



## YOUNG JEWISH YOUTH FROM BRAZIL VISITING:

Even days after the group of young Jewish Brazilians had been at Ner Yaakov I still heard Sachar bragging: "I got at least 50 kisses," he shared with a cute smile. Not only he, but also the other elderly, and we all were very blessed by the visit of our new Brazilian friends. Almost 150 young people and their leaders came to meet the Holocaust survivors and to hear about our small work. It seemed that our back garden "grew." How did everybody fit in it? This big group-- the people in our house, with some survivors who were guests at Ner Yaakov and several survivors from the community--surprisingly we all had enough space. Sachar did not get tired and welcomed everyone with a tiny Israeli flag. The other survivors stood like a "Welcoming committee," a little curious and wondering, Who are these people, coming a long way and showing an interest in our lives?



**Very happy Hanna Fish**

How did they come to Ner Yaakov? Remember, last year I was in Brazil and there I met Celso, one of the leaders of the group. He is a very good friend of the Thalenberg family and is very active in bringing young Jewish people to Poland, Auschwitz, to participate in the "March of the Living."

I was asking myself, how they might feel, being Jewish and just coming back from this--without a doubt, hard emotional experience--and now here they are together with Holocaust survivors and German Christians?

It was very hot and they were not very comfortable sitting on the ground in the garden - however, it was incredible for us all to see how patiently and respectfully they listened to the survivors and myself. As Chana said: "It made a big impression on me how they came very quietly and respectfully to the garden. This group was so 'real.' They listening very intently, some even with tears. I have to say, it was very special!" Simone shared: "They expressed real appreciation for our work, thanked me and hugged me. They as Jewish youth to me - a German Christian, descendant of the people who caused all this suffering!"

Many had to contribute something: Sachar, the "House father" had a welcome speech; I spoke a little about Ner Yaakov; Jolanda shared some of her story, and so did Pavel. Than Arkady wanted to share from his heart about a miracle that happened back in WWII. Hanna Fish tries to always commission young people: "Not to forget and carry the stories on!" Tova shared her love and pride for her Jewish homeland: Israel! Raja joined us and asked: "Are there any Jews among you?" "Yes, we are all Jewish!" she heard the reply and it made her encourage these beautiful young people to make aliyah one day. My wish is that every one of these serious young people will have received something from these survivors--these last living witnesses of the Holocaust -- which will stay with them for the rest of their lives. As for me: I was very encouraged! Here we were: Jewish youth, who just came from Auschwitz, together with the Holocaust survivors and us, as Christians and Germans. Isn't that what Ner Yaakov is all about? I am not "bragging" like Sachar about "50 kisses," but I want to express deep gratefulness for the encouragement I received by the wonderful words Celso shared that morning at Ner Yaakov, or like Eduardo W. wrote:

"Many, many thanks for this unique opportunity. We all leave your home different, better people. The Mitzvah was yours, not ours! Thank you so much, on behalf of Keren Hayesod, for an unforgettable experience last week. I am still moved by the warmth and compassion shared by you and your team with our young adults from São Paulo. We would love to be able to visit Ner Yaakov again!" For me there is one thing left to say: Toda L' El! Thanks be to God!



*„Do not be afraid,  
for I am with you!“ Isaiah 43:5*

1. Julia 2. Tova 3. Hanna with their new friends