



אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב  
Ben-Gurion University  
of the Negev



# #HASHTAG HOPE

#BGU students are trending social action and community engagement



*Only through a united effort by the State in planning and execution, by a people ready for a great voluntary effort, by a youth bold in spirit and inspired by a creative heroism, by scientists liberated from the bonds of conventional thought and capable of probing deep into the special problems of this country, shall we succeed in carrying out the great and momentous task of developing the south and the Negev.”*

*David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister  
(342 characters; DBG was not a Twitter kind of guy)*



*A helping hand is the very push that completely changes the world for the better.”*

*Prof. Rivka Carmi,  
University President  
(only 67 characters)*

# Our Vision

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev was founded with a special pioneering spirit – a desire to realize the potential of the frontier region, which comprises some 60 percent of Israel but houses less than 10 percent of its population.

Created by government mandate, BGU's mission is to transcend the boundaries of academia and create a new model of education and research that has a direct impact on people's lives.

Today, BGU has succeeded beyond all expectations, having built an academic institution that is deeply

rooted in the community, while achieving international recognition for its inspired scholarship and impact-based research.

Our students don't just learn about people in need, they live and learn with them – both in Israel and among some of the world's poorest communities – teaching English, building wells and reaching out to make a difference. We are particularly proud of the hands-on approach that represents the true BGU spirit of learning through doing and believe our students' lives are enriched by the experience.



*Our students get involved, engaging directly in and with the community around them as part of their education.”*

*Vered Sarussi Katz, Director,  
Department of Community Action*



# The Aviv Project



## Ohad Wormser, 27

Recipient of a Lubner Prize for Community Service

Hometown: Gedera

4th-year student, Joyce and Irving Goldman Medical School



The program promotes the absorption of Ethiopian immigrant children and their integration into their adopted culture and homeland. Students mainly from the Faculty of Health Sciences serve as volunteer mentors at the Haruv Absorption Center in Beer-Sheva, running a number of special activities, such as storytelling, enrichment classes, tutoring and Holiday celebrations, bringing the youths together with other sectors of the population.



*We focus on the principle of double giving as part of our activity – the students who volunteer give the Ethiopian youths the opportunity to make their own contribution to the community. Whereas they are accustomed to receiving help from others, this program empowers them to make a difference to the elderly and to those in greater need.”*



# HaBarvaz Theater



## Shir Ophir, 22

Hometown: Raanana

2nd-year Psychology and Cognitive Sciences Student



When the cornerstone of the Deichmann Building for Community Action was laid in 2000, a dream was fulfilled: benefactor Dr. Heinz-Horst Deichmann had always hoped to build a symbolic meeting place that would invite community members into the University. Today, the building houses the Sara Tadmor Auditorium, built specifically for the HaBarvaz Theater Group.

Organized by the Community Action Department, the HaBarvaz Theater Group provides a healthy framework for Beer-Sheva's seventh to twelfth graders to come together and perform theater under the caring guidance of a professional director. The group seeks to empower those teenagers with a passion for theater, who may have no other opportunity to express themselves artistically. The group produces a major original play at the end of each year.



*This is an amazing program that allows participants to use acting as an empowerment tool, helping them gain confidence and open up emotionally, while escaping from their troubling reality.”*



NET WT. 10 OZ (283g)  
CAUTION: Keep out of reach of children.  
Do not spray directly on face or eyes.  
Avoid contact with skin and clothing.  
Do not use in enclosed spaces.  
Do not use near open flames or heat sources.  
Do not use in areas with poor ventilation.  
Do not use in areas with electrical equipment.  
Do not use in areas with sensitive electronic equipment.  
Do not use in areas with sensitive electronic equipment.  
Do not use in areas with sensitive electronic equipment.

**Raid**  
SPRAY  
For Exterior & Interior Use

**CAUTION:**  
Extremely flammable.  
- Harmful for water & aquatic life.  
- Contains under pressure. Do not use  
near and eye contact. Read label  
and directions of use carefully.

