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Renewing the Vision



Ami
women



Renewing the Vision

A partnership of AMIT Women and the State of Israel

In 1925, at the urging of Mrs. Bessie Gotsfeld, z"l, a number of women's auxiliary groups federated to establish the Mizrahi Women's Organization of America, later to become AMIT Women. The women collected funds for Palestine's pressing needs on a project-by-project basis, maintaining control of both funds and projects.

This revolutionary concept in women's charitable activity—incorporating a strong sense of independence with a pragmatic approach to developing the young new Jewish nation—remains the impetus for AMIT's members and Friends in over 425 chapters across the United States today.

Closing the Social Gap

Israel's unique history has presented special challenges for AMIT Women. Her economic needs were magnified by the effort to modernize, by successive wars, and by the need to integrate diverse groups of new immigrants: refugees from Holocaust-torn Europe, riders of the "Magic Carpet," and escapees from the oppression of Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq and the Soviet Union, all with special needs and special problems.

AMIT Women's network of educational and social welfare projects in Israel has undergone a continual process of growth and change to foster unity among these diverse Jewish peoples and to usher them into Israel's future. Curricula with heavy emphasis on agriculture have given way to pioneering courses in biotechnology and sophisticated electronics; community centers have introduced day care facilities to serve young working mothers.

The competence and foresight guiding these projects to meet the challenge of

Israel's complex development led Israel's Ministry of Education in 1981 to designate AMIT Women (then called American Mizrahi Women) as its official *Reshet* (Network) for religious secondary technological education. This designation brings with it active participation in Israel's educational policy-making and the adoption of more schools into AMIT Women's ever-evolving network of projects.

Yet, change as they may, all AMIT Women projects strive for the same goals:

- To equip new generations of Israeli youth with the skills to play constructive roles in the future of the Jewish State—
- To instill within them the values of

Torah and Jewish tradition—

- To promote a sense of the unity of all Jews which minimizes social barriers while cherishing Jewish cultural diversity.

These were the goals envisioned by Bessie Gotsfeld, z"l, and they are shared by thousands of AMIT Women who have also grown in number and in diversity. Today, working women and homemakers in 38 states and the District of Columbia help make AMIT Women the major women's religious Zionist organization in the U.S. They have made a vital personal commitment amid busy professional and family schedules.

Every AMIT woman carries on a proud tradition of independence, devotion to Israel and a deep commitment to Torah values. Every AMIT woman, each day, contributes to the ongoing process of *Renewing the Vision*.



The world stands upon three things: On Torah, on labor, and on good deeds.

The Ethics of the Fathers 1:2

Bessie Gotsfeld, shown surrounded by her early pupils, lives forever in the hearts and minds of the countless thousands of children who have benefited from her wisdom and vision.



The wide range of academic and vocational programs at AMIT High School, Jerusalem, has produced graduates with a wide range of skills. Thus, graduate Levana Ganish is the manager of the popular "Kumsitz" cafe at the Jerusalem Plaza Hotel.

Sarah Yitzhaki, a graduate of the secretarial program, earned a university degree in political science and is now the Knesset Spokesperson, reporting directly to the Speaker of the Knesset. All the graduates, now, however, have one thing in common: a concern for the community, imparted to them during their years in the School's ongoing communal service activities for the elderly and underprivileged.



AMIT High School, Jerusalem

opened in 1933, was the first project established by AMIT Women in Israel (then Palestine). It was also the first vocational high school for girls in the country, serving as a model for subsequent training programs for high school girls. Moreover, it was the first to provide girls with religious studies alongside vocational training.

Today, the student body of some 500 girls is composed largely of Jerusalem-born children of immigrants from North Africa and the Middle Eastern countries.

AMIT High School, Jerusalem students benefited from one of the earliest high school computer studies programs in Israel in the 1970s, and today are offered up-to-date automatic data processing

courses. Other courses lead to careers in nutrition, laboratory technology, hotel management, secretarial and office work, fashion design and technology, and the teaching of handicrafts and domestic sciences. Those who enroll in the school's academic programs are also aided by such modern equipment as a fully-outfitted language laboratory. AMIT High School, Jerusalem graduates go on to teachers' seminaries or to university, as well as to careers in Israel's growing industries.

