

The Youth of the Jordan Valley, Working the Land

How gratifying to turn over a clump of earth and set down seeds... to care for something alive. How satisfying to focus on the natural connection people have with nature and God's creations, to learn what a cycle is from blooming to withering... what a process is, from seed to sapling to fruit. Though gardening is an ancient art, professionals only recently have started noting and developing its curative powers.

The Yarden High School has students from Maaleh Ephraim and many communities of the Jordan Valley, including Argaman, Roi, Bekaot, Hamra, Gitit, Mechola, Massua, Yafit, Fazael, Tomer, Gilgal, Netiv Hagedud, Yitav and Naama. The communities are spread out in an area of over 70 kilometers. There are 211 students in the school, ranging from seventh to twelfth grade. As a regional school, Yarden has to provide educational options for all the young people, according to his or her needs and abilities. The student body is extremely heterogeneous and programs have to be adapted to include enrichment for excellent students and individualized, creative programming for the weaker, more challenging students. The goal is to keep everyone fulfilling their potential; the goal is to keep everyone in school.

The Jordan Valley is part of the geological phenomena which developed along the Syrian-African Rift Valley. The region's climate is extremely dry, with only 100-150 millimeters of precipitation a year! As a result, there is a congregation of flora and fauna, primarily along the riverbeds. This area is one of the most fascinating and breathtakingly beautiful in Israel, with its distinctive geology, botany, zoology and ecology.

The Yarden High School has decided to take advantage of God's natural classroom, in the center of the Biblical Heartland, by initiating an agricultural project for its students. What a remarkable opportunity for students to be able to study the environment while sinking their hands satisfyingly into the rich soil of their beloved land. They established an organic greenhouse on campus, complete with all the necessary equipment. Last year, a wonderfully energetic young woman, with a wonderful knack for working with youth, began working as agricultural counselor with a group of students, as they began investigating the influences of environmental conditions on different crops. Budget limitations have unfortunately forced the program to stop and both the administration and the students feel it's a tremendous shame. Everything is in place! What a tease! All that is needed is a modest part time salary for the counselor and a minimal annual fee to cover the costs of seeds, potting soil, fertilizer and water.

So often, a child is on the receiving end of care. These children of the Jordan Valley have the chance to become nurturers. They will learn how to work with a team, how to develop concentration, curiosity and an awareness of cause and effect in our environment, in a healthy, supportive setting that the greenhouse can provide.



Project Summary

Jordan Valley Youth Agriculture Project

- The Jordan Valley's high school is privileged to have a region, rich with environmental learning possibilities.
- All teenagers, both the struggling and the gifted, can benefit from an on-campus agricultural program.



Help the youth of the Jordan Valley grow as they watch their seeds grow. Allow them to feel the deep sense of satisfaction that comes from working with the land.

Project Budget

Annual Salary for Agricultural Counselor @\$1,590/Month	\$15,900
Basic Annual Costs, Including Seeds, Soil, Fertilizer, and Water	1,585
TOTAL FUNDS REQUIRED:	\$17,485

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