NET WT. 10 OZ (283g)

Lillian and Larry Goodman

# Open Apartments Program



Yehonatan Goren, 20

Hometown: Beer-Sheva

2nd-year Economics and Business Administration Student



Students of the Lillian and Larry Goodman Open Apartments Program make their home in the socio-economically challenged neighborhoods of Beer-Sheva. In exchange for rent-free accommodation, students provide eight hours a week of community service. Many families benefit from the program's wide range of activities, including after-school tutoring and workshops, children's and elderly residents groups and summer programs, while our students learn the tremendous significance of giving back to society.

Yehonatan Goren offers an artistic graffiti workshop to a group of teenagers, teaching them a variety of styles and techniques and providing constructive criticism of their work. Instead of engaging in vandalism, they apply their newly acquired skills to the embellishment of the neighborhood.



*I come from a similar background and am happy to have the opportunity to serve as a role model for these kids, spending quality time with them and teaching them a whole new art form.”*



# Life in the Community



## Simona Yoffe, 28

Hometown: Beer-Sheva

4th-year student, Joyce and Irving Goldman Medical School



This program offers first-aid training, free of charge, to the diverse Negev population, thus empowering the participants and enhancing their sense of security and wellbeing. The volunteers, all of them students in the Faculty of Health Sciences, establish unmediated personal connections with local residents, particularly young parents and preschool teachers, many of whom have had no previous exposure to the University.



*I am constantly amazed by people's willingness to learn. An elderly woman once approached me at the end of a session with tears in her eyes. She said that she had given up learning at the age of 14, thinking herself incapable of it, and now felt useful for the first time in years, asserting that she could actually save a life. I was very moved by her words."*

# Osim Rechov (Street Makeover)



## Matan Saad, 28

Keren Moshe Leadership Program

Hometown: Beer-Sheva

MA Student in Urban Planning



An initiative of the BGU Student Union, Osim Rechov aims to bring students together with the residents of Beer-Sheva living near the University. Together, they engage in the restoration and embellishment of the neighborhood, through clean-up operations, the cultivation of community gardens and the installation of street furniture. A colorful happening is held as part of the event, including arts and crafts workshops, mural painting, musical performances and food stalls.



*Something amazing is happening on the street – students and residents join forces to create their own public space, and the results speak for themselves. Nothing makes me happier.”*





עושים רחוב  
OSIMRECHOV



# The Perach Tutorial Project



## Anwar Wanni, 20

Hometown: Shefaram

1st-year Pharmacology Student



The nationwide Perach Tutorial Project “strives to support a society based on mutual caring and responsibility through the creation of meaningful relationships between mentors, students, and youth.” Its southern division operates out of a space in the Deichmann Building for Community Action that includes a library, game rooms, an enrichment center and a computer lab.

In the framework of the Perach Tutorial Project, Anwar Wanni volunteers with Arab children at one of the enrichment centers operating in Beer-Sheva’s diverse neighborhoods, thus offering them a challenging and enjoyable learning experience, promoting creativity and curiosity through sports, arts, cooking and theater workshops, in addition to individual tutoring.

[www.perach.org.il](http://www.perach.org.il)



*Not only do we strive to improve the children’s scholastic achievements, but we also offer them an unforgettable experience. The program has enabled me to bond with these children and I enjoy every moment spent with them.”*

# Green Campus



## Alon Freund, 28

Hometown: Ma'ale Adumim

4th-year Communication Systems Engineering Student



Green Campus seeks to create a cleaner environment at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and throughout the city of Beer-Sheva. Among its activities, it operates a community garden jointly with the Be'er-Sova non-profit organization, which also runs a soup kitchen and a socio-educational enrichment center. The community garden at Be'er-Sova hosts a slew of activities open to the public, including Holiday celebrations, recycling workshops, the cultivation of fresh, organic produce for the needy and an opportunity for groups of special needs children to grow their own plants.