AMIT High School, Jerusalem includes the Esther and David Shapiro Vocational High School and the refurbished main building and annex.

Additional facilities: AMIT Students Residence, Jerusalem.



AMIT High School, Tel Aviv

Wolf and Julia Eisenberg Comprehensive High School

originally founded in 1938, received a new name, a new home, and numerous new additions to its curriculum when it relocated in 1975 as the Wolf and Julia Eisenberg Comprehensive High School. Over 550 students currently attend classes at the ultra-modern facility near the Tel Aviv shore.

At the Eisenberg School, a young woman can explore the arts and humanities, preparing for a career in textile design, fine or graphic arts, industrial arts, photography or ceramics. Or she may pursue the sciences, including biology, chemistry, laboratory technology and computer programming.

AMIT High School, Tel Aviv alumnae have been accepted into nearly all of Israel's major universities, art schools, nursing schools and scientific institutions. Those who elect to begin work instead of seeking higher education are well-prepared to successfully enter the job market as graphic artists and designers, fashion professionals, computer programmers or technicians in various scientific areas.



In addition to its thoroughly modern academic and technological programs, AMIT High School, Tel Aviv offers its students a rare quality: the aura of Zionist history in the making. For it was in the original AMIT High School, Tel Aviv building on Dov Hos Street that the Actions Committee of the World Zionist Organization met prior to the establishment of the State, and it was there, in April 1948, that the famous resolution was adopted to declare a State of Israel upon the departure of the mandatory power.

AMIT Community Center, Jerusalem

the first institution of its kind in Israel, opened in 1949. Patterned after the American settlement house, its purpose was to help integrate the diverse immigrant populations of the area into the functioning mainstream of Israeli society.

Located in a transitional neighborhood where crime still runs high, educational and employment levels run low and poverty is the standard of living, the Bakka Center is a ray of hope for Jews of all ages. Its programs are designed to overcome the cultural barriers that isolate "Oriental" immigrants, to stem juvenile delinquency and to encourage wholesome educational and recreational activities for children and young people, most

of whom are members of large families living in crowded housing conditions.

More than 500 children, teenagers and adults pass through Bakka's doors each day for homework assistance, special counseling, Sabbath and holiday services, discussion groups, lectures and other cultural events. They participate in a comprehensive sports and athletics program, and choose from among a variety of classes for all age groups: cooking and sewing, wood and metal working, language and literature—plus dramatics, music, dancing, painting and more. Even working mothers whose days are spent out of the neighborhood benefit directly from the Center, which provides day care

for their young children while they help support their families.

The AMIT Community Center, Jerusalem includes the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library, established in cooperation with the municipality in 1963, and a summer day camp for needy children.



In addition to the organized activities at the Center, there are often unscheduled "visits" by the staff to juvenile court to retrieve a troubled boy or girl. One perennial offender, Avi Avshalom, seemed bent on self-destruction until the patience and genuine concern of his counselors penetrated his defensive toughness.

Avi Avshalom today is the deputy mayor of Ashdod.



Chana, aged 3½, arrived at Beit Hayeled AMIT, Jerusalem undernourished, not walking, not speaking. Her mother, having decided early on that she was “slow,” had exacerbated the situation by virtually ignoring Chana.

Yosef, 13, came with severe emotional problems. His mother had deserted him and two siblings when they were very young; his father left them alone for long periods of time. Though obviously intelligent and imaginative, Yosef carried the crushing conviction that he, “a bad boy,” was responsible for his family’s dissolution. He had difficulty concentrating and experienced spells of sudden aggressiveness.

Chana and Yosef, like most of the children at Beit Hayeled AMIT, Jerusalem were referred by social workers who wished them to “heal.” And heal they have—with the love of their new “families” and under the watchful eyes of child care and psychology professionals who combine concern and dedication with their professional expertise. Chana now walks, talks and exhibits an alert intelligence. Yosef has found warmth, acceptance and a new, confident self-image. They are, in every sense, “at home” in Beit Hayeled.

Beit Hayeled AMIT, Jerusalem

The Alfred M. and Frances Frisch Childhaven



was dedicated in the Jerusalem suburb of Gilo on April 13, 1983, amidst the accolades of dignitaries including then Prime Minister Menachem Begin, Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek and numerous Ministers and Members of Knesset.

