THE MAGAZINE OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

SCOPUS

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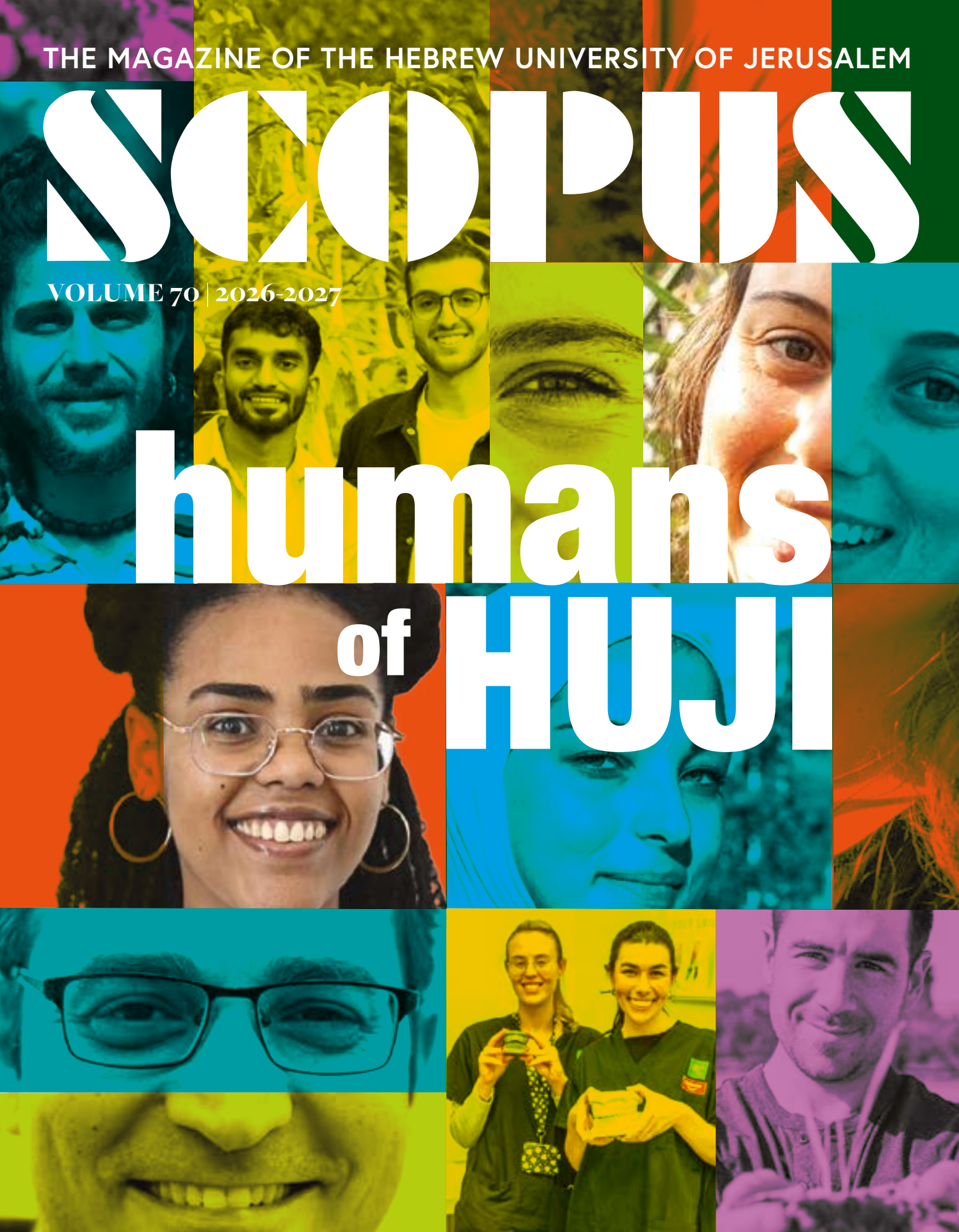

humans of HUJI

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel's first university, is a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning and research where intellectual pioneering, cutting-edge discovery, and a passion for learning flourish. Ranked among the world's leading universities, the Hebrew University is a center of international repute, with ties extending to the worldwide scientific and academic communities. The Hebrew University is an institution where excellence is emphasized, and where teaching and research drive innovation and provide the broadest of education for its students.

At the Hebrew University, success is measured in terms of social impact, ranging from the lives of our students and graduates to influencing policy on the national level and to advancing the frontiers of science for humankind. At its core, the Hebrew University's mission is to develop cutting-edge research, to educate future leaders, and to nurture generations of outstanding scientists and scholars in all fields of learning.

6 CAMPUSES
3 in Jerusalem (Mount Scopus, Edmond J. Safra, and Ein Kerem) and in Rehovot, Beit Dagan, and Eilat

7 FACULTIES
14 Schools, 315 Departments, 11 Libraries

25,000 STUDENTS
including 13,413 undergraduates, 5,246 master's students, 2,312 doctoral students, and 2,468 overseas and pre-academic students, postdoctoral fellows, and others

5,950 COURSES
(including 3,175 BA, 2,530 MA, and 45 PhD)

1,077 FACULTY MEMBERS

4,242 RESEARCH GRANTS

Dear Friends of the University

There is a particular kind of courage that does not announce itself. It belongs to the second-year computer science student who served as an IDF instructor and now wants to push the boundaries of what we know, even if only a little. To the professor who walks into her lab every morning, turns peptides into cancer-fighting coatings and cardiac stents, and sees each experiment as an act of service to her country. To the fifth-year medical student and mother of nine who gets everyone out the door each morning, commutes to campus, and studies again after the house goes quiet at night. To the young woman from East Jerusalem who married at 17, raised five children, and is now in the final year of her BA — determined to show her kids, and an entire neighborhood, that university is within reach.

These are not exceptional stories in the sense of being rare. At the Hebrew University, they are the norm.

This edition of Scopus is built around the people of our university — the humans of HUJI. It is a reminder, in the most direct terms, of why this institution was founded more than a century ago on the promise that Jerusalem could be a place where the life of the mind flourishes for everyone willing to pursue it.

You will read about researchers who are working to heal a society still carrying the trauma of October 7 — training hundreds of clinicians across the country to deliver evidence-based care at a scale Israel has never seen before. You will meet a scientist who sees the periodic table as an instrument of national resilience, a legal scholar who has spent decades making the case for Israel before international audiences, and a physicist who now ensures his entire community has enough to eat.

At Hebrew University, we hold two things to be equally true: that excellence requires rigor, and that that rigor must be open to everyone. These are not competing values; they reinforce each other. Our students and faculty represent a genuine cross-section of Israeli society, and it is our mission to help shape what comes next, for Israel, for society, and for the future of knowledge itself.

We invite you to read this magazine slowly. Let the stories stay with you. And if they inspire you to do more, to connect more, to bring others into this community — we hope you will reach out. The Hebrew University's next century is being written now, one human at a time.

With deep gratitude and great hope,

Professor Tamir Sheafer
President

Daniel Schlessinger
Chairman of the Board of Governors

Editor: *Shoshana Israel*
Assistant Editors: *Nehama Miller and Mara Kalvo-Vigevani*
Writer: *Sara Miller*
Design & Production: *Dana Barak Design*

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campaign.huji.ac.il
Facebook.com/HebrewU
YouTube: @thehebrewuniversityintl

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The Science Behind Israel's Future

Every nation talks about STEM. Israel cannot afford to merely talk. For us, the molecules matter, the code matters, the equations matter, because they are essential to building a future worth protecting.

By **PROF. MEITAL RECHES**
Vice-Rector, Full Professor, Institute of Chemistry & Center for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Every few months, a new report comes out with a variation on the same headline: Nations must invest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics—commonly known as STEM. These subjects are the engines of the modern economy, we are told, and the countries that master them will prosper. The message is right. But it is framed as an opportunity. For Israel, it is something more urgent than that. It is an obligation — one written into the very logic of our national existence.

I say this not as rhetoric, but as a scientist who has spent years working at the molecular level studying self-assembly and generating materials that prevent microbial contamination, destroy viruses, inhibit ice formation, and more. Every day in my laboratory at the Hebrew University, I am reminded that science is a form of sovereignty. And in a country with no oil, no vast mineral wealth, and neighbors who have not always wished us well, sovereignty built on intellect is not a luxury. It IS the strategy.

The Arithmetic of a Small Nation

Israel is a country of some 10 million people, roughly the size of New Jersey. What it has, what it has always had, is human capital. The question of how to develop, organize, and deploy that capital is therefore not merely a question of economics. It is a question of security.

6.3% of GDP spent on R&D
#1 in the world – more than double the OECD average

33% of all new PhD students in Israel study natural sciences or mathematics, ranking 3rd out of 37 OECD countries

53% of all Israeli exports are high-tech

These numbers do not emerge from nowhere. They emerge from a society that made a deliberate wager, generations ago, that education, and specifically scientific education, was the foundation upon which everything else would rest.

The 'Start-up Nation' Is Not an Accident

The phrase 'Start-up Nation' has become something of a cliché since it was popularized by the 2009 book of the same name. But beneath the Silicon Wadi marketing gloss is a genuinely remarkable phenomenon: Israel has, per capita, more start-up companies than virtually any other country on Earth, and its universities have generated billions in technology transfer. The Hebrew University's commercialization arm, Yissum, has registered over 10,750 patents and launched more than 260 spinoff companies, generating over 2 billion dollars in licensing revenues. One of those spinoffs, Mobileye, became one of the world's leading autonomous vehicle technology companies before being acquired by Intel for 15 billion dollars.

What distinguishes the Hebrew University's current direction is its recognition that excellence in research and relevance to society are not in conflict. ASPER-HUJI Innovate, The Hebrew University Entrepreneurship Center, aims to ensure that every student—historian, philosopher, and chemist alike—learns something about innovation from their very first semester.

The goal is not to turn everyone into a founder, but to ensure that the next generation of Israelis can participate in, contribute to, and lead the knowledge economy that the country's survival depends upon.

