

Major Developments at ORT Operations USA 2000-2004

ORT Operations USA has successfully completed the first four years of the 21st century, working to overcome difficulties stemming from the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, recession in the United States and the slowdown of immigration. Bramson ORT College and Los Angeles and Zarem/Golde Institutes continue the ORT mission of helping low income students find better paying jobs through high technology training. Together with ORT Resource Centers they are expanding support of Jewish educational community: Jewish day schools, JCC's, after-school programs, teacher training, Jewish museums and other organizations.

ORT schools in the USA are the foundation of ORT Operations in the USA. The schools trained more than 100,000 Jewish refugees and immigrants mostly from FSU, Iran, and other countries over the last two decades. Today, the majority of the student body still consists of immigrant adults, while a growing number of students come from American secondary schools. The ORT schools had introduced special programs for high school students from the local Jewish community and Yeshivot.

Bramson ORT College, with its two campuses in Queens and Brooklyn, New York, received a ten-year re-accreditation last year from the Board of Regents of New York State, satisfying its rigorous standards for higher education. Bramson's credits are being transferred for Bachelor degrees by several 4-year schools. The most popular Associate degree programs are in Accounting, Business Management, Computer Information Systems, and Medical Office Assistant. The College is expanding its programs in the high demand job market of medical assistants and established new medical laboratories. Graphic design, 3d imaging and animation are being taught in addition to computer languages. Internet-based credit courses as well as continuing education on-line for staff training are being offered, and new video conference labs will be added this year. Computer labs for English as a Second Language have been recently established under grants from Verizon and the City Group. The school is expanding its reach to the local Jewish community by building partnerships with New York Association for New Americans (NYANA), The Hebrew Immigrant and Society, Inc. (HIAS), The Educational Alliance, Metropolitan Council, Board of Jewish Education and other New York Jewish organizations.

Los Angeles ORT Technical Institute, with its branch campuses in Sherman Oaks, California and Zarem/Golde ORT Technical Institute in Chicago had received a three-year re-accreditation last year from ACCET. The schools are offering certificate programs in ESL, Computerized Accounting, CADD, Computer Graphics and other programs. LAOTI has submitted for approval new programs: Medical Assistant, Lab Technician, Dental Technician, and Pharmacy Technician, which are in high demand. LAOTI has working relations with: the Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), Board of Jewish Education (BJE), Holocaust Museum, and other LA Jewish organizations. The school runs computer training programs for teachers of LA Jewish day schools and Yeshivot. Zarem/Golde had become a cultural center for the Russian Jewish community and it hosts a Sunday school for Russian Jewish children. The school provides vocational counseling to Chicago's orthodox Jewish community and developed CAD courses for Jewish day

schools.

The New York ORT Resource Center continues teacher training seminars and national contests on Jewish thematic developed for students of Jewish day schools and synagogues. ORT partnership with the Jewish Educational Center of Cleveland won the Covenant Foundation award for a three year program to train the teachers of Cleveland Jewish day schools in Internet-based curriculum. ORT program in Atlanta, Georgia had expanded from computer technology support of Jewish day schools to a new ORT Resource Center at the Marcus Jewish Community Center. ORT sponsored computer resource center is being used by teachers at Miami's Hillel school.

The latest addition of Hermelin ORT Resource Center at the Kahn Jewish Community Center in Detroit, Michigan turns a new page of ORT partnership with the local Jewish community. The Hermelin ORT Resource Center, which was inaugurated in December 2003 by the local, national and World ORT leadership, provides a computer wireless network in support of the Jewish Discovery museum, teacher training for the synagogue schools, and vocational programs for the unemployed. The Center is linked to Bramson ORT College, which offers many courses on-line. ORT Operations USA and World ORT also provide links to the national and international ORT schools and programs. The partnership between ORT, the JCC and the Federation in Detroit is considered a model for future ORT Resource Centers in the USA.