The brand-new facility replaces and expands the services of two older AMIT Women establishments: the Beit Hayeled Sleep-in Nursery in Bakka and the Motza Children’s Home in Talbieh. It provides full-time care for 165 children from three to 14 years of age, many of them orphans, half-orphans, the victims of broken homes or the children of parents with severe physical or emotional problems.

The Beit Hayeled complex comprises self-contained apartments designed to simulate a family environment. Children live in groups of ten to twelve, covering a range of ages as in a normal family, with live-in counselors—married couples—who serve as parent figures. This pioneering approach to child care in Israel is designed to make Beit Hayeled’s chil-

dren feel like other children they meet, without bearing the stigma of being “institutionalized.” And it is the goal of AMIT Women to teach these children from troubled homes what a normal family situation is like—in preparation for the time in the future when they grow up to raise children of their own.

Indeed, every aspect of Beit Hayeled AMIT, Jerusalem is geared to ease the children’s entry into functioning membership in the community. An intensive after-school tutoring program directed by an educator of many years’ experience helps insure that the children keep up with their classmates in the schools they attend in Gilo and the greater Jerusalem area. Other afternoon activities, including a full athletic program, arts and crafts, theater arts, dance, and open hours at Beit Hayeled’s own library, offer these deprived children the worlds of discovery and development that are taken for granted in more fortunate families, and give them a further common language



with their friends.

Finally, Beit Hayeled’s synagogue plays host to many members of the Gilo community, furnishing its neighbors with a full schedule of religious services and instilling in the children a sense of pride in their religious heritage—and the satisfaction of making their own contribution to the local community.

AMIT High School, Gush Dan

combining Torah education with the most advanced technological training, was added to the AMIT Women roster in 1978. Situated on the campus of Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan, the school draws upon the talents of the University's prestigious faculty and receives high-level curriculum guidance from Israel's Ministry of Education.

AMIT High School, Gush Dan is the first school in the greater Tel Aviv area to provide advanced technological training in a religious high school. It was established specifically to fill the needs of religious youngsters who wish to continue their religious education while preparing for careers in the sophisticated sciences and technologies.

The school also prepares students for required pre-university matriculation. Part of the student body is already participating in university-level courses in physics and mathematics at Bar Ilan, for which they will receive university credit upon matriculation and admission to Bar Ilan.

A new building is being planned to eventually accommodate more than 1000 students, who will have access to the university's laboratories, computers and other academic and technical services.

Along with a curriculum of intensive Torah education courses, AMIT High School, Gush Dan offers the most up-to-date education in telecommunications, computer science, electronics, optoelectronics, pharmacology and paramedi-



cal skills. A newly-introduced course in biotechnology is the first such course taught on the high school level in all of Israel.



A bright world is opening up in many fascinating directions for 15-year-old Omri Shanan, a student at AMIT High School, Gush Dan. The son of a religious mother and non-observant father, Omri is following the example of his older brother and strengthening his religious commitment. As he studies computer science with the aim of becoming a computer engineer, Omri is also exploring Talmud, Bible and Jewish values for the first time. These courses, plus discussions with the school rabbi and special days set aside for immersion in Jewish study, are helping Omri prepare for a future as a proud observant Jew as well as a valuable professional.



"There is no day without Torah in this house." These words, spoken not long ago by the director of the AMIT Community Center, Haifa, are an accurate reflection of the atmosphere at Haifa's only religious community center. The AMIT Community Center, Haifa holds seminars on Zionism, lectures almost every evening by renowned rabbis from Israel and around the world, Bible classes and religious services on Sabbath and holidays. The Center also hosts the unique Meir Institute, a forum for discussion and debate to foster understanding and smooth relationships between Israel's religious and secular elements.

AMIT Community Center, Haifa



was the first religious community center established in Israel's major port city. The Center first opened its doors in 1958.

Today, over 1500 children and adults take advantage of the Center's wide range of services and facilities each week. There are hobby groups for children and teenagers from age four to 17; a full sports and athletics program; tutoring groups for students of all ages; adult education courses; arts and handicrafts lessons; counseling services for new immigrants; and cultural programs, lectures and social activities for residents of the

religious community. In addition, the Zionist Council of Northeast Israel meets at the Center and conducts classes in Zionism there.