What I Do in the Lab—and Why It Matters Beyond It

My own work sits at the intersection of chemistry, biology, and materials science. In my laboratory at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, we study

> **THE GOAL IS NOT TO TURN EVERYONE INTO A FOUNDER, BUT TO ENSURE THAT THE NEXT GENERATION OF ISRAELIS CAN PARTICIPATE IN, CONTRIBUTE TO, AND LEAD THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY THAT THE COUNTRY'S SURVIVAL DEPENDS UPON.**

what happens when biological entities such as peptides, proteins, and bacteria encounter surfaces. The science that begins with a peptide on a gold surface in a Jerusalem laboratory does not stay there. It travels. It becomes a coating on a cardiac stent. It becomes a strategy for reducing antibiotic resistance. It becomes a start-up. It becomes a patent. It becomes an export. This is the chain that Israel's investment in science education makes possible and it requires, at every link, people who were trained to think rigorously, experiment boldly, and build from first principles.

For women in science, I would add something further. I am one of relatively few women leading a research group in chemistry in Israel, and I am acutely aware of the pipeline problem. The STEM talent pool we are drawing on is, in too many cases, only half the population. When we speak of Israel's security and prosperity depending on scientific excellence, we must reckon honestly with what it means to leave that excellence half-cultivated.

Expanding access—reaching girls in underserved communities, making science a live option for Arab students, for Haredi communities, for new immigrants—is not a social policy add on. It is a strategic imperative.

Betting on the Future

I want to be honest about what I mean when I say STEM education is existential for Israel. I do not mean that every child must become an engineer. I mean that a society that systematically underinvests in scientific literacy—which treats chemistry and mathematics as peripheral rather than central—is, in this particular corner of the world, making a civilizational bet it cannot afford to lose.

Israel's defense depends on technological superiority. Its economy depends on continued innovation in software, life sciences, and deep technology. Its ability to attract investment, train its workforce, and project influence in a world reorganizing itself around artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and biotechnology depends on having, in every generation, a critical mass of people who can do the hard things, who can read a protein-surface interaction, write a cryptographic protocol, model a quantum system.

So yes, STEM education matters everywhere. But the consequences of getting it wrong are not evenly distributed. When I walk into my laboratory in Jerusalem and begin a new experiment, I am doing science, and I am, in a small way, doing something for my country. I hope the young people who come after me understand that the periodic table, the microscope, and the compiler are not just tools for careers. They are instruments of national resilience. ■

Prof. Meital Reches

ISRAEL'S INVISIBLE WOUND

Why Trauma Recovery Must Be a National Priority

The Hebrew University's Center for Trauma Recovery is doing the painstaking, evidence-based work that a wounded society desperately needs — and the window to act is now.

By **PROF. JONATHAN HUPPERT**, Founder, Center for Trauma Recovery, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Prof. Jonathan Huppert

On the morning of October 7, 2023, Israel experienced the most devastating attack in its history. The physical destruction—the lives lost, the communities razed, the hostages taken—has been documented, mourned, and contested in the public sphere ever since. But there is another wound, quieter and slower-moving. Psychological trauma is now embedded in hundreds of thousands of Israeli lives. For some, if left untreated, this wound will not heal on its own. It will calcify into chronic illness, fractured families, and a generation marked by post-traumatic stress and related disorders.

However, the public mental health workforce was not prepared. There are insufficient numbers of therapists, and many of them are not trained in standard-of-care treatments for trauma.

The good news is that Israel does not have to face this crisis without a map. Trauma science has advanced enormously over the past three decades. The challenge Israel faces is not a scientific one in terms of treatment development. It is a challenge of how best to provide access, scale, and speed.

That is precisely why we created the Center for Trauma Recovery at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Its unique approach is to focus on the public sector, implementing routine outcome measurements and time-limited, evidence-based approaches to trauma recovery in the public sector in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the HMOs, and the Ministry of Defense.

We established the Center in the immediate aftermath of October 7, building on years of partnership with Israel's Ministry of Health and HMOs to train and expand the workforce. In just two years, the Center has trained approximately 640 clinicians (approximately 5% of the workforce) from over 84 public clinics and hospitals nationwide — introducing five new evidence-based methods to Israel's public health system for the very first time. Sixty-six clinical groups of therapists in the public sector are currently finishing their training programs, including 11 cohorts embedded within the military.

The Center anticipates training between 200 and 300 therapists annually on an ongoing basis. In addition, trauma does not just lead to PTSD. Individuals suffer from grief, anxiety, depression, and more. Therefore, the Center has expanded its trainings to include evidence-based treatment modalities for adults and children experiencing these symptoms.

These are not symbolic gestures. Each trained therapist is a multiplier: one clinician reaches dozens of patients. In addition, we are working on training clinicians in the public sector to be supervisors to support sustainability. Scaling this work is how a society heals. For example, a social worker in a public clinic in the Western Negev may previously have relied on supportive counseling when treating survivors of October 7. Through the Center's training, she and her team learn Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), receive supervision as they apply it, thus delivering structured, evidence-based treatment that directly reduces PTSD symptoms. The impact extends far beyond a single clinician or a single patient.

The clinical team in a given public sector clinic will ideally have at least one member who will become an identified leader, whom the Center will then work on training to become a supervisor. This way, all new clinicians joining the team will be able to be oriented and trained, creating a self-sustaining model of dissemination and training. In addition, the supervisor and others trained by the Center become part of its learning community, often asking for additional training for various needs, and keeping up to date with the field via Center communications and events.

At the Center, no community is left behind. A dedicated Cultural Adaptation team, including two native Arabic speakers, is translating and adapting self-help and therapy materials, and the Center's website into Arabic, and dedicated supervisions for Arabic-speaking clinicians are being planned. Peripheral communities — those farthest from urban centers, often with the least access to mental health resources — are a specific focus of additional community-based intervention efforts, in addition to the individual and group trainings we are doing for public therapists working throughout the country.

Technology is another frontier. The Center has developed a guided digital application for CPT-based PTSD treatment, currently in a trial at Sheba Medical Center. When deployed effectively, such tools dramatically extend the reach of care beyond the limits of any single therapist's caseload, while providing guardrails for therapists in terms of their fidelity to the protocol.

"IN JUST TWO YEARS, THE CENTER HAS TRAINED APPROXIMATELY 640 CLINICIANS FROM OVER 84 PUBLIC CLINICS AND HOSPITALS NATIONWIDE — INTRODUCING FIVE NEW EVIDENCE-BASED METHODS TO ISRAEL'S PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME."

The Center is also investing in public awareness — because shame and ignorance are among the most powerful barriers to seeking treatment.

An eight-episode podcast on trauma, a national campaign on the N12 news platform, a free self-help book in Hebrew (with an accompanying app whose Arabic version is coming out next year), and an expanding library of online resources for both clinicians and the general public are all part of this effort to shift how Israeli society understands and talks about mental health.

Critics might argue that this responsibility lies with the government and not universities, but, in reality, it requires both. The Center for Trauma Recovery demonstrates how an academic institution can bridge cutting-edge research and a strained public health system, combining the agility to respond quickly in a crisis with the rigorous evaluation needed to ensure effective care.

We are working to develop something Israel has never had before: a sustainable, evidence-based, nationally integrated workforce infrastructure for mental health care. This work continues as Israel remains in an active security situation, with new traumas occurring even as society attempts to recover from old ones.

The need is urgent, and it continues to grow. With greater support, the Center can expand its reach and help more individuals, families, and communities recover and rebuild. ■

The Center for Trauma Recovery at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (ctr.huji.ac.il/en/) works in close partnership with Israel's Ministry of Health, health funds, public hospitals, and Ministry of Defense.

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY STRIKES BACK

For the past two decades, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement – created by a Qatari-born Palestinian graduate of an Israeli university — has been working to ostracize Israel and Israeli institutions from international cultural life, including academia. Since the October 7, 2023 mass terror attack on southern Israel by Hamas and the war it triggered, that pressure has grown in popularity in some academic circles worldwide.

The Hebrew University, like other Israeli institutions, is taking steps to combat this phenomenon by setting up an anti-BDS task force. This is headed by Prof. Yuval Shany, former Dean of the Law Faculty, who explains the implications for students and researchers, and how the university is fighting back.

A Q&A WITH PROF. YUVAL SHANY

Hersch Lauterpacht Chair in Public International Law, Chair of the HUJI Initiative for Academic Freedom and Dialogue

How does BDS manifest in academia?

The BDS Movement targets what it sees as Israeli soft power, such as universities, cultural and sporting institutions, and commercial ventures, aiming to "punish" alleged Israeli violations of international law and to weaken the state itself.

In practice, this translates into some institutions, countries, municipalities, professional associations and individual researchers adopting formal boycotts of Israel. In certain cases, that means severing academic ties completely or blocking collaboration with Israeli researchers. There are now several dozen universities in Europe that have taken this approach, with different levels of severity.

The more benign interpretation of the aims of the boycott movement is that this may lead Israel to rethink its direction; the less benign interpretation is that this is a project ultimately aimed at destroying Israel, and targeting universities is a stepping stone on the path to that goal.

What does this mean for students?

For our students, the impact is very real in certain areas, especially international exchange programs.

Some foreign universities have withdrawn from exchange agreements funded by Erasmus (the European Union youth exchange program), and we are no longer able to send students to these universities and these countries.

In one case, the University of Madrid advised a HUJI student to consider postponing his approved exchange with the university, due to the sensitive situation. The student decided to turn down the exchange.

Interestingly, we see that many boycotts by foreign universities are the result of internal student pressure more than from the institutions themselves.

What does this mean for researchers?

For researchers, it cuts to the heart of how academia functions today, which depends on international collaboration, joint projects, conferences, and publications.

When researchers are unable to join international teams or apply jointly for funding, it affects their ability to compete at the highest level.

This is particularly significant with regards to Horizon (the EU's flagship R&D program), because many research groups are Horizon research groups that create consortia, and on that basis are applying for funding.

Researchers are increasingly in situations where they are disinvited or face attempts to exclude them from research groups, which affects funding for the universities as well as individuals. We see this regularly, with one or two cases every week. It divides Europe into countries that do and do not work with Israelis, and it's a very unpleasant situation.

Horizon aside, there are other forms of exclusion. One faculty member's keynote lecture in Singapore was cancelled due to "security concerns," and a second was disinvited from a conference at the University of Ghent in Belgium.

In Barcelona, another faculty member was forced out of a conference after BDS-motivated administrative measures led to the cancellation of her panel, while a conference in Italy was cancelled over disagreement about the participation of a HUJI keynote speaker.

There are also less visible barriers, such as journal submissions going unanswered, delays in peer reviews, or unusual requirements. In some fields, professional associations such as the European Association of Social Anthropologists and the European Association of Archaeologists have also sought sanctions affecting Israeli researchers.

I don't want to overestimate it, but it's fair to say that our world has shrunk: if before we could work with researchers from around 100 countries, now it's probably more like 60 or 70.

