

Lunch and Learn



in Dimona, Israel

The Lunch and Learn program provides an extended school day and a nourishing hot lunch for nearly 500 at-risk elementary school students in 13 schools in Dimona.

For more than a decade, Lunch and Learn's students have benefited from a tailor-made educational program in a nurturing atmosphere. Countless parents have been able to return to full-time employment, knowing their children are safe and receiving opportunities to advance scholastically and socially.

Lunch and Learn's participants come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Their parents suffer from chronic unemployment or have low-paid jobs. Most homes lack basic necessities. Even young children risk falling into a cycle of violence and crime.



Lunch and Learn is changing lives throughout Dimona. Its goals:

- **Extend the school day** to enable parents of disadvantaged families to obtain full-time work
- **Provide a secure and stable afterschool framework** that offers educational, social and emotional development for every child in the program
- **Teach children social values** including responsibility, tolerance and mutual support
- Increase self-confidence and feelings of achievement, **fostering a desire to succeed and escape the cycle of poverty**
- Provide vulnerable children with a **“full school-bag”**—books, participation in school trips, and an opportunity for equality with their peers

Elementary school principals report significant improvement in educational achievements and behavior, and note that students show sustained progress in middle school. Our investment in Lunch and Learn is preparing the children to be Israel's future leaders.

Lunch and Learn's two-and-a-half hour program starts at 2:30 pm with a hot, nutritious meal—which many of the children would otherwise not receive. They do homework, get individualized lessons and participate in sports, computers, art and English. Jewish holidays are observed, and each child's birthday is celebrated with a cake and a small gift. For many of the children, this will be their only birthday party.



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