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- Media Alert -

## Sylvan Adams Nefesh B'Nefesh Bonei Zion Prize Announces 2019 Recipients

*Annual Sylvan Adams Nefesh B'Nefesh Bonei Zion prize is awarded to English-speaking Olim who have greatly contributed to the State of Israel*

**JERUSALEM, April 1, 2019** – Seven outstanding Olim (immigrants to Israel) from English-speaking countries have been awarded the 2019 Sylvan Adams Nefesh B'Nefesh Bonei Zion Prize, recognizing Anglos who have made a major contribution to the State of Israel.

The honorees include: **Dr. Ora Paltiel**, Director, Hadassah Center for Research in Clinical Epidemiology and Professor, Braun School of Public Health in the field of Science; **Leah Abramowitz**, Co-Founder of Melabev and Coordinator of the Institute for Studies in Aging in the field of Community & Non-Profit; **Michael Dickson**, Executive Director of StandWithUs – Israel in the field of Israel Advocacy; **Dr. Beverly Gribetz**, Principal of the Evelina de Rothschild—Tehilla Secondary School for Religious Girls in Jerusalem in the field of Education; and **Danny Hakim**, Founder and Chairman of Budo for Peace and Chairman of Kids Kicking Cancer Israel in the field of Culture, Art & Sports.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was awarded to **Harold 'Smoky' Simon** for his decades of service to the Jewish State – his role in the founding of the Israeli Air Force as well as acting Chairman of World Machal and his contributions to Israel's insurance and pension arenas.

In addition, the Young Leadership Prize has been given to **Miriam Ballin**, Founder of the United Hatzalah's Psychotrauma and Crisis Response Unit.

(Please see bios of all winners below)

This year's prizes, announced today, are sponsored by Sylvan Adams, a Nefesh B'Nefesh Oleh and Canadian real estate developer, who is committed to developing the State of Israel. Sylvan is dedicated to showcasing the impact and achievement of Israelis to the world, viewing the Bonei Zion Prize as an integral piece of this mission.

"It is an honor to be able to recognize these incredible Olim for the significant and meaningful impact they have had on the State of Israel," said Nefesh B'Nefesh Co-Founder and Executive Director **Rabbi Yehoshua Fass**. "The Bonei Zion Prize recipients exemplify the endless professional opportunities available in this country, and serve as shining examples of the undeniable contributions Olim make in their respective fields in Israel."

Hundreds of Olim from English-speaking countries – including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, UK, and USA - were nominated for the prize. The prize recognizes outstanding Anglo Olim who have helped Israel in a meaningful way by encapsulating the spirit of modern-day Zionism and contributing in significant ways towards the State of Israel. Recipients were chosen by a prestigious panel of committee members in the following categories: Science & Medicine; Community & Non-Profit; Education; Israel Advocacy; Culture, Art & Sports and Young Leadership.



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*The following are the details of the 2019 Nefesh B'Nefesh Bonei Zion Prize recipients:*

*Science & Medicine* - **Dr. Ora Paltiel** trained and worked in Internal Medicine, Hematology and Epidemiology at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. In 1992 she moved with her family to Jerusalem, where she has served as Attending Physician in the Hematology Department at Hadassah and a teacher and investigator at the Braun School of Public Health & Community Medicine of Hebrew University/Hadassah, reaching the rank of Full Professor in 2013.

*While maintaining her clinical, teaching and research commitments Dr. Paltiel has held various leadership roles including as Director of Hadassah's Center for Research in Clinical Epidemiology, heading the Braun School's International Masters Program, and recently as the School's Director. Under her guidance, the School recently passed a comprehensive evaluation initiated by Israel's Council of Higher Education with accolades.*

*Dr. Paltiel's research focuses on cancer epidemiology, quality of care and the environment. She leads a large epidemiologic study of non-Hodgkin lymphoma among Israelis and Palestinians. She is a collaborator in the Jerusalem Perinatal Cohort study, the Directorate of Israel's Quality Indicators Program in Community Healthcare, and international cancer research consortia. As a member of the Hebrew University Centre of Excellence on Environment, Agriculture and Health she performed innovative research on human exposure to produce irrigated with recycled waste-water, which was awarded the 2018 Strage-BGU Award for Excellence in Environmental Sciences (with B. Chefetz).*

*With colleagues in the Braun School, she leads a project funded by Israel's Ministry of Science, Technology and Space, which aims to forge Community-Academic Partnerships with stakeholders involved in health promotion, to reduce health disparities among Jerusalem's residents.*

*As an educator, Dr. Paltiel has exposed thousands of medical students to epidemiology and critical appraisal of the medical literature. She has mentored scores of MD, Masters, and Ph.D. students, from Israel and many countries across the globe. In 2018, she won the Hebrew University's Rector's prize for excellence in research and teaching.*

*Dr. Paltiel made Aliyah from Montreal in 1992.*

*Community & Non-Profit* - **Leah Abramowitz**, along with Professor Arnold Rosin, founded Melabev 33 years ago, initially as a volunteer-run "start-up" for dementia patients whose families wanted to keep their loved ones outside of an institution for as long as possible. It very quickly became a highly regarded and innovative service supported by the social services, the municipality, and Bituach Leumi.