How is the Hebrew University responding?
The university's anti-BDS task force monitors what is happening, supports researchers and students, and responds where needed.

A major part of the work is simply understanding where it is happening and how it is expressed. Another part is practical support, advising researchers and departments when they face exclusion or hostility, and sharing experience on what approaches work.

When cases are based on misinformation about Israeli academia, the university engages directly with factual clarification. In other cases, it reaches out to institutions to challenge decisions and defend academic cooperation.

In more serious situations, legal action is considered, particularly when there is clear discrimination, such as rejection based purely on institutional affiliation. Israeli universities also coordinate through shared legal representation in Brussels and exchange information regularly, since many of these challenges are common experiences.

How successful have you been?
There are some tactical wins, like being able to stop our researchers from being excluded from consortia by threatening to collapse them and bring lawsuits for theft of intellectual property. Once our researchers are part of developing the research agenda, they cannot be excluded from the research proposal.

We have also received some clarification, albeit not as strong as we would like, from the European research authorities that they view boycotts as incompatible with their mission.

We've had specific victories that affiliated associations have won in Spain and in the UK, targeting specific boycott decisions, holding in both cases that the boycotts are a form of discrimination on the basis of nationality or institutional affiliation.

I think we've been able somewhat to mitigate the forms of boycott, so some institutions, instead of breaking agreements, suspended agreements. Instead of breaking all ties, they suspended some ties.

For us, the main goal for the time being is actually keeping Israel in Horizon. This is the big prize, and so far, it seems to be still on course.

Ultimately, it's about institutions growing a spine. We've actually recently seen the Free University of Berlin issue a very impressive statement that they are for academic freedom, and under no circumstances will they boycott Israeli universities, period. If you make it clear that this is your article of faith, then there is no room for discussion.

We are also seeing relative successes in countries where anti-boycott legislation exists. In the UK, there is an Equality Act and an Academic Freedom Act that make BDS very difficult to pull off legally. This is also happening in the US, to some extent, and we are hopeful that more countries will pass legislation or regulatory frameworks. ■

Inside the President's Office

Exploring the objects that reflect the University's legacy and ongoing story

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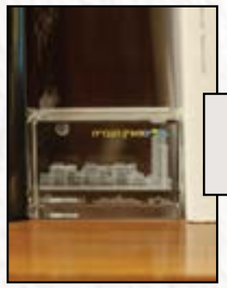
In his office, Prof. Tamir Sheafer is surrounded by a small collection of artifacts he selected—each one reflecting a different chapter in the story of the Hebrew University. From its founding moments to its leading figures and fields of research, these objects bring together history, ideas, and innovation in one shared space. Together, they quietly connect the University's past with its present and future.

Collection curated by Dr. Michal Mor, *Curator, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

ALBERT EINSTEIN – VISION AND LEGACY
A portrait of Einstein and a facsimile of his Theory of Relativity represent his enduring connection to the University, combining his scientific legacy with his role as a founding intellectual force. His commitment is today reflected in the planned Einstein House, dedicated to preserving his archives and legacy.

NEUROSCIENCE AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE MIND
A 3D-printed brain selectivity model from the laboratory of Prof. Yonatan Loewenstein at the Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences, illustrating how different brain regions respond to stimuli, learning, and decision-making through mapped levels of neural selectivity.



FROM RESEARCH TO INNOVATION – HUJI TECH
A model of the Gav-Yam Hebrew Campus, adjacent to the Edmond J. Safra Campus, showcases the University's ongoing transformation into a global innovation hub. The Campus creates a direct and dynamic connection between academic research and industry, ensuring that Jerusalem continues to serve as a magnet for the world's brightest minds.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE LANGUAGE OF PROTECTION
A replica of a Byzantine-era (5th century CE) limestone amulet plaque from the Institute of Archaeology collections, reflecting ancient Jewish traditions of protection and blessing. The recurring motif of the menorah appears across amulets, jewelry, and "Mizrach" and "Shiviti" plaques as a symbol of identity, light, and safeguarding.

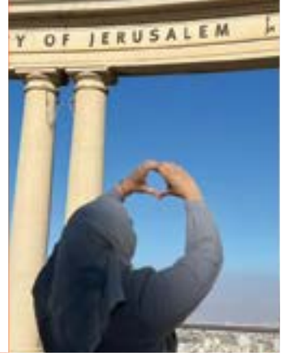
THE MOTHER OF WHEAT – FROM HERITAGE TO GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY
A botanical herbarium sheet of wild wheat collected by Jewish botanist Aaron Aaronsohn in 1906, preserved at the University's Herbarium. This artifact connects early agricultural discovery with today's research in plant genetics aimed at improving resilience and food security.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN
Replica of the 1918 trowel used to lay the Hebrew University's cornerstone, alongside archival inauguration materials including the "Le-Yom Chageinu" document and admission ticket to the 1925 opening ceremony.

LEAH GOLDBERG – VOICE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT
Original writings, drawings, and handwritten materials by Leah Goldberg, poet and scholar at the Hebrew University. A pioneering Professor of Comparative Literature, Goldberg gave us the language to process the human soul. Through her delicate drawings, illustrations, and exquisite handwriting, Goldberg expressed "the pain of two homelands"—the experience of roots planted in two distinct landscapes.



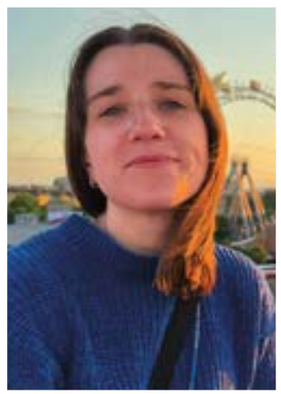



humans of HUJI

Meet the students, faculty, and alumni who make the Hebrew University a hive of humanity














Alex Katola

Alumnus, MSc Nutritional Sciences, The Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Coming from the resource-constrained region of Malawi, it was always my goal to use science to contribute to society.

My research focused on orange maize (Mthikinya), a traditional maize variety with the potential to improve vitamin A intake among rural populations. In Malawi, micronutrient deficiencies remain a major public health concern, and I was therefore particularly interested in whether this locally grown crop could provide a sustainable dietary solution to vitamin A deficiency. My research examined how traditional storage and processing affect its nutritional value, as well as whether communities would accept and consume foods made from orange maize.

It is incredibly fulfilling to solve problems through research, and I love seeing how work that began in the classroom can impact the wider community. The Hebrew University opened so many doors for me academically through my mentors, and professionally as well.

ON BEING A ROLE MODEL FOR HIS SIBLINGS:
I became the inspiration in my family. I am the youngest of eight, but the first to earn a bachelor's degree, and now three are following in my footsteps and pursuing degrees in higher education.

Prof. Yaniv Dover

Vice Dean of Research and Associate Professor in Marketing, Hebrew University Business School

I study how information spreads in modern markets, how people make decisions, and how individual choices collectively shape firms' reputations.

The world we operate in is noisy, and human decision-making is far from fully rational. Ideas and beliefs can spread quickly and widely, even when they are only loosely grounded in reality. I'm not making a value judgment here—just observing how easily people can be influenced.

A central part of my research focuses on online reviews and their impact on consumer perception. For example, consumers often assume that certain brands such as premium jeans labels are higher in quality and therefore justify paying significantly more. Yet in many cases, there is no objective way to verify these claims, and perceptions are driven largely by social signals, judgment, and cognitive bias.

More recently, I have begun researching how artificial intelligence is shaping our lives and the economy.

For instance, when a bank uses AI to decide whether someone qualifies for a loan, it raises important questions about how these systems are built and what data they rely on. In many cases, we still don't fully understand how these decisions are made.

WHAT ASPECT OF AI FASCINATES YOU?
One of the most fascinating questions for me is how these AI systems reach their conclusions, and what biases or assumptions may be embedded within them.

Prof. Christa Asterhan

Besen Family Chair in Integrated Studies, Seymour Fox School of Education

Most of my research is experimental, but one of the latest studies we published was about social media and Israeli teenagers during the recent war. It deals with how Israeli teens' online presence during the war affects their wellbeing.

The study was conducted immediately following October 7, when terrible images and the polarizing debate about the existence of Israel had already surfaced online.

Young people today are exposed to all kinds of debates and discourse, but they don't have the tools or experience to try and understand and contextualize (or even listen).

Our research focuses not just on teaching people how to use rationality in reasoning, but also how to truly listen and engage with different perspectives.

We developed a bot that argues with the user in a safe environment. It intentionally disagrees, but in a deliberate way, while listening to the user's argument. It doesn't replace human interaction, but it can help guide discussions between humans, so that they can see the value of being engaged with others who hold different opinions.

I believe that people can learn how to disagree more constructively and be better listeners, but they don't necessarily have the tools, drive, or incentive.

On being at the Hebrew University:
I like that at the Hebrew University we don't compromise on standards. We work hard and test our limits.

People come here to find the limits of their abilities. Once they find them, they push them further and ask – what's next? This holds true for faculty members and students alike.

ON DIVERSITY AT HUJI:
My graduate students come from a variety of fields, such as education, psychology, communication, and physics. They each bring something different to the table, and we get to tackle topics from different perspectives. My research group includes Jews, Muslims, and Christians, secular and religious, Israeli, and Korean. Talk about a wonderful mix of cultures!

"Being a Diversity Ambassador stems from wanting to be a positive influence for people. I'm honored to represent and support Haredi students to show that we belong in institutions of higher education, like the University."

Yehoshua Levetal

Master's degree student, Seymour Fox School of Education

Noam Taragin

Law and Economics student, Faculty of Law

He was supposed to start university that week.

Noam was days away from beginning a dual degree in Law and Economics at the Hebrew University when everything changed.

From a young age, he had been driven by justice and a desire to serve something larger than himself.

Then came October 7.

"You could feel it in the air—a need to protect your people and your country. I put my academic life on hold and went back to the army."

Noam was immediately called up for reserve service as a commander in the Golani unit, serving hundreds of days in Gaza and Lebanon.

On November 19, 2024, he was wounded in Lebanon. "An explosive drone hit me and my soldiers. I was hit by shrapnel in my lungs and my left leg. I remember thinking—these are my last moments. I told myself, this can't be over now. It's too early. I have more plans."

He was evacuated to Rambam Hospital in Haifa, where he was placed in a coma for three weeks.

"When I woke up, I saw my family. Everyone was crying. I didn't understand what was going on. I didn't even realize I was in a hospital."

