



## Amutat Kaima

Activity Report

(January - December 2018)



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## Happy Birthday to Us!

Kaima began with a simple, untested idea hatched during Chanukah 2012 to utilize productive agricultural employment to connect to the young person unable to relate to conventional educational settings, and engage the community-at-large in the endeavor.

Every year, we celebrate our birthday on June 13, the date of our first harvest in 2013. Then, the Kaima CSA community included 60 devoted families who believed in our vision to reengage teens through organic farming. They took a chance on our crazy dream, placed their orders, received freshly picked veggies delivered to their doorsteps, and generated our first profits. In 2018, after just five years, the number swelled to 330!

In the time that has passed, Kaima has provided alternative education to more than 250 young people, 80% of whom have returned to normative school settings within six months on the farm; welcomed more than 6,500 visitors and volunteers; helped to legitimize commercial agriculture in the center of Jerusalem; and created four sister farms, three in Israel and one in Africa.

*With profound appreciation and happy growing! -- Kaima*



## Snapshot of 2018: Kaima...

- ✿ Welcomed an additional 22 new farmers, bringing to 250 the number of boys and girls who have taken part in our long-term young farmer employment program.
- ✿ Wished 12 of graduates well as they went on to perform army/national service.
- ✿ Significantly expanded our after-work enrichment programming, particularly our music room and PBL workshop which now hosts an online and a made-to-order woodwork social business run by our youth.
- ✿ Integrated new populations into daily farm life, including young adults recovering from addiction, special needs adults and others.
- ✿ Kicked off our first alumni event for 60 graduates.
- ✿ Laid the groundwork for our new visitor center which is helping us appreciably expand our outreach to the general community.
- ✿ Modified our office greenhouse operations from hydroponic growing to soil growing to great effect.
- ✿ Cultivated a new plot of land to expand farm productivity yet further, planted a fruit orchard, and, slowly starting to dabble in berry farming - A Kaima first!
- ✿ Increased our customer base by 30% and expanded delivery points around Jerusalem and its environs.
- ✿ Welcomed our 5th farm into our network, this time in Tanzania, Africa!



*I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees ~ Henry David Thoreau*

## 2018 Prototype Mother Farm Calendar

jan

- ☼ Took part in the Jewish Community Farming Field Building Initiative's annual conference at Leichtag Commons in San Diego, California. JCFBI involves leaders of Jewish, farm-centered organizations as they define and advance this new field. Kaima is the only Israel member of this growing movement.
- ☼ Launched our annual 10-part workforce entry workshop facilitated by NGO, Hut HaMeshulash

feb

- ☼ Organized our annual three-day trip to Israel's southern Arava desert, an incredibly inhospitable region which against all odds is home to some 600 farms supplying more than 60% of Israeli exports of fresh vegetables. One night was spent at outdoors where the group practiced survival skills necessary to persevere in the desert's harsh conditions.
- ☼ Bid a temporary farewell to eight of our young farmers who took part in an international youth exchange in the Gantrisch Mountains in Switzerland with teens from Portugal and Switzerland. Participants built and slept in igloos, went snowshoeing and shared their own cultural heritages with one another. The next encounter will take place at Kaima.
- ☼ Co-Hosted a Tu bishvat event with Achva B'Kerem Synagogue and the Beit Ha Kerem Community Center. Our contribution – a cooking demonstration using farm-fresh veggies.
- ☼ Participated with our other sister farms in a national CSA conference hosted by Chubeza Farm located in the Ayalon Valley.

march

- ☼ Facilitated a two-day training for sister farm Kaima Hukuk's national service volunteers who were mentored by our own team.
- ☼ Explored the art of beekeeping, the insect's harmonious lifestyle, and Israel's voracious appetite for the honey from Waldorf educator and bee enthusiast, Yossi Aud.

april

- ☼ Hosted Israel's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Uri Ariel, and members of his office for a tour of the farm and a conversation about Kaima's contribution to Israel's educational landscape. MK Ariel intuitively understood the ethos of Kaima's "employment as education" model and shared with us his own reality as a teen, unable to relate to the traditional classroom.
- ☼ Completed construction of our climbing wall, a dream of Omri, one of our national service volunteers. The wall, built with donated materials, is super fun, healthy and offers great pre-army climbing experience.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed construction of our beloved music room, the brainchild of Binyamin, another national service volunteer who is now mentoring our current team of young farmers who relate to his post Kaima success story.</li> </ul>
may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kicked off our alumni program with an overnight gathering and work-a-thon for around 60 program graduates - some now back in school and others in the army or performing national service.</li> </ul>
june	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received first prize (selected from 1,500 non-profit organizations) in the WeWork Jerusalem Creator Award competition in the non-profit category in recognition of our employment as education model. (WeWork is an international company that provides shared workspace and growth services for non- and for-profit entrepreneurs.) Tipping the scale in our favor was a passionate explanation by young farmer Hudi about how the Kaima community changed his life for the better.</li> </ul>
july	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosted a terrace-building course in the fields adjacent to the farm led by Yochai--former Kaima staff person, local vintner, and olive oil maker--who is highly knowledgeable about the area's ancient terracing system and works to restore it to active purpose.</li> </ul>
aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrated when a massive pumpkin was discovered in our fields not far from another smaller one that wanted to be a cherry tomato...these are the kind of fluke of nature things farmers live for!</li> </ul>
sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installed a new grey water system, designed, tested and implemented by Atara, one of our national service volunteers, with the help of one of our young farmers. As a result we can now repurpose water which would otherwise go down the drain of our field kitchen sink. The cleaned water, treated with a natural filtration system of our own making, is happily lapped up by our non-agricultural plants. Similar methods have been adopted by some of our sister farms.</li> </ul>
oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosted annual Sukkot Open Day replete with farm tours, food, arts and crafts, and music. Approximately 400 attended.</li> </ul>
nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harvested our first blueberry crops cultivated from seedlings we brought from the Golan Heights. These little purple fleshy berries, which thrive in the heat of southern California as well as the humidity of Florida, have always been hard to grow in Israel.</li> </ul>
dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In celebration of winter's arrival, hosted a nature walk and comfort food cooking demonstration with European trained local chef, Nadav Malin.</li> </ul>