*With her background as a social worker, Leah is focused on innovations in dementia care and in guidance and support for their family members. She presents at conferences in Israel and abroad, and organizes recognized accredited courses in gerontology.*

*Leah is also a published writer. She writes articles for the press, authors books for the general public, as well as articles for professional journals in her field. She has written two books on Nehama Leibowitz in English and in Hebrew called, Tales of Nehama and recently published a book of short stories based on her experience in the field of gerontology called, Aging in Wellness and Adversity.*



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*As a result of the many pioneering and successful ventures of Melabev in elderly care, the organization was honored with numerous awards from the city of Jerusalem, from JDC-Israel and the Gerontological Society of Israel among others. Leah Abramowitz and Prof. Arnold Rosin were both awarded The Yakir Yerushalayim Prize on separate occasions.*

*Leah continues with her multiple professional involvements, such as counseling individuals, organizing family support groups, running courses, training student social workers and serving on various public committees.*

*Leah made Aliyah from St. Louis in 1957.*

*Israel Advocacy - **Michael Dickson** is Executive Director of StandWithUs-Israel. He leads a dynamic team in Jerusalem for StandWithUs, an international non-profit and a respected provider of Israel educational material and programs. This role includes pioneering innovative Israel educational initiatives, running campaigns to counter discriminatory BDS boycotts of Israel, overseeing the organization's significant social media presence and hosting delegations of politicians, diplomats, academics and other people of influence in Israel.*

*Michael was intimately involved in establishing the StandWithUs Israel Fellowship, which has become the go-to public diplomacy program on Israeli campuses and has graduated over 1,500 of the country's future diplomats and leaders. These outstanding Israeli young adults have gone on to staff major corporations, political parties in the Knesset, government ministries and embassies, and NGOs worldwide.*

*Michael has led diplomatic, academic and journalist missions to Israel and has advocated for Israel in different forums, including at the UN "Durban II" conference, in the Knesset, in Europe, the US, and in the Far East. Michael has helped pioneer the organization's social media activity, which now has a weekly peak reach on Facebook of over 105 million people. He has been instrumental in setting up "social media situation rooms" as far back as in 2009 during Operation Cast Lead. Michael has amassed a large following on social media and his personal output reaches millions of people each month.*

*Under Michael's leadership, StandWithUs's operation in Israel has grown exponentially, empowering people in Israel and internationally to be active advocates for Israel and countering efforts to impose commercial, academic and cultural boycotts on Israel. Michael oversaw the construction of the new StandWithUs Educational Center in Jerusalem, which hosts 20,000 students and tourists a year, participating in educational programs.*

*Michael regularly addresses audiences and broadcasts on issues pertaining to Israel and public diplomacy. He is an accomplished writer, with many published articles, TV appearances and he is writing a book due to be published soon. He is a Senior Fellow at the Center for International Communication of Bar Ilan University, is an Honorary member of Alpha Epsilon Pi, and was appointed to the Spectrum Forum of leading Executive Directors in Israel under the age of 40. In 2016, he was named as the 14th most influential Jew on Twitter and also one of the "30 Israelis Making a Difference" by Channel 10 TV. Michael was listed in the Top 30 of "The Aliyah 100 List" of British immigrants to Israel as one of the "flag bearers who shape the state of Israel and made a significant contribution".*

*Michael made Aliyah from London in 2006.*



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**Education - Dr. Beverly Gribetz** has devoted her life to the improvement and professionalization of education in the Jewish world at large. She has been a pioneer in the education of girls and women and has worked on the front lines with teachers and students throughout her entire career. She has championed socio-economic and sectoral integration, including new immigrants from all over the Jewish world, and has set an incomparable model of how to achieve this in her almost two decades of work in the Evelina de Rothschild Tehilla Secondary School.

While fostering technological innovation and the inculcation of Jewish, social, and Zionist values, she has also maintained a hands-on approach, developing a tailor-made educational program for every student in her school. Dr. Gribetz was also the first female teacher of Talmud to girls in the State Religious (Mamlachti Dati) system. She weathered an initial storm of protest to train and inspire some of today's leading female Torah teachers, especially empowering young educators who are taking on positions of influence in the Israeli religious system.

Dr. Gribetz made Aliyah from New York in 1980

**Culture, Art & Sports - Danny Hakim**, a two-time world Karate silver medalist and philanthropist, is the Founder and Chairman of Budo for Peace, an educational NGO which uses traditional martial arts to connect, empower and mobilize diverse communities.