During his long recovery, professors and friends from Jerusalem made the two-to-three-hour drive almost daily to visit him. After three months in Rambam, he was transferred to Hadassah Mount Scopus, where he continued treatment for another four months.

The university arranged academic support, sending assistants to help him study, and in the end, he completed his exams from the hospital.

On his first day back on campus, he remembers walking up the small ramp leading into Hebrew University. "I was so excited just to walk up it on my own legs."

Prof. Tomer Broude, Dean of the Faculty of Law, said: "When I see Noam walking on campus, I feel both joy and admiration for his capacity to overcome."

For Noam, coming back to study wasn't only about finishing his degree. It was about returning to the path of life he had before.

Today, Noam is interviewing for a Supreme Court internship. And in April 2026, he ran the Jerusalem Half Marathon (21K).

> I kept thinking about the days I was in a wheelchair, lying in a hospital bed, and everything I went through to get here. I feel like my achievements can give others strength.

Amal Mashahreh

BA student, Arabic Language and Literature, and Education

I was born and raised in East Jerusalem. I got married at 17 and did not finish high school. I come from a family where my parents did not receive an education, and being a first-generation academic meant facing many challenges along the way.

Now, 16 years later, I am in the final year of my BA. By doing so, I am breaking the cycle. I want to open new horizons for my own children and for other young people in East Jerusalem, showing them that they, too, can pursue higher education and study at the Hebrew University.

Education is the best way to create change.

The Hebrew University has given me so much. It helped me understand society and see different perspectives.

I have Jewish friends, Christian friends, and Muslim friends.

At home, my five children, aged 11 to 16, are part of my academic journey. Every day is a new day. I come home and tell them everything, from my first lecture to what is happening with my friends, and I listen to them too. My husband is also very supportive, which makes this all so much easier.

> **WHAT'S NEXT:**
> I hope to continue at the Hebrew University, complete my master's degree and then pursue a doctorate. This is my time.

Dr. Nofar Mazursky

The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare

I am devoted to improving the lives of Israel's most marginalized young people through clinical practice, research, and the pursuit of social justice.

My current work focuses on human trafficking in Israel, examining different forms of exploitation and developing ways to identify and support vulnerable young people.

As a new member of the faculty of the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, I draw on my experiences of growing up in Jerusalem, my work with children in mental health care settings, and my doctoral research on LGBTQ+ youth to better understand and improve the lives of marginalized young people.

> A first-generation university graduate, I completed all my degrees at the Hebrew University. Becoming a faculty member represents the fulfillment of a personal and professional dream, and I am determined to continue advancing knowledge, practice, and policy for populations vulnerable to exploitation and human trafficking.

Dr. Oded Zinger

Department Chair,
Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry

I'm a social historian, so I'm really interested in people. I work on documents from the Cairo Geniza that attest to everyday experiences of Jews in Medieval Islamic countries. My aim is to show Jewish life in its richness and complexity, not just the normative elite Judaism that is found in books, but everyday reality.

Geniza documents are usually written in Judeo-Arabic (Arabic written with Hebrew letters), and they capture everyday Jewish life in a way that we don't usually see. It's shopping lists, letters, legal documents, small notes and doodles. Through these documents we see that Jews were fully embedded within Islamic society. They're writing and thinking in Arabic and are deeply rooted within the cultural currents and social fabric of the surrounding Islamic society. There are no ghettos, and Jews are living in mixed courtyards and neighborhoods within the Muslim cities.

My focus is on family life, and I study mostly court documents and family letters. Letters can be from mothers to their sons, between brothers and sisters, and so on. I particularly enjoy exploring petitions and letters to the community asking for help. One petition is from a poor, starving woman whose husband left her with three children weighing on her neck, while another is from a poor woman complaining that her only robe was stolen when she went to bathe in the Nile.

I do this because I'm just interested in everyday life.

ON DIVIDING HIS TIME BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES

During my studies, I spent my time between Israel and the US. I did my BA in the US; came here for an MA, and then went back to the US to do my PhD at Princeton. Once I was finished with the coursework, I returned here to do most of the writing. My wife and I wanted to stay here, and I was extremely lucky to get a position in the Jewish History department, and now I'm serving as its head. Sometimes I present myself as the most American of the Israeli scholars in my field, and the most Israeli of the American scholars.

Itay Peled

Alumnus,
BSc Physics and Environmental Science,
Faculty of Science

Q: What was your inspiration behind co-founding the Jerusalem Food Rescuers non-profit?

A: *It started as a way to fight fruit and vegetable wastage, while simultaneously educating people. We started in one neighborhood with a few students, mostly from the Hebrew University, and seven years later, we're operating across the city to rescue food, reduce waste, and build communities.*

People often think it's just about giving away fruits and vegetables, but it's much more than that: it's about creating connections within the city.

Q: When you say "connections," what does that look like on the ground?

A: *We work with communities across Jerusalem: Jewish, Palestinian, secular, and religious. People come for the food, but stay for the social interaction.*

We refer to our concept as a 'neighborhood food market' because it feels like going to a farmers' market. It's a place where people can hold workshops, celebrate together, ask for help, or even develop into leaders themselves.

Take one single mother who first came just to collect food for her family, but a few weeks later said she wanted to expand the scheme to her own neighborhood. Today she's leading her own market, organizing volunteers, and representing her community in meetings with the municipality. Another woman showed up one day with a table full of old dolls she was repairing to give away alongside the fruit and vegetables, creating a trend where people could donate other things too.

These are the moments that remind me that once you create the opportunity, people incorporate and develop their own creativity and dignity.

Q: How does your academic background fit into all of this?

A: *While I don't use the physics I learned every day, I do use the way it taught me to think. I learned to look at the same problem from different angles, to understand different people's needs, and to build partnerships that create better solutions.*

The Hebrew University is a beautiful playground. It was a place where I could focus on learning, test new ideas, meet the best people, and trust that together we could do something big.

Looking back, I realize that's exactly where this journey began.

"My dream is for our research insights and findings to be used directly in treating patients, improving their health and quality of life, and making them smile again."

Prof. Yael Houri

Faculty of Dental Medicine

Dr. Omri Finkel

The Alexander Silberman Institute of Life Sciences

I was always interested in nature, conservation, and ecology. During my undergraduate studies, I was inspired by a professor who spoke of newly discovered exotic microbial habitats in the deep sea. It felt like a new age of discovery.

In our lab, we study microbes in the soil: how they function, how they interact with plants, and how they shape ecological processes.

My goal is to connect genetic and genomic data with ecological processes, so we can build better models of how the biosphere works.

Most microbes on Earth cannot be cultivated in the lab. Much of what we know about them comes from the DNA that we collect from environmental samples. There are thousands of microbes that form associations with plants, and for most of them we still do not know exactly what they are doing.

Soil is everywhere, and it affects everything. We have this huge potential of an enormous genetic bank that's found in the soil. It's like a whole world has opened, a new frontier for understanding biodiversity on Earth.

ON WORKING AT HUJI:

I feel very connected to the University and to the city of Jerusalem. For me, the University symbolizes the best parts of this country and what it has been able to do for humanity. I'm extremely privileged to be a part of this tradition.

Dina Shantsev

MA International Relations (Accelerated Track)

I always wanted to understand how the world works. Even as a kid, I was fascinated by how governments interact, how countries make decisions, and how the international system fits together. That's what brought me to the Hebrew University.

I commute from Ma'alot Tarshiha, just a few kilometers from the Lebanese border but 150 kilometers from Jerusalem, and continued to do so throughout the entire war. I travel home almost every chance I get because my mom is alone. She was never evacuated because we aren't within the 4-kilometer range of the border, but we were in a combat zone, and you could still hear all the fighting.

It's incredibly hard to function day to day in wartime, but my mom mapped out routes based on bomb shelters and managed to keep working. Sometimes it was truly difficult to focus on my studies when there was tension in the north.

Studying international relations during this time has been especially meaningful. You think you understand how the world works, and then you learn something new that completely changes your perspective. You begin looking at historical events, current affairs, and global politics in a very different way.

For me, coming to university was about more than earning a degree. I'm the first person in my family to go to university, and my mother is incredibly proud. In many ways, I'm doing something she never had the opportunity to do herself. The university has supported me as a first-generation student, making it possible for me to focus on my studies and pursue my goals.

The university hasn't just changed the way I understand international relations. It has expanded my view of the world, and my place in it.

Waseem Younis

Third year student, Faculty of Law

Academia is the way.

I'm from an Arab village in the north that has a population of around 25,000. When I look at the situation there and in many Arab communities, I see problems like limited opportunities, and an increase in crime. I believe that many of these problems are a direct result of the lack of access to higher education.

My father is a teacher, and he always believed in education as a way to create a better future for our community. That belief inspired me and is one of the reasons I chose to pursue higher education.

I'm honored to be a Diversity Ambassador. In this capacity I tutor first-year students through the Equal Opportunities Unit, and I also serve as Vice-Chair on the Forum of Arab Law Students.

ON LEADING BY EXAMPLE

For me, helping students see education as a possibility is just as important as my own studies.

Prof. Aya Ben Yakov

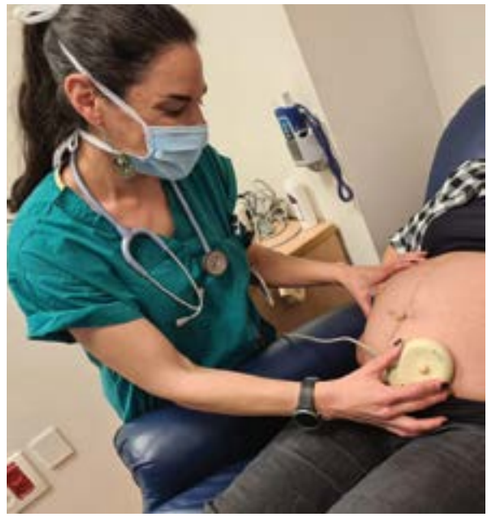
The Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences (ELSC)

As an undergraduate at the Hebrew University studying cognitive science and computer science, I found myself drawn to questions about how we think, remember, and make sense of experiences.

Today, I am exploring how the brain actually stores experiences. Do we constantly 'save' information, moment by moment, like a recording device? Or do we wait for boundaries marking the 'end' of an event, such as changes in context or shifts in attention, and then package the whole thing into a single memory?

In my opinion, memory is a crucial part of what makes us *us*. My ultimate objective is to understand the building blocks or 'molecules' of our memories.