## Integrating New Populations

Beyond our employment program directed to youth who have left the formal educational system, we are beginning to integrate new populations into the farm. For example, late last year, our adult staff visited Retorno, a program at the forefront of addiction treatment for young people in Israel. While we are not sure if we will integrate their community members into the farm or if we will help them create their own gardening program, the experience was eye-opening for everyone.



## Reflections

Kaima is privileged to help young people on the extreme margins of society, many of whom have already been greatly damaged in their short lives, been abandoned by the system, and may have given up on themselves. This year, one of the most heartening moments came when Hudi, one of our youngest farmers, a boy who had left school for five years, not even leaving his room for four, proclaimed:

*"For the first time in my life I feel capable. I really don't know how I would have come back without Kaima...people can really change and go from the worst places to the best places because of a couple of loving supportive people."*

Today, after challenging himself on the farm and at our onsite PBL workshop, Hudi, at 19, has taken his first confident steps toward independence as he focuses on a future he never thought would happen. [CLICK](#) to hear Hudi's touching words.

In another case of how the farm gave one person hope and purpose, we reflect on the experience and words of a young girl who left the strict Ultra-Orthodox community where she was raised. F, who had dropped out of school and turned to drugs, first came to Kaima at age 15. Now 17, F contemplates the last two years of personal growth and where she is headed.

*"The physical work on the farm and being in nature has triggered many changes for me. Beyond anything I could have imagined, I was finally able to stop smoking marijuana. I think I succeeded because of the secure feeling I got from the farm, its people, and their different approach. Today I have more courage and am taking on new responsibilities, like returning to school to take my final exams. I now study music, something I was introduced to in Kaima's music room, and next year I will probably even do my national service. Now, if I go through a hard time, I come to the farm to talk things through with one of the adults. I always feel relieved afterwards, like I can do anything. I don't know if the farm made the people or the people made the farm...I think that whoever chooses to work with plants and nature is much more aware of herself and her environment. This place and its people have become my family. I would like to proceed and continue to work here as much as possible."*

It just doesn't get any better than when a young person leaves feeling good about him or herself. This is really what it's all about.

## **Q: What's all the fuss about? A: Our New Visitor Center**

This past year brought a record number of interesting groups to the farm drawn to our unique way of relating to Mother Nature. Visitors from abroad included families, synagogue groups, women's collectives, visiting academics, and representatives from the World Bank. Local visitors came from IVN; JDC; the Ankori school system; the Leyada high school, run by Hebrew University; the Israel Association of Psychiatrists; Intel; Bank HaPoalim; and others. Given increased interest in the farm, we are in the process of developing a new onsite visitor center on a plot of land, adjacent to our fields, which while unsuitable for serious agricultural work, is ideal for us to host farm guests. Once operational, the new visitor center will allow us to expand our programming and workshops focused on:

- 🌱 Utilizing agriculture as an educational tool
- 🌱 Planting and harvesting
- 🌱 Restoring Jerusalem's ancient terraced hillsides
- 🌱 Designing permaculture according to ethics and function
- 🌱 Utilizing urban agriculture commercially and privately
- 🌱 Integrating Jewish learning according to biblical traditions
- 🌱 Gathering cross-cultural communities for farm-to-table encounters

*"We have visited reintegration farms before, but knowing the feelings of the youth who work here leaves an indelible mark on the heart"*

## Media Corner

Check out this funny film made by Chananya, one of our young farmers who, after leaving school at age 11, wandered the streets for more than three years. He arrived at Kaima at the age of 14 1/2. Now nearly 16 and still working on the farm, we are all excited as Chananya, with our support and encouragement, prepares to return to school. [CLICK](#).

## We are family!

Like our veggies, we are growing all the time. We invite you to check out any of our sister farms...they love visitors!



Kaima Beerotayim Founders  
**The Shevach Family**



Kaima Hukuk Founder  
**Efrat Noy**



Kaima Nahalal Founder  
**Merav Carmi**



Kaima Tanzania Founder  
**Fabian Bulugu**



*Kaima + You = Socially Responsible Agriculture*