

# Farm-a-Way Report



February 2022

As a first for Yad Voezer Ltd, users were taken on a getaway, which was described by users, staff and volunteers as a whopping success. Never before has Yad Voezer, attempted such an undertaking, of taking a group of 16 men and women with various degrees of disability away for an entire week-end out of town.

The idea was the brainchild of Yad Voezer's energetic day centre manager Mr Yossi Korn who spent the last two months making sure that every detail would be adequately taken care of and recruited many kind-hearted individuals to assist him in the undertaking, amongst them his capable wife Mrs Devoiry Korn, Mrs Shoshie Landau who has many years of experience in running summer camps and Mr Menachem Lieberman of the Shabaton L'Menucha Trust who readily shared his experience and expertise.

"I'm working for Yad Voezer for over eighteen years," wrote one staff member. "This is the first time ever to see the clients so happy. They got a chance to be THE limelight. Thank you, thank you."

9 men and 7 women from Yad Voezer and their carers, as well as nine volunteers and their families were welcomed on Thursday at the Kent Great Everden Manor, near Folkestone with music and dancing. A delicious dinner awaited them inside and pampering welcome packs were laid out in their rooms. Stunning banners and photo displays of Yad Voezer activities adorned the various public rooms.

The clients were then carefully accompanied by the volunteers into the beautiful swimming pool which proved very beneficial for their wellbeing. They then retired for the night in their beautiful rooms, to rest up and gather strength for the wonderful activities awaiting them.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning and Friday afternoon found clients engrossed in a wide range of farm work. They petted, fed and groomed the animals, collected and washed eggs, put up and painted fences, rode tractors with assistance, assisted with crop production, trimmed hedges, cleaned and painted barns and much more. They relished the fulfilling work and their faces shone with contentment and pride. At midday they had satisfying lunch break, where wholesome and delicious food was served according to each users dietary requirements.

Just before sundown, they took a relaxing walk on the picturesque grounds enjoying the pleasant sights and sounds of the countryside. A nutritious dinner then followed and the evening concluded with an hour of games in the dedicated games room.

Saturday morning, as detailed above, clients spent on the farm grounds participating in a variety of beneficial and satisfying activities. Then, after their lunch break clients went swimming again.

Dinner and an inspiring singing session wrapped up the wonderful day. There was booming musical accompaniment in a darkened room that was lit up only by the LED glasses distributed to the residents and a candle-lit floor making the words Yad Voezer with tealights, making it a very romantic and serene setting. Exciting dancing then followed, tying up the well spent day.

On Sunday after farm work, all the clients were given a packed lunch and left on an outing to Folkestone beach with their carers before returning safely back to London.

Yad Voezer is very grateful to the many shops and businesses who donated their products for the Shabaton. They are also very grateful to Mr Hillel Deblinger, manager of the Great Everden Manor who ensured that the site was impeccably clean and well-equipped for this special Shabbos. They are also indebted to the wonderful charities that funded this project, enabling clients this once in a lifetime opportunity.

“I have never seen an organisation that has every participant engaged and entertained according to his individual needs to such a degree,” said Mr Lieberman, who has accompanied and led many getaways. “And the farming element was a great tool in engaging users and had a tremendous impact on their wellbeing.”

Feedback was tremendously positive both from staff and clients and their parents and carers. Clients returned rejuvenated and refreshed, so alive and content. In a client’s own words ‘It was my best weekend ever!’ 87% reported reduced feelings of depression, 91% saw an increased confidence and self-esteem, 100% feel happier with themselves, 83% learnt new skills, 91% improved social skills and made new friends, and 100% would love to attend again.

The amazing success of the getaway has moved Yad Voezer to plan for future events in the future.