The AMIT Community Center, Haifa has pioneered services for all age groups—from caring for the pre-school children of working mothers at a nursery and kindergarten sponsored by the municipality to enriching the lives of hundreds of senior citizens in Haifa's first Golden Age Club. The Center also maintains a full-time synagogue to help fill the community's spiritual needs.



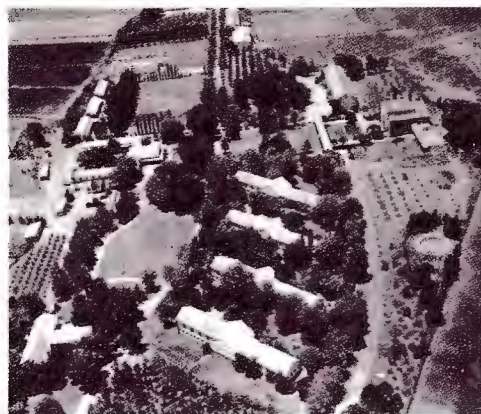
AMIT Kfar Batya Youth Village, Raanana

an exemplary Youth Aliyah village of international renown, was established in 1947 on a 250-acre tract in Raanana, a short distance from Tel Aviv.

Some 500 boys and girls aged 12 to 17, stemming from 25 different countries, live, study and work in this self-governing village, where they are housed in 16 dormitory buildings. Each day they are joined by an additional 500 students who commute from nearby towns.

Facilities include AMIT High School (Oscar and Regina Gruss Comprehensive High School), AMIT Bar Ilan Junior High School, AMIT Junior College for Practical Engineering, the Bienenfeld Library, the Lucy Bohm Shay Gymnasium, the Kaufman Olympic Swimming Pool, and the Bessie Allen Cultural Center for the Performing Arts.

The Village, begun as a farm school, is now also a major industrial training center, providing vocational instruction in computer programming, precision machine tooling, electronics, carpentry, welding and metal work, agromechanics



and other vocational skills. Its origins, however, are not forgotten. The Kfar's hennery provides eggs for all the youngsters and adults living on site, as well as a substantial overflow to sell to neighbors and visitors. Flourishing orange groves, also tended by the students, produce a golden crop each year.

AMIT Kfar Batya Youth Village, Raanana also offers a complete academic program to students interested in pursuing higher education. And for outstanding

electronics students, a 13th and 14th grade (junior college) program is offered which leads to a diploma as a qualified technician in electronics.



Lessons in fruit-tree gardening are among the fondest memories of AMIT Kfar Batya Youth Village, Raanana, for graduate Miriam Suleman: "Our teacher promised us mangoes from the trees if we worked hard at tending them," recalls Miriam, the daughter of Yemenite parents. "I invested all my energy and strength and he gave me the choicest fruit of all, which I proudly brought home."

Today, Miriam brings home daily the fruit of the labors of AMIT Women everywhere. Married on Kfar Batya to Shimshon Suleman in the first wedding of Kfar classmates, Miriam now serves as a dormitory counselor there, creating a home for 35 tenth-grade girls. "Our attachment to the Village is deeply rooted," says Shimshon. "It's the atmosphere here that is so welcoming," adds Miriam. "I can't imagine our future without AMIT Kfar Batya."



Etti Basterman's parents came to Israel from Iran in 1951 and settled on a moshav named Kadima, later moving to Petach Tikvah. "Life was very rough then," Etti remembers. "There were nine of us in a two-room house. But my mother had vision. She decided that her children would get the education she never had." So Etti and her siblings began studies at AMIT Youth Village, Petach Tikvah.

The dreams of Etti's mother have become reality. "She is very pleased," says Etti, now a home economics teacher at AMIT Kfar Batya Youth Village. "Almost all of us have achieved higher education. Two of us have become teachers and another is an occupational therapist, thanks to her efforts and our own, and—of course—thanks to AMIT Women."

AMIT Youth Village, Petach Tikvah

formerly the Mosad Aliyah Children's Village, was the first children's village founded by AMIT Women in Israel.

AMIT Youth Village, Petach Tikvah was established in 1944 to absorb immigrant children from war-torn Europe and North Africa, and to help them become a part of their new homeland. Today the village is home to many newly arrived Ethiopian children.