Since his Aliya in 2003, Danny has actively worked to promote a shared society for all of Israel's citizens. Budo for Peace is a translation of this vision. Using the universal language of sport, Budo for Peace strives to create a society in which socially constructed rivals can conquer their cultural, social and political differences. In 2018, Budo for Peace was awarded the Regional NGO of the Year by the Prince of Monaco's organization Peace and Sport.

Danny's belief in social change is also evident in his interest in and talent for film-making. His international award-winning documentary, *Shadya*, was endorsed by the PBS network for their educational women's empowerment series.

Danny has represented Australia, Israel, and Japan in several international Karate competitions and was inducted in the Maccabi Australia Sports Hall of Fame in 2017.

He serves on the Board of ALLMEP (Alliance of Middle East Peace) – an alliance of 110 NGOs promoting people-to-people cooperation and shared society in the Middle East and is the Chairman of ALLMEP's Sport for Peace Action Alliance. Danny is also a Board Member of Maccabi World Union and Psik Theatre in Jerusalem.

He holds a B.Sc. in Biotechnology from the University of New South Wales, Sydney and a Masters in Entrepreneurship and Innovation from Swinburne University, Melbourne.

Danny made Aliyah from Australia in 2003.



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***Lifetime Achievement - Harold “Smoky” Simon** was born in South Africa in 1920 (age 99). After graduating with the degrees of Bachelor of Commerce and Chartered Accountant, he volunteered in 1941 to join the South African Air Force (SAAF) in the war against Nazi Germany. He was trained as a navigator-bombardier and served for five years in various theatres of World War II.*

*In 1948, Smoky and his wife Myra (who was trained and served as a meteorologist in the SAAF), volunteered to fight with their brethren in Palestine/Israel, in the looming war against the Arabs.*

*Smoky and Myra were part of the first group of South African volunteers which had been organized by the South African Zionist Federation, arriving in Palestine on May 9th, 1948, and enlisting in the Israel Air Force (IAF) on 10th May.*

*Smoky as the navigator and the late South African Boris Senior as the pilot, flew on the first operational mission of the IAF on Friday, 14th May. This flight was somewhat unique in that it took off from Tel Aviv airport in Palestine, but when they landed it was the airport of Tel Aviv in Israel, as the flight took place at the very time that Ben Gurion was declaring the establishment of the State of Israel. Smoky served as Chief of Air Operations of the IAF for two-and-a-half years.*

*Smoky and Myra returned to South Africa, and came on Aliyah in 1962, with four children. On his return to Israel, Smoky and his partner Moshe Wiesel, established the Simon & Wiesel Insurance Agency, which developed into Israel’s largest and most innovative agency in the life insurance arena.*

*Smoky was elected as Chairman of World Machal – the 4,800 volunteers who came from 59 countries to fight in Israel’s War of Independence in 1948. He is the recipient of a number of awards: an “Ot Hakara” from the Ministry of Defense for his contribution to Machal and to Israel’s security; an “Ot Hakara” to Smoky and his wife as founding members of the IAF; a “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Menachem Begin Heritage Foundation, as one of its founders, and having served as Hon. Treasurer for 25 years; an “Ot Hakara” from the Israel Air Force Association; and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the South African Zionist Federation (Telfed).*

*Smoky made Aliyah from South Africa in 1962.*

***Young Leadership - Miriam Ballin**, originally a general volunteer for United Hatzalah of Israel, became the first Hareidi female EMT and ambulance driver in Jerusalem and was the first woman to receive the United Hatzalah Outstanding Medic Award two years in a row.*

*After having responded to countless medical emergencies, Miriam, who has a background in psychology with a specialization in trauma, felt the need to incorporate her knowledge in the world of Emergency Medical Services. Miriam saw that treatment for those physically injured was effective and timely, but those on the scene who suffered emotional pain went unnoticed.*

*Miriam and her team developed a protocol that combined Israel’s expertise in trauma intervention with the protocols of the World Health Organization. With this, she founded and directed United Hatzalah’s Psychotrauma and Crisis Response Unit - the first fully integrated psychotrauma team in the world.*



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*She recruited and trained a team of mental health professionals from all backgrounds who would be on-call around the clock, responding alongside the medics to highly traumatic incidents.*

*Since the Unit was founded, the hundreds of specially trained mental health workers who make up the team have responded to thousands of calls that have been flagged as “highly traumatic,” providing stabilization and support to people in their moment of crisis.*

*Miriam’s model was recognized as the first of its kind. It soon spread across the whole of Israel, and she found herself managing, training, and dispatching over 600 responders across Israel. She then began to spread the model internationally and has trained teams in the US, Ukraine, Panama, and South Africa. She has also led international missions to assist in Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, and Pittsburgh. She has also built a clinic and hotline for medics across the country to receive psychological support, and psycho-education as an investment in their own emotional resilience and to reduce burnout rates.*

*Miriam speaks across the world inspiring other women to pursue their dreams and contribute to Israel. She is now working for her doctorate and writing a book based on her experiences working in the field of crisis management.*

*Miriam made Aliyah from Maryland in 2013.*

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