



Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya
Dina Wind z"l Scholarship Recipient
2014/2015



This past Thursday, March 26, was an important day for IDC Herzliya as the very first Dina Wind z"l Scholarship Recipient was officially presented with her scholarship for the 2014-2015 academic year, by Jerry, John and Lee Wind.

Heather Chatwick is 24 years old from Santa Monica, California in her first year the Psychology track through the Raphael Recanati International School at IDC Herzliya.

She made Aliyah in August 2011 and only recently moved closer to the campus from Kiriya Motzkin, in order to assist her with travel to and from her studies.

Heather is a truly remarkable woman with a really sad life story that tells of her courage and inner strength at every turn.

When Heather was 7, her mother was diagnosed with kidney cancer, which was a financial hardship for the family and left them in debt – not to mention the emotional toll that it took on each family member. With her mother so ill, Heather started to take care of her brothers and at the age of 14 she started working after school in order to bring money home for her family.



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In 2008, one Monday, Heather's father was diagnosed with stage four throat cancer. Her mother died of heart failure on the Friday of the same week. Shortly after, her father's company went bankrupt. This chain of events forced her to take her GED exams and become the breadwinner of the family. She decided to combine work with studying medical assisting so that she could manage her father's treatments. Once her father's condition stabilized she took an internship at an emergency room in Virginia. There she realized that she loved medicine but wanted to have a more personal relationship with the patients as she felt that the regular doctors were cold and clinical. This led her to the field of Psychology.

During that time, Heather was "parenting" her brothers (one older than her and one younger). She says she had to be the glue that held her family together. During this time, her younger brother, who had been a straight "A" student, dropped out of high school. Heather dropped one of her jobs and began to take him to school and wait outside to be sure that he wouldn't leave.

In 2011, Heather went with her older brother on Birthright and fell in love with Israel and decided that she needed to volunteer in order to give back to the country for having given her such an amazing experience through Birthright.

She stayed on Kibbutz Ramat Yochanan for a month, where she volunteered as a dishwasher. Heather then returned to the States.

After her experience in Israel and with all the stresses that she faced as a substitute parent to her brothers, Heather decided to make Aliyah and build a new life for herself. Her father's condition seemed to be improving and everyone felt hopeful, so she began to plan for her trip.

As it would happen, a week before her plane was to depart her father received the news that his cancer had metastasized. She wanted to cancel her planned Aliyah and stay to take care of him, but he urged her to go ahead with her plans. Heather says that her dad converted at the age of seven and had always wanted to travel the world, especially to Israel. His urge to travel was so strong that his gift to Heather on her 18th birthday was a passport.



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Heather had only been in Israel for 6 months when she got the news that her father had passed away. She had no money to fly back for the funeral.

Heather knew that tuition at IDC Herzliya was very expensive and that she probably should have set her sights elsewhere but she felt that she had found a "home" there and wanted to be here more than anywhere else. In her determination to make this a reality, Heather's first step was to apply for a needs-based scholarship, which she received thanks to the establishment of the Dina Wind z"l Scholarship fund.

Following Thursday night's event, Heather wrote: "I really wanted to thank you for everything that you have done for me. You have worked so hard to provide such a beautiful opportunity for me to get an education. The other night really meant so much to me ... to the Wind family, whose generosity and kindness has touched me so deeply. Hearing the story of Dina's life really inspired me, she truly seemed like a woman who lived her life to the fullest and enjoyed every moment. She seemed like the kind of person who really loved everything in life and her love was so strong that I feel it today with this beautiful gift. I can't begin to articulate the gratitude that I feel for all of you who have made this gift possible. Thank you again."

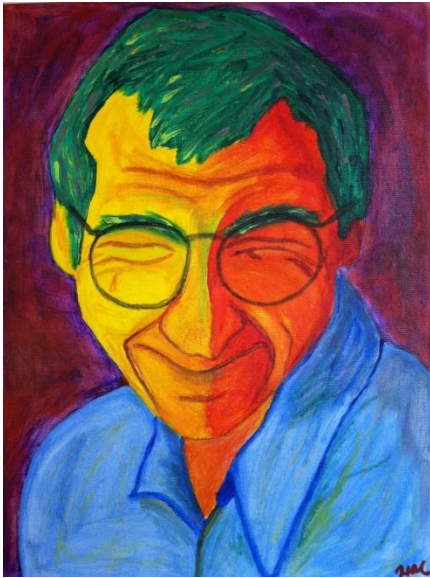
Heather dreams of one day starting a non-profit whereby people come to learn different things and the teachers and students merge into a community of people who help and teach one another different skills.

With no one to support her in Israel except for her boyfriend and his family, Heather is very lonely – even though she loves being in Israel and says that she wouldn't trade it for anything.

One of her hobbies is to paint, though she stresses that she has never taken official art classes and is not a professional, and Heather says that she receives great joy from sharing her artwork with others.



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Title of painting: Dad



Title of painting: Orphan





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