As immigration lessened and stabilized, the Village evolved to meet the challenges of the new, emerging Israeli society. In recent years, the curriculum has broadened to include training in agrome-

chanics, soil chemistry, horticulture, automation, vocational training, general studies, computer and electronics.

Some 375 boys and girls reside at AMIT Youth Village, Petach Tikvah. An additional 75 students attend a Teachers' Seminary, which provides, in addition to regular teacher training, opportunities for specialization in music and orchestration for music teachers. The Kfar is the only religious-oriented music teachers' seminary in Israel.

Additional facilities: AMIT High School (Wurzweiler Vocational High School), Music Seminary.



AMIT High School, Kiryat Ata

near Haifa, has been operated under the auspices of AMIT Women since September 1982. It was the second new school to join the AMIT family after AMIT Women was designated as Israel's only *Reshet* (Network) for religious secondary technological education by the Ministry of Education in 1981. A six-year comprehensive high school, it encompasses junior high school grades seven through nine and high school grades 10 through 12.

The school, with a total student body of approximately 700 boys and girls, places special emphasis on religious studies, such as Bible and Talmud, in addition to

its academic and technological courses. There is an intensive religious training program for boys from seventh through 12th grade.

AMIT High School, Kiryat Ata offers a strong academic program geared to successful completion of Israel's *bagrut* (matriculation) examination and the continuation of study at the university level. There are also technological courses in general office work, administration and management, electronics, electricity and tool-making. Basic computer science and automatic data processing have recently been added to the curriculum.



Students graduate with a matriculation certificate, enabling them to enter any institute of higher learning in Israel. Upon completing their studies at AMIT High School, Kiryat Ata, boys can be accepted into the Army Academic Reserve or a "Yeshivat Hesder."

Additional facilities: AMIT Community Center, which services 500 people weekly.

"Everyone gets into the act" at AMIT High School, Kiryat Ata. Parents who wish to gain hands-on experience with the modern data processing equipment used by their children during the day participate in evening workshops in computers at the school. Not to be outdone in their total involvement with the school, the students have offered their own skills: one twelfth-grader's final term paper for her secretarial studies program provided the blueprint for the planned automation of Kiryat Ata's administrative system.

AMIT High School, Rehovot



came under the AMIT Women umbrella in late 1981 as the first of a number of schools to join AMIT's projects under the organization's new *Reshet* (Network) designation.

The school offers an academic track as well as a technological program. In the academic study section, students can choose between a science curriculum and one in the humanities. Both options include religious studies as well. The technological section offers vocational training in electronics, computers and secretarial skills.

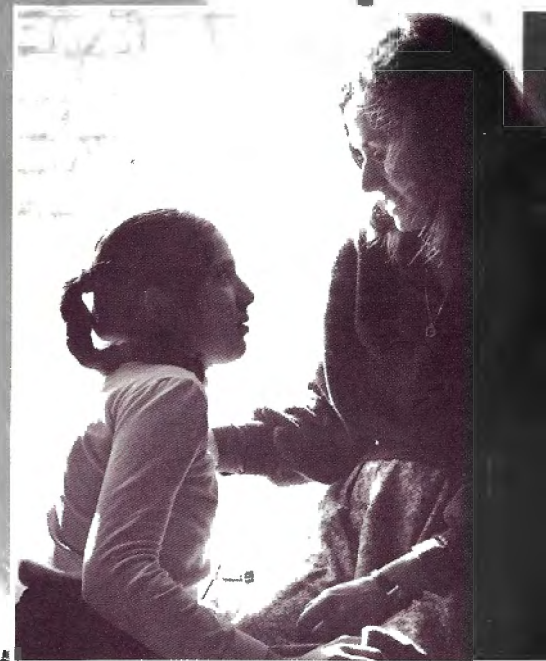
The Rehovot school's central building includes laboratories for physics, chemistry and biology, workshops for secretarial



courses, electronics laboratories and a library. The campus also houses an administration building.

