

Israeli President Herzog at Shalva Gala: Inclusion Is a 'Gift to Society'

At Shalva's 35th anniversary gala, President Herzog championed disability inclusion as a vital source of national strength and hope during wartime.

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL, December 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Shalva](#) National Center, the Israel Association for the Care and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, marked its 35th anniversary on Wednesday with a gala event attended by Israeli President Isaac Herzog. Held at the Avenue Convention Center, the event coincided with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, gathering philanthropists, public officials, and families to recognize the organization's growth from a local initiative to a global leader in disability care.



Kalman Samuels, Founder and President of Shalva, presents the Shalva Award to Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

“

This is a great gift to all of us as human beings and to Israeli society as a whole—it enriches and diversifies us.”

saac Herzog, President of the State of Israel

During the event, President Herzog, accompanied by First Lady Michal Herzog, accepted an award of appreciation for his administration's support of accessibility and inclusion. In his keynote address, the President emphasized the societal value of integrating individuals with special needs.

"The blessed work done here allows more and more men and women to be part of the conversation, to be included

in the community, and to be partners," President Herzog stated. "This is a great gift to all of us as human beings and to Israeli society as a whole—it enriches and diversifies us."

Addressing the current situation in the region, the President utilized the platform to acknowledge national challenges. "In a time of heavy national challenges, I send wishes for

recovery to the IDF wounded, embrace the bereaved families, and pray for the return of the remaining hostage," Herzog said in his address. "I call on all of us to continue spreading light, hope, and good tidings."

Three Decades of Impact

Founded in 1990 by [Kalman and Malki Samuels](#), Shalva was established following the couple's personal experience raising their son Yossi, who became blind and deaf combined with other disabilities during infancy. The organization has since expanded to provide therapies, education, and respite to thousands of individuals from infancy through adulthood.

"People with disabilities teach us vulnerability—the courage to be imperfect without apology," said Kalman Samuels, Founder and President of Shalva, addressing the attendees. "They teach us determination, and perhaps most powerfully, they teach us to see beyond masks and titles to the person within."

Celebrating Rehabilitation and the Arts

The anniversary event highlighted the role of cultural inclusion in rehabilitation. The program featured a performance by the [Shalva Band](#), a musical ensemble comprised of musicians with disabilities that has achieved international recognition.

Shay Ben-Shushan, the band's director and a combat veteran injured during his military service, spoke about the intersection of trauma recovery and music, noting how the arts serve as a bridge to rehabilitation for both the disability community and wounded service members.

"I am privileged to stand before you as CEO, but first and foremost as Yossi's brother," said Adv. Yochanan Samuels, CEO of Shalva, in his closing remarks. "Day after day, Yossi teaches me what hope and true courage are, and demonstrates the ability to live life to the fullest alongside



Shalva CEO Yochanan Samuels and President Kalman Samuels welcome the President of the State of Israel, Mr. Isaac Herzog.



Shalva Deputy CEO and the audience applauding the President of the State of Israel

limitations."

About Shalva

The Shalva National Center is the Israel Association for the Care and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. Dedicated to providing transformative care for individuals with disabilities, empowering their families, and promoting social inclusion, Shalva offers an all-encompassing range of services for thousands of people from infancy to adulthood. Its National Center in Jerusalem serves as a hub for disability care, research, and inclusion.

Eli Mand

Shalva

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[TikTok](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/872563788>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.