



קרן תל אביב
THE TEL AVIV
FOUNDATION

September, 2019

Dear Friends,

In the State of Israel Archives, there is a yellow note, signed by then Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, which gives us a glimpse of the worldview of the fledgling State of Israel. "To the Director General of the Prime Minister's Office, from the Prime Minister," it says. "For every official state event, we must first invite writers and teachers. This is a directive."

It is amazing to reflect on the priorities of 71 years ago; these days, it is celebrities, athletes and media personalities who are invited first, while teachers and writers often just commentate from the sidelines.

In the past, it was the role of teachers to discuss values and social issues. As a former school principal, I remember engaging with students on a wide range of burning issues. This was how students learned the value of democracy and the importance of hearing and sharing opinions which differed from their own.

These days, in an era of political correctness, teachers have been silenced.

However, it is precisely in this era of fear and 'blissful ignorance' that we must equip teachers – and thereby students – with the tools, knowledge, and support they need to instill values and grapple with important issues. We must educate for democracy, encourage critical thinking, broaden minds and engage with political issues. This must be done appropriately and sensitively but it must not be avoided.

Surveys conducted in Tel Aviv-Yafo show that 50% of children in grades 4 to 6 feel they have little impact on their environment and school. In grades 9 to 12, the figure is closer to 60%. Unless we actively engage students in the world around them, they will grow up to be disconnected and apathetic adults.

The City of Tel Aviv-Yafo is clear in its commitment to the core values of equality, diversity and inclusion. As we begin a new year and pass through another election cycle, it is our mission to nurture a new generation that is engaged and committed to democracy and values.

The support of our friends and partners through The Tel Aviv Foundation is crucial to our ability to maintain these values for the benefit of all Tel Avivians and for generations to come. As we usher in the new year, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our friends and partners a Shana Tova – a Sweet New Year.

Yours,

Ron Huldai
Mayor of Tel Aviv-Yafo
Chairman of the Tel Aviv Foundation