What I love about ELSC is that you don't stay in your lane, you interact with other disciplines all the time. And those interactions transform the science.



Gila Zarbiv

Alumnus Midwifery, Research, and the Human Side of Care

"Are you a midwife? Oh, thank goodness."

For Gila Zarbiv, those words capture the reason she does her work.

As a midwife, researcher, and PhD candidate, Zarbiv has spent her career supporting women during some of the most vulnerable and significant moments of their lives. Whether through clinical care, research, advocacy, or policy work, her goal remains the same: ensuring that women have access to compassionate, knowledgeable care when they need it most.

Zarbiv's entire adult life has been closely connected to the Hebrew University and Hadassah. Shortly after moving to Israel from the United States in 2007, she met her husband, then a medical student at the Hebrew University Hadassah Medical School. Their first date took place at the hospital, and later, their children were born there.

She later enrolled in nursing studies through the Hebrew University and went on to become a midwife. After that, she returned to complete a master's degree in women's health, a program she calls life-changing. While she had always been drawn to research, it was at the Hebrew University that she came to understand how research can directly improve clinical care.

Her academic advisor, Dr. Anna Woloski-Wruble, taught her to bridge the worlds of medicine and academia, shaping her belief that meaningful change in healthcare depends on evidence—and on clinicians who can interpret and apply it in practice.

Zarbiv worked for more than a decade as a midwife at Hadassah University Medical Center. Today, while completing her PhD, she continues to provide emergency clinical care through a joint program with Magen David Adom and Hatzalah. When calls come in involving miscarriage, severe bleeding, pelvic pain, or other urgent women's health situations, she responds with her emergency bag and clinical expertise.

She is deeply committed to the belief that midwives play a critical role in healthcare.

"Midwives save lives," she says, emphasizing that every woman should have access to a midwife when she needs one. She recalls a recent encounter with a woman who had been experiencing severe distress after childbirth. In that moment, the woman looked up at her and whispered, "Are you a midwife? Oh, thank goodness."

For Zarbiv, moments like these define her work. In situations marked by uncertainty, fear, and stress, research shows women need someone by their side who understands, listens, and knows how to care for them.

Looking ahead, her vision is to implement the overwhelming evidence that every woman needs to have access to a midwife— not only during childbirth, but across the full spectrum of her health. She says midwives can safely provide most aspects of women's healthcare, while connecting patients to physicians as well when specialized care is needed.

"Everything comes back to that moment of recognition and relief from a patient," Zarbiv says. It is a reminder of what care is ultimately about: being present for another person when it matters most.

Prof. David Weisburd

Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law

People sometimes imagine scientific breakthroughs happen in laboratories.

Mine began on the streets of Brooklyn.

As a young researcher, I spent a year walking with community police officers through some of the city's toughest neighborhoods. My training had taught me to think about crime in terms of people and communities. But day after day, I noticed something that didn't fit that picture. We kept returning to the same one or two streets.

That simple observation changed the course of my career. It led me to ask a different question: what if crime isn't spread evenly across a city? What if it concentrates in just a handful of places?

For decades, I've followed that question wherever the evidence has taken me. Along the way, it's changed the way police departments around the world think about crime prevention.

But science has never been about proving myself right. It's about being willing to discover that you're wrong.

That's one of the things I've valued most about the Hebrew University. Good science is built on rigorous thinking, asking difficult questions, and following the evidence wherever it leads. It's an environment that values ideas over certainty and encourages researchers to keep pushing beyond what they already know.

The questions keep changing. Today I'm studying how living in crime hotspots might even affect people's biological markers, supported by an Israel Science Foundation grant. That's the joy of research.

Mazal-Tagev Adela

Third year student, School of Pharmacy

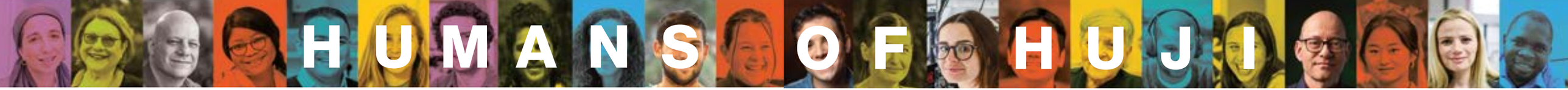
I am the eldest daughter of a single mother. I'm the first one in my family to attend university, and I'm a proud Ethiopian Israeli from Netivot. I know what I want: to attend medical school; to complete a PhD; to conduct meaningful research; and to have a career spent improving the lives of others.

Growing up, money was always an issue. My mother raised three daughters alone, doing everything she could to keep the family afloat. University felt out of reach; neither of my younger sisters planned to pursue higher education.

I'm honored to be a trailblazer in my community. One of my sisters is already a student, and the other plans to begin following her IDF service. Friends from home have also decided to pursue higher education because of me. It is both humbling and motivating.

My academic path has not been straightforward. I discovered that I have been living with undiagnosed ADHD and anxiety. The University's support was life-changing, and it transformed both my academic life and my sense of self.

> I've had struggles, but I wouldn't be the person I am today without the things I went through.



Prof. Ofra Benny

School of Pharmacy - Institute of Drug Research, Faculty of Medicine

If you want to solve medical problems, you have to understand a patient's need and build the technology around it.

I'm an engineer at heart. I studied biotechnology and spent seven years at Harvard Medical School in the lab of Dr. Judah Folkman, who pioneered research into how cancers use blood vessels to grow and spread. I got to witness the direct impact of scientific discoveries on a patient's life. That experience shaped everything I do.

When I came to the Hebrew University in 2013, I wanted to create a multidisciplinary lab where biology and engineering could work hand in hand.

My research is about making cancer treatments more effective, more targeted, and ultimately kinder to patients.

By combining nanomedicine, tissue engineering, and cancer biology, we design nanoparticles that can carry chemotherapy directly into the tumors, making treatment more precise and reducing damage to healthy tissue.

Our physical proximity to the Hadassah Medical Center means that scientists and physicians are constantly learning from one another, allowing us to transfer discoveries from lab to clinic (and back), always keeping the patient at the center of everything we do.

WHAT'S YOUR DREAM?

My dream is to see the technologies we've developed reach patients and become part of the revolution happening in cancer treatment.

Dolev Asher

Second year BSc student, Rachel and Selim Benin School for Computer Science and Engineering

On studying science

My main goal is to give back to science. I want to push the boundaries of what we know, even if only a little. That's what motivates me.

On the freedom to explore

As a participant in the Amirim Honors Program, I get to design and carry out my own research under the guidance of a professor. Eventually, I present my findings to the entire program. It gives me the freedom to pursue questions that genuinely interest me.

ON TEACHING

During my military service, I was an instructor. One day I'd like to return to teaching. There's something very meaningful about helping other people learn and grow.

Prof. Zvi Peleg

Robert H. Smith Institute of Plant Sciences and Genetics in Agriculture

I've been a part of the faculty since 2000. My lab is working on crop adaptation to the changing climate, with a particular focus on drought, which is the main challenge facing the Israeli agro-system. One of our solutions is to reintroduce sesame into the Israeli cropping system.

Sesame is a superfood, with lots of nutrients, and Israelis eat it almost every day. Yet we import 80,000 tons every year, which is not sustainable or a way to create food security. In my opinion, this is a national security issue.

Our goal is to make sesame a sustainable crop in Israel, and from it produce tahini, oil, and sesame grain for baking and cooking.

Our most important mission at the Faculty of Agriculture is to support Israel's farmers with science. In fact, we need to support the country's entire agricultural ecosystem as the climate gets crazier and crazier. That means working closely with farmers because you want your research to be rooted in agriculture, not just come up with wild ideas by yourself. In fact, the move to sesame came from the farmers who are looking for alternatives to diversify their crop rotation.

For the past two years, we have been working with farmers in the Gaza envelope area, including kibbutzim such as Nahal Oz, Kfar Aza, Saad, OrHaner and Re'im. It is part of the rehabilitation plan for the area after October 7. We are trying to reestablish agriculture there and bring them more options for profitable crops.

Dr. Michal Breker-Dekel

Plant and Environmental Sciences, Sheldon Lavin Center for Safe, Secure and Sustainable Food Systems

I am a very curious person, always searching for how things work, and what is the meaning of it. A lot of my work focuses on chloroplasts, the organelles that make photosynthesis possible. In that sense, they sit at the center of life as we know it on Earth. If you can understand how they function, you can begin to understand something very fundamental about biology itself.

Curiosity is what first drew me to science during my military service in the 8200 intelligence unit. That was my first exposure to systems in terms of data, patterns and complexity. I didn't think of it as 'science' then, but it trained the way I look at problems: to try to understand the structure beneath what you're seeing.

In the academic setting and particularly at the Hebrew University, I found something similar. The university gives you space to ask questions without immediately needing an applicable answer. That freedom is rare, and it really matters. It lets you build tools, collaborations, and entire experimental systems that don't exist yet, and mostly require time and exploration.

We now work with algae, chloroplasts and microbiomes – all different layers of life interacting with each other.

Sometimes we find principles that repeat across systems that look completely unrelated and this is always the most exciting moment for me. If we do this right, the work might even eventually inform how we think about crops and sustainability.

Ultimately, what I hope for most is quite simple: that we understand a little more today than we did yesterday.

Efrat Seckbach

Fifth year medical student

I start my day like any mother, getting everyone ready for school. We have nine children, so mornings are not quiet. Once everyone's out the door, I switch from mom to medical student and head to the University. The commute is long, but it's also my quiet time to study.

My classmates are half my age; some are the same age as my children. I was a teacher for years before starting medicine, so I guess I bring that same energy — patient, caring, and organized.

Sometimes I think about how far I've come. I already have a PhD in the History of the Land of Israel — and now I'm back to being a student again!

The moment I walk in the house, I'm Mom again, with chores and listening to everyone's stories. It's a full house, but I wouldn't trade it for anything.

When the house finally quiets down, I hit the books again. This is my study time. It's late, but I'm used to it. Medicine is demanding — but so is motherhood. You just keep going.

ADVICE COLUMN:
You can build your dream, one small step at a time. Don't give up, no matter where life takes you. It's never too late to begin again.

Mohammed Ghosheh

PhD candidate, Bioengineering

I grew up in East Jerusalem and left to study biomedical engineering in Turkey, where I graduated at the top of my class. But I always knew I wanted to come back to Jerusalem. Everyone encouraged me to go to the Hebrew University, specifically to Prof. Yaakov Nahmias' lab. I started as a master's student and then continued on to my PhD, with my studies focused on the human heart.

Today, my research involves developing advanced 3D heart models that can help scientists better understand cardiac disease.

Before I arrived, I wasn't sure a place like the Hebrew University was for someone like me. As an Arab from East Jerusalem and a non-Hebrew speaker, it felt out of reach. Instead, I found a welcoming environment and became the first Arab student to join the Alexander Grass Center for Bioengineering.

ON HIS WIFE, WHO ALSO ATTENDED HUJI:
I met my wife, a fellow scientist, at the University. She was finishing her master's, and we were in the same building - she was one floor below mine. She's a microbiologist, and she finished her master's last year, and I am encouraging her to also move forward with her PhD.

Dr. Eran Blacher

Assistant Professor, The Alexander Silberman Institute of Life Sciences

People often think that the brain works in isolation, but in reality, our bodies are far more connected than we ever imagined.

In fact, some of the biggest clues to neurological diseases like Alzheimer's, ALS, or strokes may actually be found in the gut. This idea transformed my understanding of neurological disease.

I see the gut as a communication hub. Tiny molecules produced by gut bacteria that can travel through the body, influence the immune system, and ultimately shape what happens in the brain.

Understanding this hidden dialogue could open entirely new ways to prevent or treat neurological diseases that have affected millions. Ultimately, our goal is to unlock the secrets of longevity through the gut-brain axis.

I love that science still has mysteries this fundamental waiting to be solved. What keeps me going isn't the promise of a miracle cure or a headline. It's the chance to understand how life works a little better than we did yesterday.

The most exciting discoveries are often the ones that remind us how much there is still left to learn. Every answer opens up another question. To me, that's the privilege of being a scientist.

People often ask how bacteria in the gut could possibly affect diseases like Alzheimer's or stroke, and if we want to understand these diseases, we have to understand those conversations.

What excites me isn't just discovering something new. It's changing the way we think. Every once in a while, research reaches a point where the old model no longer explains what we're seeing, and suddenly an entirely different perspective opens up. That's where progress happens.

I spend my days asking questions that don't have obvious answers. How do the gut and brain communicate? If we can understand those conversations happening inside the body, maybe we can find out.

Science teaches you humility. You spend months testing an idea that seems beautiful, only to discover the mice completely disagree with you. Failure isn't the exception—it's the job. But every once in a while, after all those setbacks, something clicks. For a brief moment, you know something about the world that nobody else knows. Those moments are extraordinary.

"In fundamental science we're looking for the phenomena that will form the building blocks of future technology."

Prof. Hadar Steinberg

The Racah Institute of Physics, Faculty of Science

RESEARCH THAT MADE HEADLINES IN 2026

From decoding the origins of human language to engineering the next generation of cancer therapies, the Hebrew University's research spans the full width of human inquiry — and its impact is felt far beyond the lab.

Sound Shapes the Brain Differently for Males and Females

INTESTINAL STEM CELLS CA… SALMONE…

NEW DRUG COMBO OUTPERFORMS TAMIFLU IN FIGHTING FLU

RESEARCHERS PUSH EARLIEST EVIDENCE OF HUMAN FIRE USE BACK TO OVER A MILLION YEARS

A New Papyrus from Israel Reveals a Spectacular Criminal Case from

Cultured Meat's N… Secret Ingred…

RETHINKING WHERE LIFE COULD EXIST BEYOND EARTH

…TRADE-OFF BETWEEN …D LONGEVITY UNCOVERED

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE THREATENS VISION IN PETS AND HORSES

A New AI Breakthrough Could Change the Long Search for Rare Disease Diagnoses

This Tiny Bra… …Network Co…

Collective Trauma Can Trigger Immediate Tobacco and Cannabis Cravings

Gene Therapy Delivers Missing Gene Directly to Infant's Brain, Marking Historic Milestone in Precision Medicine

Early Detection of Parkinson's with Novel …sed Blood Test

BEE AND FROG PROTEINS: NATURE'S DOUBLE DEFEN… AGAINST FARM SUPERBUGS

THE BRAIN PREDICTS SOCIAL INTERACTION BEFORE IT STARTS

HEALTHIER COWS, CREAMIE… HOW STEM CELLS COULD RE…

Early Dete… Parkinson's … Novel RNA-… Blood Test

Why Botox Doesn't Kill Nerv… New Study Uncovers Brain's… Hidden Defense

Gulf of Aqaba Corals Survive Record-Breaking Heatwaves, Offering Hope Amid Global Coral Crisis

Breakthrough in 3D Printing Glass — Without Glue

Astronomers Detect Radio Signals from a Black Hole Tearing Apart a Star

Hope for Aggre…sive Breast Cancer

Addictive by Design? Why AI 'Friends' Need Regulation

…Industry Revealed in …ncient Tunnels

Humanitarian Aid Can Inadvertently Prolong Armed Conflicts

SETTLING DOWN VS. SETTLING: NEW STUDY …ROVES BEING SINGLE BEATS A BAD RELATIONSHIP

…E MYSTERIOUS GOBI WALL UNCOVERED

DRONES AND GENETICS TEAM UP FOR DROUGHT-SMARTER WHEAT

15,000 Years Ago, Children Shaped … Before … Farming

FAST-TRACKI… COMPRESSIN…

Treatment Triples Survival Rates in Severe Blood Loss Cases

Hidden History of Israeli-Syrian Peace Efforts Across Seven Decades Revealed

Whale Song Has Structure Similar to Human Language

…romise in Fighting Fatty Liver Disease

Viruses Hidden Within Fungi

Hebrew University Administration Predict the Headlines of 2046

PROF. TAMIR SHEAFER
PRESIDENT

Bridging Continents: Hebrew University Solidifies Top 20 Global Ranking, Launches Historic Consortium with 10 Leading Middle Eastern and Far Eastern Universities

PROF. ORON SHAGRIR
RECTOR

The Hebrew University is a source of great pride—to its students, staff, graduates, friends, and to Israeli society as a whole

ADV. NAAMA KAUFMAN-FASS
VICE PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR-GENERAL

From the heart of Jerusalem, Hebrew University prepares the next generation of leaders and advances research that strengthen Israel and addresses some of the world's greatest challenges

YISHAI FRAENKEL
VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The Hebrew University Receives Its Next Trio of Nobel Prizes for AI-Driven Scientific Revolutions

PROF. AARON PALMON
VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Hebrew University: A Global Leader in Innovation— and a Model for a Shared Society

PROF. MONA KHOURY
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STRATEGY AND DIVERSITY

Hebrew University Sets a New Standard for Academic Excellence, Meaningful Representation of Israel's Diverse Society, and a University Community Built on Belonging and Inclusion

PROF. GUY HARPAZ
VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Hebrew University is a leading international research institution, with an extensive network of collaborations with the world's leading research institutions that drive scientific innovation and impact

FROM BATTLE *to Saddle*

IDF veterans find healing through horses








How do you help heal a wounded soul? Sometimes, by placing another wounded soul in its care.

This concept of reciprocal healing is being put into practice by the Hebrew University's Koret School of Veterinary Medicine, which recently completed a five-month pilot program pairing IDF veterans with wounded horses in need of rehabilitation.

The pilot proved so successful that the next cohort has grown from the original four participants to 28.

A Pilot with Heart

The program, called "In Good Hands – The Way of the Horse," paired each veteran with a horse in need of long-term treatment and rehabilitation. Six horses were gathered from humane organizations across Israel - animals that, much like the veterans who would come to care for them, needed time, patience, and support.

For the last four months of the five-month program, each veteran worked one-on-one with his chosen horse. Through dedicated care and consistent interaction, both horse and handler gradually learned to rely on one another.

The veterans described the program as deeply meaningful. As one participant put it: "I think this should be obligatory for every discharged soldier."

Learning the Way of the Horse

The daily work was hands-on and practical. Under the guidance of a seasoned equine veterinarian, the teaching hospital at Koret School of Veterinary Medicine, and two horse technicians, the veterans groomed, trained and cared for their horses, learning everything from basic handling and first aid to recognizing signs of illness. As their confidence grew, so did the relationship between horse and handler.

One veteran even helped bring around Abu, a one-eyed horse who had barely been handled by humans before. Week by week, Abu became more comfortable with his new companion until, eventually, the horse accepted his care. It was a small, quiet triumph that captured the spirit of the whole program.

Alongside the horsemanship, there was an emotional and psychological dimension. Once a week, the group sat down together with a mental health professional and a fellow combat veteran to talk through their experiences, both with the horses and their lives beyond the stable. Over time, the weekly meetings built something that went beyond the program itself: a sense of belonging. The individuals didn't just complete a program together; they became friends.

The impact had a ripple effect. Families got involved too, learning to enjoy "the way of the horse" alongside the veterans. Riding sessions on horses other than their equine rehabilitation partners, guided by a certified therapeutic riding instructor, added another layer of connection between veteran and animal.

Finding Their Stride

With the completion of the first cohort, "In Good Hands" is preparing for a much bigger second chapter.

The entire project takes place within the grounds of teaching hospital of the School of Veterinary Medicine in Beit Dagan, not far from Tel Aviv.

Each session begins with the veterans working with the horses. This is followed by a session from the course on how to administer first aid to animals, and then it is a return to working with the horses. The final session of the day is therapy for the men themselves.

If the pilot proved anything, it's that healing can begin in unorthodox ways. Sometimes it begins with actions: showing up for another living being who needs you.

In helping a wounded horse learn to trust again, these veterans were quietly learning to do the same themselves. ■

"

I BELIEVE THAT TREATING A SICK ANIMAL IS MORE SOOTHING TO THE SOUL THAN TREATING A HEALTHY ONE.

IN A PARTICULARLY MOVING MOMENT, ONE OF THE SOLDIERS ON THE PROGRAM TOLD THE GROUP THAT HE BELIEVES EVERY SOLDIER SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO THROUGH SUCH AN EMPOWERING EXPERIENCE AT THE END OF THEIR OPERATIONAL SERVICE.

"

MERAV SHAMIR.
DIRECTOR, KORET SCHOOL
OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

World of Friends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The Hebrew University's supporters and Friends Associations are integral partners in the development and advancement of the University. In the pages ahead you will meet some of the individuals who actively support the University and its mission across the globe.

