

**making the  
impossible**

**possible.**



**Friends of AKIM  USA, Inc.**

# opening doors, improving lives

## **We Are Proud to Introduce Open Wide– A Supported Employment Program**

Our goal is to improve the quality of lives of people with intellectual disabilities by allowing them to work and earn a living in the dental profession. Traditionally, adults with disabilities have attended sheltered workshops that are facility-based day programs as an alternative to working in the open labor market. AKIM Israel, however, has initiated an innovative model of the Supported Employment Program, which offers a training program to educate people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and integrate them into the professional dental market.



The program will train these individuals with the goal of their inclusion in the dental field and provide them with an opportunity to earn a respectable living and develop independence. The program will also teach the participants work-related social skills, which are essential to enhance their independence and facilitate their full integration in society. This life-changing program will be carried out by AKIM Israel's Professional Occupation Department in conjunction with the Dental Schools at Tel Aviv University and Hebrew University.

## **Who We Are Helping**

The program was originally intended for individuals graduating from the sheltered workshop program who have skills and the required learning potential. It has now expanded to also target young adults with intellectual disabilities who are over 21 years old graduating from special education schools and who are able and interested to participate.

## **the vision of AKIM Israel**

*To make Israeli society a better place for intellectually disabled people and their families: a respecting, warm, accepting society that enables self-realization based on acknowledgement of difference and commitment to equal opportunities.*



## Program Objectives

- To professionally train young adults with intellectual disabilities in the dental profession
- To provide these potential students with the opportunity to choose a dental profession according to their area of interest and enhance their ability to find work in that field
- To teach people with intellectual disabilities professional dental skills which will help their integration in the community and the society at large
- To promote tolerance and social awareness in Israeli society

## How the Program Works

The program participants will undergo specific professional training in various dental fields which meet their abilities so that the trainees preparing for individual employment become functional, efficient workers.

Regardless of the area of training, all the participants will attend two basic training courses to enable them to acquire required work-related social skills:

- 1) Developing communication skills and providing a high standard of service:

The course will teach participants basic terms in human relationships, employer-employee relationships, providing service to customers, manners and etiquette, and making conversations with clientele if relevant.

- 2) Job and employment terms and norms:

The course will teach work regulations and norms, as well as their implications (e.g., work hours, meeting deadlines, professional responsibility, and respectable appearance).

The Supported Employment Program will last up to 2 years. The training will be conducted in small groups of no more than 4 individuals in each. The courses will combine theory with simulations of real-life situations and 3 months of practical experience in a proper workplace.

Following the completion of the program, the participants will be placed in the dental job market and receive accompaniment by a mentor. The mentor will help each participant to adjust, to internalize work habits and to socially integrate in the new workplace. The mentors will maintain ongoing contact both with the employer and the employee, and visit the workplaces regularly.

## Identified Career Opportunities in Dentistry for People with Special Needs

- Dental Assisting
- Dental Preventive Therapist/Patient Navigator
- Dental Records Assistant
- Dental Administrative Assistant
- Radiology Assistant
- Laboratory Technician
- Sterilization Assistant
- Office Receptionist
- Trade/Product Representative

“ It is amazing to see how this program transforms lives and is making the world a better place. ”

–Dr. Allen Finklestein  
Board of Directors, AKIM Israel



## Please Join Us in Helping Special Needs Individuals Help Themselves and Their Families

This program will not only benefit the world at large, but also greatly impact those students in the program and their families. With AKIM Israel and your support, these students will have an opportunity to pursue a challenging and rewarding career, and gain self-efficacy through their success.

In its first year, the program hopes to train between 8 and 12 students at the cost of \$7,500 per participant. We estimate that the operating cost of the program will total around \$75,000 to \$100,000, depending on the number of trainees in the program. This cost includes dental treatment, training program, transportation, and psychological training. AKIM Israel is fortunate enough to have some sponsors for this wonderful program, but more are needed to ensure the success of the program and its future.

### Support Levels

Full Scholarship	\$7,500	Platinum Level
Partial Scholarship	\$5,000	Diamond Level
	\$2,500	Gold Level
	\$1,000	Silver Level

thank  
you

*for opening doors for a very special individual.*

*Please reference  
AKIM Israel Project on your check.*

*Please send your check to:  
Alpha Omega Foundation  
50 W. Edmonston Drive  
Rockville, MD 20852*



### Allen Finklestein, DDS

Allen L. Finklestein, DDS, the Chief Executive Officer of Bedford HealthCare Solutions, is the former Chief Dental Officer of AmeriChoice/ United Health Group which insures over 3.5 million lives in dental government coverage.

