there is ample supply. They can learn the basics of trade and commerce, and hopeful-

¹ This page of the proposal contains a highly sensitive description of our Pilot school. This page cannot be disseminated without the express approval of the author(s).

ly break the cycle of impoverishment. They will learn the elements of work ethics: hard work, diligence, responsibility, accountability and evaluation. They will learn the elements of how to make something of value grow. These lessons, will serve them throughout a productive meaningful life -- that is our hope, with your help.

PROJECT:

Hydroponic Growing System in Schools:

Pilot School: Ohr Batya



Seeds of this Project

This project actually came about as a result of trying to advance Shmitta observance in Israel, and to increase the value of the products that will be available during the Shmitta year.

This led us to Hydroponic growing systems. But without the demand for more of this delicious, bug-free, pesticide-free produce, how could we expand the market?

School children!

A Shmitta Curriculum and Torah Connection

The first question that arises with a Hydroponic system, "Why aren't we growing our food in the ground?" This opens the door to learn about Shmitta and it's laws. This learning raises awareness and appreciation of the profound miracle of food production and integrates the deep love and respect of nature contained in Torah.

Bringing it Home

Our hope is that the children bring their knowledge and vegetables that they've nurtured, home and share with their families the importance of Shmitta and respecting nature. Our hope is that over the generations, these same children who will have been introduced to Shmitta, will want to be a part of supporting it in their homes and in the growth of their children.

IMPLEMENTATION:

School Permission:

The administration, teachers and students at Ohr Batya are all excited for this upcoming infusion of attention, learning and growing opportunities, and investment in their school.

Building the Hydroponic System

We researched as many Hydroponic experts in Israel as we could find, and based on interest and ability in this project, we took bids and ultimately chose Livin-green, a company that specializes in educational systems.

Hydroponic and Halachic Advisor: Dan Gordon

Dan Gordon, founder and owner of, *Great Jerusalem Gardens*, is renowned in Jerusalem as the "Mum-cheh" in halachot of the land of Israel. He is in the process of writing a sefer on how to practically follow the halachot of the land and of Shmitta.

Dan is closely connected with leading rebbeim, including Rav Efrati who will be supervising this important and innovative project.

The *Shomer Shmitta Kollel* was started, and is being overseen, by Dan Gordon. This is a one-year Kollel for gardeners to be able to learn and connect spiritually to the land, and to provide them with parnosa for this difficult year with minimal work.

Educational Consultant:

Overseeing curriculum development, we work closely with the schools' educators to insure the classes are interesting and engaging, age-appropriate, and

well-timed. We will work with Dan to insure accurate content. This provides exciting collaborative activity for teachers in and among many school systems.

PUBLIC RELATIONS:

We are planning to host an opening reception of the new Hydroponic System upon its completion.

Politicians, Educational dignitaries, Rebbeim, Community Leaders and Philanthropists will be invited and encouraged to support the project.

Journalists, schools around the country, visiting groups to Israel, Birthright groups, etc., will be among invited people during the year to see the school, and how the children are farming in Hydroponics.

Our hope is that other schools, and perhaps businesses and homes, will themselves get involved and support this clean growing method.

PLANTING SEEDS IN YOUNG MINDS:

Our hope is that Hydroponics expands to many schools, and for many years past the Shmitta year. This outstanding opportunity will allow for young people who participate, to creatively develop new and improved methods of Agro-Techonology, which has already become high in demand globally with Israel already leading the way.

When Torah is integrated with Israeli ingenuity, as with the Hydroponics systems, astonishing ideas and methods develop. It will be exciting to behold what young Israeli minds think of when given a chance. Hence, the name, S T A R T U P R O O T S.

EXTRAORDINARY INVOLVEMENT:

We have already been privileged to witness the excitement of people when they get involved in the project. Secular and religious, side-by-side have been brainstorming explorative ideas in order to to execute this Torah-based project. Many people will enter this environment which already has the foundation of diversity and respect. They will experience the students' knowledge and exuberance. All involved will experience, and witness the students knowledge, experience and exuberance. All involved will

experience, in a most sublime way, how to engage with nature at its core, and with one another, planting seeds for mutual respect that can help build positive bridges.

NOW, TO ANSWER OUR QUESTIONS:

How ?

1. Can we empower children to become enterprising and creative, learners and leaders?

By implementing Hydroponic systems in schools, children, regardless of socio-economic backgrounds, are empowered to share their knowledge which instills confidence, creativity and the opportunity to give of themselves. By developing produce that can be potentially sold, children can learn basic business concepts.

2. Can we connect children to nature and in so doing, connect them to Torah values and responsibilities?

When the children work in the Hydroponic system, they will have the opportunity to witness nature bloom, and then have the education to connect it to Torah when learning its laws.

3. Can we imbue Torah values in our sciences, mathematics, social studies and language arts courses?

The complex laws of Shmitta, and laws of all food grown in Israel, effect every type of learning, and the curriculum will allow for this knowledge to influence all subjects.

4. Can we grow healthy, delicious vegetables in a minimal amount of space utilizing minimal resources and recycled water?

It's amazing -- that's Hydroponics!

5. Can we create a way for children to involve their families, friends and communities to live healthier, more understanding, and connected lives?

Eating Hydroponics is a healthy choice! When children share their excitement at home, with friends and neighbors, it creates a bond of understanding and connectedness that can hope to serve as a bridge for more difficult issues.

6. Can we advance the Agro-Technology field in Israel by encouraging development and further study in our schools?

As schools implement Hydroponic systems, children will understand and conceptualize the science in ways we can only imagine.

7. Can we advance unity of the Jewish People, and increase respect and dialogue with other nations by sharing Israel's Agro-Technology systems?

When the Ohr Batya girls of all different backgrounds, meet with people of all different backgrounds, in a school located in a Haredi neighborhood, and they talk of nature, this engagement on so many levels, is unity. We're watching it happen now.

When the Jewish People unite, we accomplish extraordinary things, and our willingness and ability to share with the world is unprecedented. Opening doors, by feeding populations at risk, helps to create dialogue and mutual respect.

To add, the building that Ohr Batya is housed in, was built about a century ago by someone with the sole purpose of greeting Moshiach.

Let's try to make that happen.

Thank you in advance for your support,

Robin Katz, Chair and Executive Director

Dan Gordon, Halachic and Hydroponic Advisor