



BEAM FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

Watch Video

AMICHAJ FOUNDATION

LIVING EQUALLY WITH THE DIFFERENCE

Amichai NPO serves children, teenagers and adults with physical, cognitive and developmental disabilities. The Amichai House offers countless programs to assist people with disabilities in developing skills to help them lead a richer, more fulfilled life.

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A DEDICATED COMMUNITY FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

Amichai, a non-profit Israeli association caring for the welfare of people with special needs, was established in 1994 by parents of children with severe developmental disabilities.

Contending with an acute scarcity of services for this special needs population that requires a greater level of support in the areas of cognitive, vocational, social and functional life skills, Amichai and its services have and are creating a supportive all inclusive environment that strives to address the needs of the entire life cycle of its target population. This ranges from early childhood, through school years to adolescence, through maturity and old age, based on principles of full inclusion in a normative society, leading special needs children towards meaningful and fulfilling lives.

Since its inception, Amichai has served more than 1,000 children, adolescents and adults, providing health, leisure, employment and residence support, impacting thousands more of first-degree families and their extended families, enriching the lives of hundreds of volunteers, and influencing the social attitudes of thousands of young school students, individuals and educational settings for the public to accept and include people with special needs as equal members of society.

THE AMICHAI HOUSE

Amichai House serves as a regional center for excellence in Inclusion and social participation activities for people with special needs and houses multi-functional amenities, to provide support, involvement and social participation activities.

This includes employment and empowerment center for adults, integrated child support, after-school leisure activities, weekend respite, family support and advocacy, community involvement activities, holiday options, staff and volunteer training for integration and inclusion skills as well as programs for the integration of the general public in daily interaction and joint activity to implement its support for inclusion.

In this video, the founders of Amichai House are interviewed along with families of students with various disabilities, discussing the center's mission, values, and daily operations.



INTERACTIVE PLAY AS A REHABILITATION AND LEARNING AGENT

Amichai founder Avi Ferber approached EyeClick with the purpose of providing his students with an innovative and effective tool for rehabilitation activities, cognitive development and communication skills improvement for people with mental development disabilities, motor difficulties and autism. BEAM floor and table systems were installed at the center, providing a virtual-reality based addition to its rich play and learning offerings, which take a holistic approach to learning and social activities and experiences.



BEAM soon became an integral part of Amichai House's curriculum and social agenda. It assists residents and students of all ages, starting with 3 years old and up to full-grown adults, in developing motor skills, understanding cause-and-effect in physical movement, communicating with one another and learning how to cooperate as a team. The BEAM games are helpful in physical rehabilitation that involves movement and feedback, in learning activities of concepts and skills, in developing group dynamics and in enriching playtime in the students' free time. It is a crucial element in the para-medical treatment plan for the center's day-care for adults 21 and over, as well as a core part of the center's program for improving communication and social skills in children who are on the autistic spectrum. Teenagers with cognitive disabilities play BEAM games for enrichment and cooperation during their stay in camps, afternoon programs, and more.



TEACHING COLLABORATION TO STUDENTS WITH AUTISM

An example of the usage of BEAM for children with autism is in teaching cooperation and advantages of being part of a team. Autism often results in difficulties creating interpersonal communication, cooperation and social ties. Amichai House staff uses BEAM to facilitate such interaction by demonstrating principles of cause and effect in group settings.



For example, one of the BEAM games features virtual autumn leaves that “float” around the floor in response to movement. The instructor asked one student with autism to use a broom and “brush away” the leaves and leave the surface “clean.” This was impossible to accomplish as the game is designed to generate more and more leaves once one side of the floor is swiped clean. The instructor asked a second student to hold a broom as well, and start brushing away leaves from the opposite side of the floor. The two students were encouraged to brush away the leaves together, each from his own side of the game. This collaboration resulted in much higher success of the task and the leaves were swept away more easily. In this instance, the students became intuitively aware of the benefits of teamwork and cooperation. They saw how, by working together on a task, they can achieve more success and fulfillment.



WHEELCHAIR ACTIVITIES WITH INTERACTIVE TABLE

For people with severe arm and hand disabilities such as Ataxia and muscle tone deficiency, BEAM is helpful in developing coordination and movement. The students in their wheelchairs are placed next to a table with a BEAM projector, allowing them to comfortably focus on hand gestures while the virtual games respond to their movements and provide immediate physical feedback. Popping balloons, shifting elements around the virtual space and touching different characters and shapes, helps people with such disabilities to orientate themselves in the environment more naturally, and promotes hand-eye coordination in a fun, rewarding way.



“EyeClick utilizes the interaction of vision and sound in creating and promoting a cognitive and rehabilitative environment for people with developmental disabilities.”

- Avi Farber, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Amichai Foundation



“We believe that human beings have the right for full community inclusive life, according to their wishes and needs, based on their abilities and qualifications with equal opportunities and conditions.”

The BEAM systems at Amichai House contribute greatly to the staff's ability to offer activities and exercises that incorporate visual, auditory, and cognitive skills. The table and floor projection systems have become core components of the organization's curriculum and offering and continues to serve thousands of children, adolescents and adults in the disabled community every day.

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