

A Million Pages Read in 10 Years of English Literacy Read-a-thon

A.H.A.V.A, the Israeli not-for-profit, dedicated to improving English literacy in Israeli schools has celebrated a ten year milestone with its tenth annual read-a-thon culminating with a community celebration in Maaleh Adumim.

Founded in 2000 by Gaila Cohen Morrison, an experienced English teacher and mother of five, determined to provide affordable extra-curricular English tuition to Israeli children, A.H.A.V.A has organised its flagship read-a-thon event since 2006.

In ten years the read-a-thon has seen over a million pages in over 21,000 books read by participating children with over 115,000 NIS raised for the organisations scholarship fund to subsidise the cost of extra English tuition.

This year saw 2,284 books read including almost 100,000 pages by 164 participating children in Maaleh Adumim and surrounding communities. 5 adults also took part in this year's event sponsored by Bezeq, Bank Hapoalim and other local businesses.

In 2010 less than half of all eligible 12th graders even attempted the English matriculation exam to receive a high school diploma with less than half of all high school students in Israel pursuing college degrees.



Cohen Morrison said: "It hasn't been easy to increase participation over the years but now the read-a-thon has become a true local event which people really look forward to. Jerusalem has its marathon and Maaleh Adumim has its read-a-thon!"

"The time children put into events such as the Read-a-thon can help children jump as much as an entire reading level. Unlocking a world of wider reading for children at this age opens up important opportunities for them later on in life."

One parent of an 8th grader said: "My son has doubled his level in English because of the 15 books that he read this year. It really gave him an injection of energy for reading."

A.H.A.V.A has seen a steady growth in community participation over the years with highlights including the building of Israel's biggest book in 2012, writing to well-known personalities about their favorite books in 2013 and has also seen local Mayor Benny Kasriel also take part! The organisation has also benefited from participation from Bar and Bat Mitzvah aged students in the North America who have raised thousands of dollars in sponsorship over the years as well.

Cohen Morrison added: "I hope for growth, more and more kids participating in the future and increasing partnerships with Bnei Mitzvah outside of Israel."

Families interested in getting involved with A.H.A.V.A's year round activities can be in touch with Gaila at ahava.org@gmail.com or visit the A.H.A.V.A website www.ahava-english.org