

Jewish Federation of Ocean County IMPACT



On behalf of all of us at **Youth Futures** and the community of **Afula**, we want to express our profound gratitude for your support and partnership, especially during these incredibly challenging times since October 7. We are proud to share Yali's story of resilience: Yali, a 12-year-old boy from Afula, experienced bullying that began at first grade. Children mocked him and his haircut. In second grade, Yali transferred to a new school and joined the Youth Futures program. Ruti, his Mentor, noticed that Yali constantly wore a hat. She chose not to ask about it right away, instead taking the time to build trust. Gradually, Yali shared that at his previous school he had been ridiculed, and since then, “the hat protects me.” Throughout the year, Ruti and Yali worked together on body image, self-confidence, and a sense of belonging. They talked about his fears as well as his strengths. After a year of this process, one day Yali came to school without his hat. He shared that he had realized he had nothing to be ashamed of. Then something magical happened: his classmates responded with encouragement and showed him that he is loved just the way he is. Yali chose to strengthen others by sharing his message with other children: “There is a way out of shame, and it’s possible to learn to feel safe without protective layers. Thanks to your contribution Yali's ordeal took a positive turn. We are attaching a short clip of Yali sharing his story: https://youtube.com/shorts/lzqL48xtq_U?feature=share



Your continued partnership will enable us to continue to support the children and families of Afula.

Thank you once again for your trust, commitment, and belief in the children of Israel. Your support enables us to continue strengthening families, rebuilding communities, and creating lasting change — especially in these complex and fragile times.