

## End of Year Report 2017

*Shaked was diagnosed at birth with profound deafness. Although the diagnosis came as a total surprise to her first time parents, they contacted our offices through their tears, and began speech therapy at AVIsrael when Shaked was four months old. She received hearing aids through our AVIsrael audiology program and began her journey of learning spoken language. When it became clear that that she had no significant residual hearing, she underwent bilateral cochlear implant surgery at the age of 9 months. At 10 months of age, she was "switched on" to the world of sound. Today, not yet a year old, she responds to her name, claps and dances to music and is attending weekly AV speech therapy sessions where her enthusiastic parents are guided and trained to become their daughter's primary teachers. **This is AV in 2017.***



### Relocation:

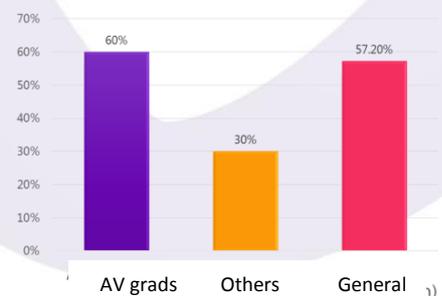
In 2017 we moved our central office and clinic to the Yad Sarah building in Jerusalem. The Located on the light train route with easy access to public transportation, our new center has attracted parents from all over the city and from beyond. We are already feeling the impact of this move as we have had double the number of families inquire into our services and join our program in 2017 in comparison to 2016. (41 new inquiries in 2016 versus 84 in 2017)

### Publication of National Research Results on AV Graduates

The National Insurance Institute published an article on "Academic outcomes of adolescents and young adults with hearing loss who received auditory-verbal therapy" in the international publication "Deafness and Education International." (October 2017)

Results of the research showed that rehabilitation through Auditory -Verbal strategies contributes positively to the academic achievements of youngsters with hearing loss who

outscored graduates of other rehabilitation programs on the matriculation exams. These results indicate our graduates become leaders in Israeli society, studying and working in their professions of choice.



Successful Results on Matriculation Exams



## **AVIsrael: Professional Excellence**

- I. AVIsrael today boasts the only Listening and Spoken Language Specialists in Israel- the certified qualification program of the AGBell Academy in the US. It is our commitment to excellence and cutting edge service that has guided our investment in supporting our staff to reach this certification, thus setting us apart from other centers. Only our LSLs cert-AVT can provide the mentoring services to professionals interested in this certification. It is our hope that professionals and rehabilitation centers will recognize the necessity of this gold standard of training for best results for children who are deaf.
- II. In 2017 we continued to host students from four academic programs for observation and in practicum programs. Future speech therapists and audiologists from leading academic intuitions recognize through their experiences that AV is a natural and effective rehabilitation approach.
- III. In 2017, AVIsrael staff members presented research and case studies at both national and international conferences and published in international publications. At the AGBell Symposium in Washington in June, our most recent LSLs certified speech therapist, Mrs. Genia Brill presented our groundbreaking rehabilitation work with the only child in the world with an Auditory-Brainstem Implant (ABI) who is receiving a full Auditory-Verbal program for acquiring spoken language. The rehabilitation world is watching our cases very closely.
- IV. Professional training is as an essential component of our new Strategic Plan for the next five years. We have already begun to develop a menu of training opportunities- from half day seminars and workshops to more intense multi week courses through mentoring professionals committed to the international LSLs certification. We are reaching out through social media and old style telephone calls to programs and professionals across the country to attract them to our offerings.

## **Hearing Program in the Southern Periphery**

In 2017, our staff of local professionals performed 378 hearing tests in one day of work a week, an increase of 30% from 2016. Our clients come from as far as Mitzpe Ramon and Arad in the southern Negev through Sderot and Netivot. In recognition of the high quality of service, local pediatricians and preschool educators recommend our program for their patients and clients.

## **Advocacy**

In 2017, we met with a number of MK's and continued our affiliation with the Coalition of Organizations of the Deaf as a means to leverage government for increased support of services for the deaf. We have initiated meetings with the Minister of Welfare and other parliamentarians. The national survey results were presented in the National Insurance Institute and will be brought before the new Director General. It is a slow process, but the

empirical results of the national survey on AV graduates have opened a new era towards recognition - and consequent funding.

### Financial Sustainability

This past year was a challenging year at AVIsrael. The devaluation of the US and Canadian dollars had an impact our budget. We consciously shifted our attention to increasing our fundraising in Israel and launched a variety of new initiatives: on-line giving through the "jgive" platform, increasing the support of local companies, solidifying previous relationships and creating new partnerships.

And yet, we are far from financially independent. Thanks to the support of donors like you, AVIsrael heavily subsidizes the program for EACH CHILD in our program in order to make the AV option accessible to all parents.

*When Shaked comes to our new AV center with her parents for her AV session, we are struck by the smiles and positive energy that emanate from this family. Our new family and child friendly AV offices in the Yad Sarah building may contribute to this atmosphere. We believe that the optimism Shaked's parents express is a product of the message and guidance that they receive at AVIsrael. Deafness today is a very treatable disability- with all of the components in place. All going well, Shaked will "graduate" from AV by the age of four (if not sooner) with normative speech and language. She will go to a regular preschool and later school and even later to college- she can decide.*

It is an honor to have been able to be there for Shaked and her family at the beginning of her journey and know that we have helped to change the life of a child. We are changing the lives of hundreds of children like her.

Thank you for your support in 2017. Together, we are changing the landscape for children with hearing loss in Israel.



Best wishes-

Elaine Matlow Tal-El  
Executive Director

Jason Rogoff  
AVIsrael Chairperson