*The garden is alive and flourishing; it offers tremendous gratification to all those involved in its cultivation.”*









# Alpha



## Or Ben-Waiss, 28

Hometown: Eshkolot  
2nd-year Psychology Student



*It has been such a privilege to get to know Viola. Every week as I visit her in her home, I feel that we grow closer and learn to trust each other. This is an ongoing conversation.”*



The organization aims to improve the situation of Holocaust survivors in Israel by helping them claim their rights, making home visits, recording their life stories and ensuring their food security. Students establish personal connections with individual Holocaust survivors and support them while they are hospitalized, organize special Holiday celebrations and raise funds to supply them with basic necessities, such as blankets, heaters and food.

Or Ben-Waiss makes weekly visits to 98-year-old Viola Török, a Czech survivor who began her medical studies prior to the war. In 1944 she was sent to Auschwitz and then transferred to a labor camp, where she worked in the clinic. She settled in Beer-Sheva in 1959 and was among the founders of BGU's Faculty of Health Sciences. In 2004 she was awarded the Ben-Gurion Negev Award in recognition of her contribution to medicine in the Negev. Her daughter, Hanna Yablonka, is a professor of Jewish History at BGU, specializing in the history of the Holocaust.



# Students for Refugees



## Moran Mekamel, 30

Public Leadership Training Program

Hometown: Kiryat Motzkin

Graduate Student in the Charlotte B. and Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work



The goal of this student-led initiative is to assist the refugees seeking shelter in Israel by providing them with tools for success, through such programs as Hebrew- and English-language instruction, first-aid workshops and lectures informing them of their rights. Moreover, in an attempt to build a bridge between the asylum seekers and the Israeli public, informal joint activities are held, including Sudanese-Israeli women's evenings, jam sessions and fieldtrips. Moran Mekamel was among the founders of this program and continues to be actively involved, having established strong personal relationships with the refugees.



*Aiding asylum seekers is not just about assisting them. We believe that an education to tolerance will create a better society for all of us, a society marked by mutual respect, brotherhood and solidarity.”*

# List of Activities

The following is only a partial list of the many activities and organizations in which BGU students are involved:

## SPECIAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

### **Keren Moshe Leadership Training Program**

The program, created by Esther and Michel Halpérin of Switzerland, aims to promote young leadership among students in the Negev. Students participate in theoretical training on the subject of Israeli society and social activism and initiate projects that meet social needs.

### **Lubner Prize for Community Service**

The Lubner Prize is awarded to BGU students who have distinguished themselves in their selfless devotion and contribution to a social cause.

### **Public Leadership Training Program**

The program provides knowledge of Israeli society in order to cultivate active and involved individuals. The students participate in a wide range

of social projects and theoretical training, including lectures and workshops.

### **Rothschild Cube**

The Rothschild Cube seeks to increase the effectiveness of social initiatives, through training, mentorship and the development of knowledge, while exemplifying the connection between academic work and practical field work.





## EDUCATION

### **Ilan Ramon Youth Physics Center**

Students offer local elementary and high-school children experiential science-oriented enrichment programs.

### **Kidma Program**

The program promotes the absorption of adult Ethiopian immigrants. Students teach them basic subjects (Hebrew, math, English, computers), as well as civics, current affairs and Israeli festivals, in order to familiarize them with Israeli society and culture.

### **Ma'amatz**

Students give workshops to high-

school students and preparatory workshops for teachers to increase awareness of sexual abuse among youths and to encourage behavioral change.

### **Manof Program**

Students work with eighth-grade students in Beer-Sheva to strengthen their connection to the city in which they live and to educate youths to initiate and take responsibility as a way of life.

### **MAPMES Students Volunteer in Rahat**

Students from the Master of Arts Program in Middle East Studies

(MAPMES) travel once a week to the Bedouin town of Rahat to teach English and converse with the children.

