

YOUNG ISRAELIS DETERMINED TO REBUILD ISRAEL

A new generation of leaders

AJN STAFF

TWO young pioneers from Israel lifted the spirits of Australia’s Jewish community during the JNF main event with their vow to rebuild Israel.

“After October 7th, a new generation of leaders was born,” Uriel Weintraub said.

“Leaders of a different kind: leaders who fought for this country and are now determined to rebuild it.”

Weintraub and Almog Levanon described how they have begun to rebuild Kibbutz Manara, located right on the border with Lebanon, after 75 per cent of its buildings were destroyed by Hezbollah.

“On October 8th, 2023, the morning after the Black Sabbath, families of Manara self-evacuated,” said Levanon.

“They were sure that the horrors of October 7th would reach them next. They packed basic belongings, thinking they would return in a few days, maybe a couple of weeks. By the morning of October 8th, Manara was completely empty.

“Hezbollah began bombing immediately.”

Neither Weintraub nor Levanon are originally from Manara, but Weintraub explained his connection to the area.

“Last year, in October 2024, Israel launched a ground manoeuvre in Lebanon,” he said.



The young Israelis helping rebuild Manara take a break from their work restoring an ancient winepress. Photo: Times of Israel

“The goal was to dismantle Hezbollah and make it possible for Israeli civilians to return to the north. My unit Egoz led this operation, we entered first. Our forces were ambushed and there was a terrible battle.

“Six of my closest brothers were killed. One of them was my best friend, Noam.”

Weintraub said before he could even process the pain, they were discharged into civilian life. Now he, Levanon and a growing number of young Israelis just like them are determined not to let the deaths of their friends during the war be in vain.

They have already brought back 120 residents to Manara, but that is just the start of their quest.

“We want to create 10 groups like ours across the border communities – a new generation of pioneers, rebuilding the land just like the chalutzim who built Israel,” said Weintraub.

“My friend Noam and so many others before and after him, gave their lives for our land. We will not allow their sacrifice to be in vain.”

JNF NSW president Jason Eisner said, “This year, JNF’s focus is even more important; not only to repair, but to rebuild better, with tangible projects that will make Israel safer, stronger and more innovative than ever before.”

JNF Australia is supporting Weintraub’s and Levanon’s mission to rebuild the kibbutz and ensure that the border communities are never abandoned again. To donate visit jnf.org.au

GOOD PARENTING

Rubinstein named Father of the Year

FATHER’S Day was that extra bit special for Jewish Victorian Dr Arne Rubinstein (pictured), whom The Australian Fathers Day Council and The Fathering Project named as the 2025 Australian Father of the Year last Sunday.

The annual national Father’s Day awards are a celebration and a reminder that when fathers, and father figures, engage with love, intention and integrity, they change not only their own children’s futures, but the very fabric of society.

Rubinstein, a father of two and former GP, received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in January 2024 in recognition for his service to youth, since co-founding the not-for-profit group Uplifting Australia in 2011, and the Pathways Foundation in 2000.

He founded the Rites of Passage Institute, serving as its CEO since 2018, and he is also the founder and coordinator of its “The Making of Men” camps, and camps tailored to the needs of teenage girls – which have been attended by hundreds of thousands of young people in Australia and around the world.

Rubinstein is also the author of several books, including the best-selling *The Making of Men: Raising Boys to be Happy, Healthy and Successful*.

“It’s a big journey being a father,” he said.



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