Dr. Finklestein is a 1965 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh with a Bachelor of Science degree. In 1969, he graduated with honors from Temple University School of Dentistry in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he was awarded a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree.

He is a member of the American Dental Association, the Board of the Alliance for Oral Health Across Borders, and the Vice Chairman of the Shils Entrepreneurial Educational Fund, among other organizations. Dr. Finklestein is currently an adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatric Dentistry at New York University College of Dentistry and is licensed to practice dentistry in New York and New Jersey. He currently maintains a dental practice, specializing in periodontal prosthesis located in Great Neck, New York.

## **AKIM's Israel Employment Initiatives– A Concept That Is Working**

The opportunity to take part in the employment cycle is an important component in the life of any person, no less so in the life of the intellectually disabled. This concept is part of the normalization principle that provides the theoretical foundation for development of employment services for the intellectually disabled that guides AKIM Israel. In addition to their current goal of training intellectually disabled adults in the dental profession, AKIM Israel has many successful programs aimed at providing independence and improving the quality of life of those who participate.

### **Israeli Defense Force Program**

In 2005, AKIM Israel came up with a unique initiative to recruit intellectually disabled people into mandatory service in the IDF, or the Israeli Defense Forces. The major objective of the program, supported by the Ministry of Welfare and the IDF, is enhancing the self-confidence of intellectually disabled people in their abilities and as an integral part of normative Israeli society. Additionally, this creates positive interaction between the intellectually disabled and other IDF personnel, soldiers, and commanders, changing the attitude toward them and forming a positive approach among the Israeli public.

In 2008, intellectually disabled people began to volunteer in IDF bases and in early 2009, five of the program trainees were recruited to the IDF and successfully passed the preparatory process: the mental and physical ability tests, and received the necessary permits.

There are currently some 60 intellectually disabled persons in different stages of the program. Two of them have finished their terms in service and have been discharged; most of them are currently serving in the IDF, and some preparing for recruitment (volunteering in IDF bases prior to recruitment).

### **Industrial Rehabilitative Employment**

The industrial rehabilitative employment is a unique employment model operated at AKIM's Israel initiative in partnership with industrial plants, recognized by the Welfare Ministry. The industrial rehabilitative employment is another employment framework for intellectually disabled people.

The advantage of the industrial rehabilitative employment is that personal relations and warm special relations are created between the intellectually disabled and other employees at the plant, including supervisors and management. This model enables maximum integration of intellectually disabled people and regular employees at the plant and enhances the sense of normalization among the intellectually disabled employees.

In 2014, AKIM Israel operated two industrial rehabilitative employment frameworks: the Promedico pharmaceutical equipment firm that employs 13 intellectually disabled persons, and as of December 2014, Sela Logistics, Ashdod, that employs 6 intellectually disabled persons, with AKIM Israel financing the employees' accompaniment.

### **Cooperation with the Souraski Medical Center (Ichilov), Tel Aviv**

This program, developed to integrate the disabled in the Ichilov Medical Center service system, was formulated due to cooperation with AKIM Israel. Disabled people are employed at the medical center as hosts, serving as "guides" that provide assistance in accompanying and leading visitors through the hospital complex.

# Friends of AKIM USA, Inc.



## The Vision of AKIM Israel

AKIM Israel was established in 1951 by a group of Holocaust survivors' parents of intellectually disabled children who had decided to take their destiny and that of their children into their own hands. Their goal was to improve their quality of living and integrate their children in the community life of the newly established young State of Israel.

AKIM Israel is the National Association for the Habilitation of People with developmental disabilities and the largest provider of services and support for the intellectually disabled population and their families in Israel.

Currently, AKIM is operating for the good of 34,000 intellectually disabled people living in the State of Israel and their relatives, through AKIM's headquarters, in 76 towns through 60 branches and activity centers in the Jewish and Arab sectors throughout the country, from Kiryat Shmona to Eilat. AKIM branches are operated by parents and relatives of the intellectually disabled as well as unrelated volunteers who dedicate their time and energy, volunteering on behalf of the intellectually disabled and their relatives in their residential location.

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