### **Newstart Program**

The program caters to residents of the South aged 19 to 40, who wish to complete their formal high-school education. One track prepares students for high-school matriculation certification, while the second prepares them for exams in various subjects by means of private tutorials.



### **Or Yarok (Green Light)**

Students work to minimize traffic accidents and improve road safety by educating young drivers, thus changing Israel's driving culture.

### **Reaching Out:**

#### **Scientific Horizons Program**

In cooperation with the Branco Weiss Institute for the Development of Thinking, Atidim and the Jewish Agency, the program exposes tenth-grade students of Ethiopian origin to different points of view, with the aim of motivating them to pursue higher education.

### **Sela Project**

Students offer subsidized private tutoring for Beer-Sheva's high-school students.

### **Women for Engineering Program**

Students from the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering give enrichment courses to middle-school girls in subjects such as math, robotics and programming, encouraging girls to pursue advanced studies in the Engineering Sciences.

## **HEALTH**

### **First Aid Course for Bedouins from Unrecognized Negev Villages**

Medical students give first-aid courses to Bedouins who live in villages that lack basic infrastructure and medical clinics.

### **Hanukkah Volunteering**

Hundreds of students from the Faculty of Health Sciences volunteer at the Soroka University Medical Center during Hanukkah, serving donuts and distributing games to patients and their families.



### **Edy's House - Ma'agan Beer-Sheva Community Cancer Care Center**

Volunteers provide social and emotional support for people with cancer, offering patients, friends and family members networking opportunities, lectures, workshops and social events in a warm, home-like setting.

### **Teddy Bear Hospital Program**

Volunteers from the Medical Students Association of the Negev (ASRN) accompany kindergarten children to the hospital, with their favorite teddy bear in tow, to ease the fear associated with visits to the doctor's office and hospital.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

### **Beit Guy Hostel**

Students support and enrich the lives of the residents of this rehabilitative center for youths aged 18 to 30, who are struggling with mental illness.

### **Canine Companion Program**

The Canine Companion program was established with the aim of training "Hebrew Speaking" dogs for Israel's Guide Dog Center. Each year, some 30 BGU volunteer students take on the task of fostering young pups in order to socialize them in their initial stages, before they embark on a lifetime of service to Israel's visually impaired. Tens of seeing-eye dogs

have "graduated" from BGU over the past decade.

### **One-on-One**

The program, in cooperation with Best Buddies, matches BGU students with cognitively impaired young people, in hopes of forging friendships between them and promoting tolerance and acceptance.

### **Shema**

Volunteers cater to the special needs of hearing-impaired children and teenagers.

### **Tzavta**

Students volunteer at an enrichment center for individuals with special needs.



## SOCIAL JUSTICE

### **AMCHA**

The National Israeli Center for Psychosocial Support of Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation.

### **Ayalim**

In the framework of this organization, young adults live and volunteer in the toughest areas in the country, thus strengthening existing communities and social involvement in the Negev and Galilee.

### **Forum for Social Justice**

Volunteers seek to empower the next generation of young Israelis to become agents of social change.

### ***Kama***

Volunteers aim to raise public awareness of the status of women in Israeli society, to promote gender equality and to effect significant social change.

### **LATET**

A humanitarian aid organization that provides assistance to needy populations.

### **Remember and Respect**

In cooperation with the Samuel Bronfman Foundation, student volunteers offer aid to Holocaust survivors throughout the city and promote activities to raise awareness within the student community.

## ENVIRONMENT

### **Beer-Sheva Loves Animals**

Students involved in this association seek to better the lives and treatment of the animals in and around Beer-Sheva, through educational activities, caretaking and adoption campaigns.

### **Society for the Protection of Nature**

SPNI volunteers are dedicated to protecting and preserving Israel's natural resources, environment, natural assets and unique landscape.

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## Contact Us

To learn more about or support  
students volunteering in the  
community, please contact us at:

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