American Friends of the Hebrew University (AFHU)

1 | 56th Annual George Katz Torch of Learning Award Luncheon
AFHU honored Rose Marie E. Glazer, General Counsel of American International Group, Inc., and Susan L. Saltzstein, Partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, with the 56th Annual George A. Katz Torch of Learning Award at Cipriani Midtown in New York City, raising more than $1.4 million to support the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Faculty of Law.

From left: *Joshua Rednik, AFHU CEO; Susan L. Saltzstein, Partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP; Rose Marie E. Glazer, General Counsel of American International Group, Inc.; and Pamela Nadler Emmerich, AFHU President Photo Credit: Hechler Photographers*

2 | Stanley M. Bogen Vision Award Dinner
AFHU's Southeast Region hosted the inaugural Stanley M. Bogen Vision Award Dinner at The Breakers in Palm Beach, FL. The event raised over $1.5 million in support of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Center for Trauma Recovery, as well as students and faculty serving in Israel's Reserves.

From left: *Roberta and Stanley Bogen; Joshua Rednik, AFHU CEO; and Professor Tamir Sheafer, Hebrew University President | Credit: CAPEHART Photography*

3 | 6th Annual Bel Air Affaire
The "Luminaries of Light," hosted by AFHU's Western Region at the iconic Papillon Estate, raised over $3.2 million in support of student scholarships at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The event honored distinguished AFHU leaders: Joyce Brandman, The Saul and Joyce Brandman Foundation, The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, Patty Glaser & Sam Mudie, Marcy & Dan Schlessinger, and May & Richard Ziman.

From left, back row: *Richard Ziman; Justin Pressman, AFHU Western Region Executive Director; Alona and Professor Tamir Sheafer, Hebrew University President; Professor Asher Cohen, former Hebrew University President; Helen Jacobs-Lepor, Norman Jacobs-Lepor, Marc M. Rosenbach, and Barry Berkett*

From left, front row: *Cindy and Gary Frischling, Robert and Mindy Mann, Renae Jacobs Anson, Dr. Barbara Natterson-Horowitz, former AFHU Western Region President; Ruth Flinkman-Marandy, Michelle Rosenbach, Joyce Brandman, Martha Berkett, Ronda Lippman, David Anson, and Barry Lippman | Credit: Randy Shropshire*

4 | The Tradition of Innovation Continues: The Next 100 Years of the Hebrew University
AFHU's Mid-Atlantic Region commemorated the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's 100th anniversary, with a celebration recognizing regional benefactors and spotlighting the next generation of innovators poised to shape the institution's second century. CNN Anchor Wolf Blitzer—an alumnus of HU's Rothberg International School —served as Master of Ceremonies for the event, held at a private club in Washington, DC.

From left: *Joshua Rednik, AFHU CEO; Wolf Blitzer, CNN Anchor and RIS alumnus; Bobbie and Bill Kilberg, President of AFHU's Mid-Atlantic Region | Credit: Shmulik Almany Photography*

5 | 55th Annual George Katz Torch of Learning Award Luncheon
News Corp Deputy General Counsel Eugenie C. Gavenchak and Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP Partner Elizabeth Stotland Weiswasser received the 55th Annual George A. Katz Torch of Learning Award, presented by AFHU at Cipriani Midtown in New York City. The annual luncheon event, attended by nearly 300 guests, raised funds for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Faculty of Law.

From left: *Elizabeth Stotland Weiswasser, 2025 Torch of Learning Award Honoree; Joshua Rednik, AFHU CEO; and Eugenie C. Gavenchak, 2025 Torch of Learning Award Honoree | Credit: Hechler Photographers*

6 | 2025 Palm Beach Scopus Award Dinner
AFHU presented the 2025 Scopus Award to philanthropists Ali and Lew Sanders at The Breakers in Palm Beach, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The event proceeds provided funding for the University's Center for Computational Medicine.

From left: *Lew and Ali Sanders with Professor Asher Cohen, former Hebrew University President | Credit: CAPEHART Photography*

7 | 15th Annual Bel Air Affaire
The 15th Annual Bel Air Affaire, hosted by AFHU's Western Region at the iconic Papillon Estate in Beverly Hills, raised over $2.5 million for scholarships to assist students from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem impacted by the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks. Honorees Drs. Eric and Melina Esrailian received the AFHU Humanitarian Torch of Learning Award in recognition of their philanthropy and longstanding support of HU's Armenian Studies Program.

From left: *Joshua Rednik, AFHU CEO; Drs. Eric and Melina Esrailian, and Prof. Asher Cohen, former Hebrew University President | Credit: Robert Lurie Photography*

8 | ASPEN 2025
At the Aspen Art Museum rooftop

From left: *Justin Pressman, Executive Director of the Western Region, AFHU; Prof. Danny Ben-Zvi, Vice-Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Hebrew University; Jolie Cooperman, Jaye-Jo Portanova Cooperman, Ambassador (Ret.) Yossi Gal, Vice President for Advancement and External Relations, Hebrew University; Eric Kreiger, and Myles Kreiger*


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9 | AFHU Leadership Empowerment and Development
AFHU Leadership Empowerment and Development (LEAD) Cohort III recently celebrated its graduation, welcoming 11 new members into the AFHU leadership family and bringing the total number of LEAD graduates to 36 exceptional leaders. The cohort's final seminar took place in Austin, Texas, where participants engaged in leadership development, reflection, and community-building experiences. The program concluded with a graduation ceremony highlighting both individual and collective growth, as participants reflected on their LEAD journey and discussed their continued involvement within AFHU. As part of their lasting impact, Cohort III designated its class gift to support student scholarships at the International School of Agricultural Sciences, reinforcing the cohort's commitment to education, leadership, and global impact.

From left: *LEAD members Jennifer Weinberg, Kyle Solomon, and Jessica Haaz; AFHU's National Director of Leadership Development, Laura Abrams; LEAD members Ellen Pieper, Nate Becker, and Jeremy Rose; and AFHU CEO Joshua Rednik*

Alumni

Over the past year, American Friends of the Hebrew University has continued to expand and strengthen its alumni engagement efforts through a series of Alumni and Friends events held across the United States. These gatherings have provided meaningful opportunities for Hebrew University alumni, supporters, and friends to reconnect with one another, engage with AFHU, and deepen their connection to Hebrew University and Israel.

10 | South Florida Alumni and Friends
From left: *Aimee Levin (RIS '90), and Monika & Gary Levin (HU '97). Boca Raton, FL - November 2025*

11 | Boston Alumni and Friends
From left: *Dr. Yotam Drier, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Medicine, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Yael Libedinsky (RIS '98), Dan Feld (HU '09), and Dr. Neal Farber (HU '73). Boston, MA - December 2025*

12 | AFHU and Hebrew University Alumni Reception at ScienceAbroad Conference

From left: *Joshua Rednik, AFHU CEO; Prof. Haitham Amal, HU '07, Associate Professor and Head of the Laboratory of Neuromics, Cell Signaling, and Translational Medicine at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and Nadav Douani, ScienceAbroad CEO. Manhattan, NY - May 2026*

13 | Friends of the Israel Defense Forces IMPACT! scholarship program
The annual gathering, led by the program director, Ms. Orna Pesach, served as an opportunity to present the program and its activities, while bringing together scholarship recipients with the university leadership and the professional teams who support them.

Prof. Tamir Sheafer with Orna Pesach

14 | Connecting Through Stories: AFHU and FAU Author Series
From left: *Author Noa Yedlin (HU '99 & '02), and Dr. Myles Krieger (RIS '69). | Boca Raton, FL - February 2026*

Israel Friends of the Hebrew University

15 | Annual meeting of the HESEG Foundation
The Foundation was established by Gerry Schwartz and Heather Reisman, leading Canadian philanthropists whose work exemplifies committed and value-driven philanthropy. Their efforts are expressed both through significant financial support and deep personal engagement with the Jewish community in Canada and in Israel, creating meaningful impact for individuals and diverse communities.

From left: *Shachar Atzmon-Peleg, Vice President of the Foundation; Aviv Bushinsky, President of the Foundation; and Prof. Tamir Sheafer*

16 | The Irving and Bertha Neuman Prize in Hebrew Literature
The Irving and Bertha Neuman Prize in Hebrew Literature was awarded to poet and scholar Prof. Rafi Weichert. The prize is one of the most prestigious in its field and was first awarded in 1963. Previous recipients include renowned Hebrew writers, including S. Y. Agnon, a Nobel laureate and the winner of the inaugural prize.

From left: *Prof. Tamir Sheafer, Prof. Rafi Weichert, Reuven Canfi, Irit Canfi (née Neuman(*

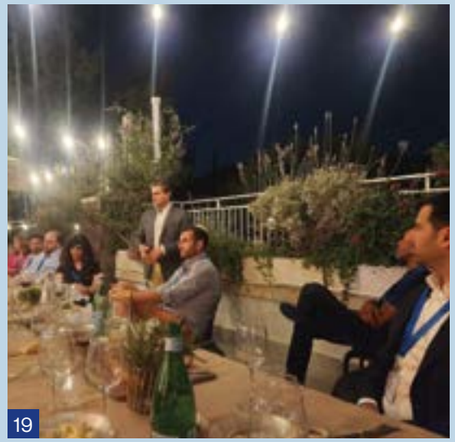
From left: *Reuven Canfi, Prof. Rafi Weichert, Prof. Tamir Sheafer, and Prof. Gideon Ticotsky*

17 | Israeli Board of Governors Gathering
The event which took place at The Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences (ELSC) focused on cybersecurity and artificial intelligence and began with a light breakfast in the ELSC courtyard, followed by sessions in the auditorium.

From left: *Prof. Tamir Sheafer, University' President, University Doctor Honoris Causa of The Hebrew University, Mr. Michael (Miki) Federmann, Prof. Asher Cohen, former University President, University Doctor Honoris Causa of The Hebrew University, Mr. Isaac Manor.*

18 | Annual gathering of the Feuerstein in Academia program
This unique social initiative promotes the inclusion of young people from Israel's socio-economic periphery and Ethiopian-Israeli background into the most prestigious academic departments in the country. Mizrahi-Tefahot Bank has been an active partner in the initiative for nearly a decade, supporting a group of Ethiopian-Israeli students throughout their undergraduate studies.

In the center: *Avi Zaldman, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Mizrahi-Tefahot Bank, Moshe Lary, CEO of the bank, staff of the bank, and the delegation from HUJI*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19| LEAD Delegation and Young Israeli Board of Governors Members
The LEAD delegation by AFHU and young members of the Israeli Board of Governors gathered for a festive evening at the home of Hani and Ariel Sterngold in Jerusalem. Ariel, a member of the Israeli Board of Governors, and his wife Hani generously hosted the young group for an evening focused on current affairs. The event featured Dr. Daniel Sobelman, who provided an analysis of the Middle East's strategic situation.