Some 360 boys and girls from Rehovot and surrounding towns attend classes at the high school. Most are from culturally and economically deprived backgrounds; there was a severe dropout problem at the time that AMIT Women adopted the school. Now, thanks to redoubled efforts by the school's upgraded staff and a newly-revised curriculum by AMIT Women, the dropout rate has been profoundly reduced. Most students do graduate, receiving either a vocational diploma, full matriculation, or a technological matriculation diploma.

Living in a "university town," especially one that hosts the brilliance of the Weizmann Institute, can be hard on an underprivileged youngster. "I felt that I was in the shadows and would never come out," says Yaron, a sixteen-year-old at AMIT High School, Rehovot. "Academic achievement was meant for the lucky. I gave up on ever amounting to anything." But Yaron has gained a sense of his own potential at the High School, thanks to the concerted encouragement of his teachers and the far-reaching physical improvements effected in the school by AMIT Women. "If I want to, I can go on in computer studies," Yaron says excitedly. "Or specialize in biotechnology. I can do whatever I want to do, as long as I work hard at it."





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THE WHITE HOUSE

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August 17, 1982

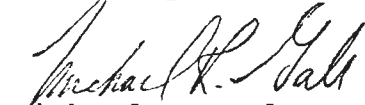
Dear Mr. Goldman:

Thank you for your August 11th letter concerning the Administrations's relationship with the American Jewish community.

You mentioned in your letter that you would be visiting Washington. When you do come in to town, I hope you will call me so we can meet one another. My direct dial number at the White House is (202) 456-2164.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Gale
Deputy Special Assistant
to the President

Mr. Peter Goldman
Director, American for a
Safe Israel
147 East 76th Street
New York, New York 2121

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August 11, 1981

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Mr. Michael R. Gale
Deputy Special Assistant for Public Liason
The White House
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Dear Michael Gale,

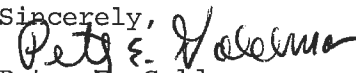
It's possible you were misquoted or quoted out of context, but your statement to The New York Times that the "Administration has consistently acted in a way the Jewish community supports and agrees with" is completely false.

The grassroots Jew is very unhappy with the protection the Reagan Administration has given the PLO and the Syrians in Lebanon for the past year and a half. Habib's mission saved the terrorist organization in 1981 and is now attempting to do the same again. The irony of the Reagan Administration as protector of Soviet-sponsored occupation should not be lost on anyone. The grassroots Jew is opposed to the condemnations of Israel over the Iraqi incident and the Golan issue. The community has not forgotten the precipitous suspension of the strategic agreement with Israel, the holding back of airplanes to Israel, etc.

There is dismay over the sale of America's most sophisticated weapons to Arab countries at war with Israel, thus providing the means for the Arabs to accomplish their aim of liquidating Israel. There is also anger at the Reagan Administration's willingness to do Saudi Arabia's bidding at almost every turn. The many-ex-Bechtel executives are added sources of concern.

The Reagan Administration, which promised an all-out fight against international terror, has, in fact, not fought terrorism but aided it. We are also aware that the State Department maps, which picture Judea and Samaria as belonging to Jordan, indicate the thinking of the Administration on this issue vital to Israel's survival.

Many members and associates of Americans for a Safe Israel were active as individuals in the Reagan campaign. We have been very disappointed with the results. When one compares candidate Reagan's campaign pledges and statements to his performance, there is a feeling of deep betrayal. This is what the grassroots Jewish community feels. On April 25th, 4000 persons under our sponsorship (along with a coalition of 150 rabbis) gathered in front of the White House to protest the pro-Arab, anti-Israel actions of the Administration. I do not wish to go into details in this letter, but if you would like to hear our viewpoint (and to present yours), I would be very pleased to meet with you when I am in Washington.

Sincerely,

Peter E. Goldman
Director



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July 30, 1985.

Mr. Marshall Breger
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Breger:

I know that by now you have been apprised by Mr. Zev Lewis of the sudden and unforeseen need to reschedule the AMIT Women national convention to which it would have been our extreme pleasure to welcome you on Sunday evening, August 11th.

A new date and city hopefully will be set the early part of next week, and we will be in touch with you to ascertain whether your calendar will allow you to join us.

Our deepest apologies for the inconvenience this may have created for you. I close in the hope that it may still be possible for you to participate when we reschedule.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frieda C. Kufeld
Frieda C. Kufeld
National President