

## Kolnoar Kfar Aza

**What could possibly cause 14 teens that have finished 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades to wake up at seven in the morning during the final week of summer vacation? Not a lot of things for sure...**

But apparently a film a made by and about themselves will do the trick.

And so, just before the end of summer, the teens from Kfar Aza met over the course of two days to shoot a film that seems to involve a lifetime of work. But they came prepared—after having participated in a four month workshop as part of the 'More Than a Thousand Words' project.

The Lahav Association, which deals in the making of teen films as a therapeutic group process, joined forces with the Israel Trauma Coalition and the Ministry for Development of the Negev and the Galilee to initiate projects throughout the Gaza Envelope. The projects are meant to serve as a therapeutic response in the aftermath of Operation Protective Edge. In Sha'ar HaNegev, the Regional Council and Mercaz Hosen (Shaar Hanegev Welfare Center) pooled resources and referred the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders for the workshop. The remainder of monies was raised from our friends in the Jewish Federation of San Diego County in the framework of Sha'ar HaNegev-San Diego Partnership-2-Gether.

The four-month process began sometime in March and was led by two instructors from the Lahav Association (Boaz and Racheli) in association with Eden, a youth counselor in Kfar Aza, and the social education apparatus in Kfar Aza.

The teens met once a week to discuss what were on their minds, what occupied them, and engage in role playing exercises. In all, they allowed each other to be who they were in a safe environment—where one could talk about anything, including things that aren't usually acceptable to talk about. During this process certain topics came up that were relevant to their ages, the security situation and the events of last summer. Something that emerged quite powerfully was the teens' bonding into a group in which each person had their place, and which was endowed with the unique strength that exists only when they acted together.

Eventually, in a totally collaborative effort, a script was produced. Readers will be given no 'spoilers' here, but we can say that the film deals with memory, family, the kibbutz, one's sense of responsibility, what is allowed and what is forbidden, and, most emphatically, the power of the group and what the group bestows to the teens who are part of it.

The film is currently in the editing process; from there, it will be screened for the teens and their parents, who are sure to enjoy the fruits of the teens' labor. What happens after that...no one can predict. But this group of Kfar Aza teens has gained a particularly unique

experience that joins the list of their other summer experiences: producing a professional short film that describes them and what makes them special; that allows them to express themselves in a safe and protected environment. And if their rehearsals and film shoots are any indication, this is without a doubt a lovely, talented, and emotionally moving group of teens.