The guest speaker, Dr. Daniel Sobelman (standing), *alongside the host, Ariel Sterngold*

Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University

20 | Gail Asper, Co-Chair of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Campaign, From left: *Gail Asper, Sylvia Soyka , Evelyn Bloomfield-Schachter, Monette Malewski, Lillian Shiller*

21 | CFHU joined the Consulate General of Israel in Toronto to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut and mark 100 years of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's pioneering contributions to education, research, and innovation.

From left: *Issy Sharp, Rosalie Sharp, Chaya Nadel, Rami Kleinmann*

22 | A sold-out audience gathered in Vancouver for a screening of The Spoils, a compelling documentary that traces the extraordinary story of the Max Stern Art Restitution Project and the ongoing effort to recover art lost during the Holocaust. The evening opened with welcoming remarks by Manon Gauthier, Executive Director of the Audain Foundation and a National Board Member of Canadian Friends of Hebrew University, and was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Sirish Rao of the Vancouver Art Gallery, featuring acclaimed Indigenous artist Lou-Ann Neel and Clarence Epstein, President of the Claudine and Stephen Bronfman Family Foundation and Head of the Max Stern Art Restitution Project.


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British Friends of the Hebrew University

23 | The BFHU gala dinner, where BFHU launched the Postgraduate Scholarship Fund, in celebration of 100 years for the Hebrew University. The event was held at Claridge's Hotel, Mayfair, London.

From left: *Jeremy Amias, Alan Jacobs (BFHU Chair), Denise Joseph, Nigel Salomon, (CEO, BFHU) Ben Stowe, Prof. Tamir Sheafer, Tony Page, Jenny Arwas, David Wernick*

24 | Hebrew University Students at the British Friends' gala dinner:
Student Ambassadors Jemma Silbert and Mazal Adela, and CTLS Law students Mia Winraob and Keren Schwartz (with BFHU's Arianna Steigman)

25 | Hebrew University UK Alumni London Community event in celebration of the University's 100th birthday at the Rothchild's Sky Pavilion, City of London, with panelists

From left: *Elad Simchayoff (moderator, journalist), Daniel Campbell, Dr. Orit Gal, Rabbi Vadim Blumin, Ornit Shinar (all HU alumni)*

European Friends of the Hebrew University

26 | Prof. Ofrit Shapira-Berman, a Hebrew University professor, psychoanalyst, and Senior Fellow at the Freud Center, leads First Line Med Anatta, a psychoanalytic initiative providing care to survivors of the October 7 attacks. She spoke at an event organized by the Association of Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in German-speaking Switzerland at the Israelitische Cultusgemeinde Zürich (ICZ), on the topic "Between Hope and Despair: Treating Victims of October 7."

From left: *Heidy Zimmermann, Prof. Dr. Ofrit Shapira-Berman, Nadia Guth Biasini, Noémi Deslex*

From left: *Netta Ahithuv, Prof. Dr. Ofrit Shapira-Berman, Nadia Guth Biasini*

27 | The 2026 Scopus Prize was presented to Arthur Essebag, held at the historic Palais Garnier in Paris and organized by the French Friends of the Hebrew University. The event celebrated Arthur Essebag's longstanding commitment to education, research, and the university's mission. *Credit: Alain Azria*

From left: *Julie Bugnone, Catherine Belais, Michele Anahory, Sylvie Rousseau*

From left: *Arthur Essebag, Elsa Zylberstein, Rachel Khan, Michele Anahory*

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Latin American Friends of the Hebrew University

28 | In Mexico, Dr. Jody Kohan visited the Schools of the Jewish Educational Network, featuring The Gifted Project: Identifying and Nurturing Exceptional Students. The Gifted Project is an initiative aimed at identifying students with exceptional intellectual abilities and creating educational opportunities tailored to their unique needs.

From left: *Keren Rossow, Dr. Judy Cohan, Dr. Tammy Kolangui*

29 | The Argentine and Uruguayan Friends of the Hebrew University participated in the 36th Annual Punta del Este Symposium "Israel After the Ceasefire: Geopolitical Challenges and Contemporary Antisemitism." The event was held at the Grand Center, The Grand Hotel Punta del Este, Uruguay,

From left: *Gabriel Goldman, Edu Pollak, Prof. Arie Kacowicz, Marcelo Birmajer, Sergio Zigelbaum, Judith Scheyer and Javier Rajtman*

30 | Leslie Shasha welcomed the participants of the symposium

31 | The Centennial Celebration of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Mexico, organized by the Mexican Friends of the Hebrew University, was held in the halls of the Maguén David Jewish Community in Mexico City

From left: *Luba Becker, Mario Becker, Dr. Tammy Kolangui*

Australian Friends of the Hebrew University

32 | Centenary celebrations were held in Sydney and Melbourne where journalist Sharri Markson was awarded with the prestigious Scopus Award. She was the first Australian to receive the award.

From left: *Michael Dunkel, Sharri Markson, Rob Schneider, The Hon. Josh Frydenberg*

THE ARTISANS OF DISCOVERY

BEHIND EVERY BREAKTHROUGH

Nestled between the Nanotechnology and the Applied Physics labs on the Edmond J. Safra campus is a small slice of history – snug, twin workshops that prove not all technology of yore is obsolete in the modern world.

You can hear the workshops before you see them: the steady hum of an antiquated lathe; the sharp clink of metal on metal; the soft hiss of searing flame as it shapes yielding glass.

Here, master craftsmen Itzik Simchayoff and Mordechai Agai employ decades-honed skills, living repositories of institutional memory who create and repair the instruments vital to the University's famed cutting-edge research.

For close to six decades, these two men have been helping the University's scientists transform concepts into experiments. Their names may not appear on published papers, for they are not academics, yet their work is fundamental to countless discoveries.

"When I started here, there wasn't really a workshop," says Simchayoff, recalling his early days at the fine mechanics department in 1967, as a young man recently discharged from the IDF.

In those days, scientific equipment wasn't something that could easily be ordered online. Specialized instruments had to be built, modified, or repaired on site.

"The first thing we maintained was student lab microscopes," he says.

Simchayoff and Agai are still using the same tools, worn smooth by years of careful handling, which today would likely be seen as outdated were they not in daily use.

"Researchers, labs, student labs, we provide services to all," explains Simchayoff, who today runs the workshop with the help of a team of four. And although he only works part time these days, his blue lab-coated form knows every inch of the workshop.

Researchers arrive at the workshop with specific requirements for equipment, which the fine mechanics team then blueprints according to those specifications, builds, and tests for viability. "We handle the design and the execution, and they receive a finished product," Simchayoff says. And the service they provide does not end the moment the equipment leaves the workshop.

The fine mechanics team tracks their work for the researchers to ensure that the finished product is precisely what was requested, sometimes going back to the start, sometimes reworking, but always refining.

"We work with every researcher face to face. If we need to go to the lab to see for a moment what's happening, how it's done and how things are assembled, we go. We're not stuck in one place."

This hands-on approach has been a constant of Agai's career as well.

But unlike the fine mechanics workshop, the glassware workshop is a one-man show. Agai is a scientific glassblower; a profession so rare that many people don't realize it still exists.

The sunlit room is crowded, with gleaming shelves of completed orders jostling for space alongside a glassblower's toolbox and the bench housing the flame that is key to the craft.

In Agai's workshop, little goes to waste. Where possible, the equipment is formed from his existing stock of broken glass pieces.

Agai smiles as he declines to divulge his real age but does let slip that he is long past retirement age. In truth, he and Simchayoff both defied retirement to return to their beloved workshops.

The work, the pair maintain, keeps them young. But while the science and the technology may have evolved, the demand for their very specialized craftsmanship remains, and neither has any intention of being left behind. ■

FRIENDS ASSOCIATIONS OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

ARGENTINA
+54 11 4374 7045
info@huji.org.ar
www.huji.org.ar

AUSTRALIA
+61 2 9389 2825
austfhu@austfhu.org.au
www.austfhu.org.au

AUSTRIA
+43 1 235 04 220
office@hebrewu.at

BELGIUM
+32 2 343 5546
contact@uhjerusalem.be
www.befhu.org

BRAZIL
+55 11 972 426 695
amigosbrasiluhj@gmail.com

CANADA
4950 Yonge St Ste 1202,
North York, ON M2N 6K1
+1 416 485 8000
Toll Free 1 888-HEBREW-U
info@cfhu.org
www.cfhu.org

CHILE
+972548820211
epollak@savion.huji.ac.il

EUROPE
+972 2 588 0455
europeanoffice@uhjerusalem.org
www.efhu.org

FRANCE
+33 1 47 55 43 23
Contact@uhjerusalem.org
www.uhjfrance.org

GERMANY
+49-30-209-636-82
info@fhuj.org
https://www.fhuj.org/

ISRAEL
+972 2 588 2840
diklaa@savion.huji.ac.il
http://alumni.huji.ac.il/
http://shocharim.huji.ac.il/

ITALY
Milan Office
+39 02 7602 3369
aug.it@tiscalinet.it
Rome Office/Brain Circle Italia
info@brainforum.it
https://www.braincircleitalia.it/

LUXEMBOURG
+352 2 402 545
alainm@pt.lu

MEXICO
+55 5814-0600 ext. 5065
and 5073
karenr@amuhj.org.mx

THE NETHERLANDS
+31 6 14 44 23 51
secretariaat@nvhu.nl
www.nvhu.nl

PANAMA
ibtesh@rejovot.com

PERU
amigos.uhj.pe@gmail.com

SOUTH AFRICA
+27 82 551 2126
safhu@beyachad.co.za
www.safhu.co.za

SWEDEN
+49 49 65 70846
petergoldmanoffice@gmail.com

SWITZERLAND
Zurich
+41 61 262 04 47
hujschweiz@gmail.com
www.huj-swissfriends.ch

Geneva
+41 22 732 25 67
Geneva@uhjerusalem.org
www.uhjerusalem.ch

UNITED STATES
+1 212 607 8500
info@afhu.org
www.afhu.org

UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND
+44 2083495757
friends@bfhu.org
www.bfhu.org

URUGUAY
+598 2 712 3523
amigos.huji.uy@gmail.com

האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM
الجامعة العبرية في أورشليم القدس