

**The seventh launch event of the support workshops for kids
with Crohn's and Colitis
The Power of Unity**

The Anne and Joe Turner Pediatric IBD Center, Shaare Zedek Medical Center

200 children, teens and parents from across Israel coping with Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis gathered on Wednesday, October 29th 2014, at the annual event in memory of Dr. Joseph Faber. The event marked the opening of the seventh season of support workshops for children and their parents held by the Pediatric IBD Center at Shaare Zedek Medical Center (SZMC).

[Click here for pictures of the conference](#)

The annual event began with a light dinner suitable for children with dietary limitations due to their illness.



Representatives from the Pediatric IBD Center at SZMC and from the Israel Foundation for Crohn's and Colitis met with the participants at various information stations regarding nutrition, conscription into the IDF, and social benefits. There was also a signup table for the GEM research project that seeks to find the reasons for the emergence of Crohn's disease by following healthy siblings

of Crohn's patients. The participants showed great interest in all the information.

The event was officially commenced with greetings by **Prof. Dan Turner**, Head of the Pediatric IBD Center at SZMC, and **Adv. Eyal Tzur**, Chairman of the Israel Foundation for Crohn's and Colitis. The lovely Liron Kleinman delivered a moving speech on behalf of the children, talking about all that she gained from the workshops and the sense of unity they provide.



After the opening ceremony, the children divided into two groups according to age. One group participated in an improvisation show by the group **Improv Theater**. The actors involved the children in a dynamic and entertaining show of improvisation and music aimed at strengthening self-confidence and body image through experience.

The unique activity created positive thoughts and emphasized the importance of social unity which is particularly important to people with a chronic illness that involves pain and frequent discomfort.

The other group met with psychologist **Udi Dunker**, who has been accompanying the workshops since their inception, and with Ms. **Dorit Ben-Gad Elbaz**, a medical educational psychologist that will be also accompanying the workshops this year. The children participated in a team building empowerment workshop that marked the beginning of this year's workshop series, which will include cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), a proven effective intervention in inflammatory bowel diseases.



Simultaneously, psychologist **Dr. Yair Einat**, who has also been accompanying these workshops for years, lectured to the parents on the importance of group unity as an effective measure for facilitating emotional health in youth. Subsequently, the parents split into four working groups to meet with the experts: one group talked to **Prof. Dan Turner** about "IBD for beginners", a second group met with **Prof. Arie Levine** about Ulcerative Colitis, a third group discussed biological medication for Crohn's with **Dr. Amit Assa** and the fourth group discussed Crohn's disease without biological medication with **Dr. Raffi Lev-Tzion**. The parents heard firsthand about the advances in the field of IBD and about new medication, asked many questions and developed fascinating discussions among themselves that demonstrated the importance of "unity".



At the end of the group activities, everyone gathered for Belgian waffles and crepes courtesy of **Simcha La'Yeled** and then for the highlight: hilarious standup show by renowned comic **Shahar Hasson**. Both the children and their parents left the event smiling, excited and more united, giving more strength to cope with the challenged the disease impose on the every day life.



This event marked the opening of the SZMC support workshops for the school year 2014-2015. The workshops are almost entirely subsidized by the Anne and Joe Turner Pediatric IBD Center at SZMC with the help of contributions and are open to families from all over Israel, including families that aren't treated at the center.

For more details about the workshops please contact Ms. Tamar Altaraz, secretary of the Pediatric IBD Center at SZMC - tamaral@szmc.org.il.

Everybody is invited!

A study at SZMC found: Constructed support workshops improve quality of life in adolescents with IBD

A research conducted by Dr. Roey Abramovich with the supervision of Prof. Dan Turner examined the effectiveness of the support workshops of the Pediatric IBD Center at SZMC. He found that participation in these workshops improved the participants' quality of life on several levels: 72% of teens reported improvement in their mood and 75% reported that the workshops helped them cope with the difficulties of the disease. An improvement was observed in other measurements of quality of life, the appearance of symptoms, emotional function, social function and the ability to cope with the illness.

77% of parents reported that their child copes better with the difficulties of the disease, 77% observed an improvement in their child's quality of life and 53% also think that the course of the disease was improved. In addition all parents reported that they benefitted from the parental group and from sharing their experiences with others.



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We would like to thank the companies that sponsored this event:

