

U.S, Israeli Experts Gather to Advance Next-Gen Disability Services

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At a time when the Israeli Government is planning a strategic restructuring of its welfare services with the aim of making them more inclusive, Israel Unlimited – a disabilities-focused partnership of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) in Israel, the Israeli Government, and the Ruderman Family Foundation – is cooperating with The Ted Arison Family Foundation and the United States Embassy in Israel to bring a delegation from The National Leadership Consortium at the University of Delaware to address a seminar tackling the most pressing issues in the field of disabilities today. The confab, which will be held today in the central Israeli city of Ma'ale Hachamisha, is focused on promoting cutting-edge innovation among Israeli leaders and decision makers in the field of disabilities.

Seminar workshops will include creating individualized plans for the disabled, personal budgeting, independent living, developing leadership roles within the field of disabilities, alternatives to guardianship, and addressing systemic changes in employment, relationships, recreation, and education. Additionally, best practices from the U.S. that have enabled the country to improve its level of disability services will be highlighted. The one-day seminar is a part of a wider week-long conference in which leading professionals will discuss up-to-date policies and services in the sector with Israeli officials and advocates, including housing and independent living solutions.

“The issue of housing in general, and for people with disabilities in particular, demands a big revolution in Israel. The conference’s purpose is to promote the securing of resources for one, and a revolution in the perception of someone with disabilities as worthy and entitled to live in the community. Finding the answers will also facilitate solutions for additional target populations, and generate a quality of life that enables real inclusion and a change in attitudes among the general public,” said Shira Ruderman, Israel Director of the Ruderman Family Foundation.

Currently, Israel has 10,000 people with disabilities living in institutions and one of Israel Unlimited’s goals is to create services to allow people who want to leave these institutions or their parents’ homes to live independently.