

Remembering the Past... Looking to the future

“When Tzvika fell in battle, the family decided that we needed to preserve his memory in a way that reflected his character and beliefs,” recalls Elhanan Abta. Even before the shiva period for his brother-in-law had ended, the family moved to establish Koach Tzvika (*Tzvika’s Strength*). Today, Koach Tzvika is a non-profit organization that operates a broad range of educational activities. *“We drew on Tzvika’s letters and diary entries to identify values that were important to him and have designed programs that strengthen these values in Israeli society.”*



Elhanan, now a doctoral candidate in the Department of Hebrew Language, has a very full plate – and he likes it that way. Four days a week, he can be found on campus absorbed in his doctoral studies that focus on an analysis of the linguistic style and grammar of Nachmanides, a leading medieval Jewish commentator and philosopher. *“My research is fascinating. Nachmanides lived at a pivotal point in Jewish and world history. He was a prodigious writer, but there is very little written about his published works from a linguistic perspective.”* Elhanan credits his wife, Tsippi also a graduate of the University of Haifa, with motivating him to pursue his doctorate. *“She encouraged me to enroll. Even though we have our hands full raising five children, she saw that my interest in Judaic texts and linguistics was a source of inspiration.”*

The Abtas are part of a young, religious community that has taken root in nearby Acre. Community members volunteer in a range of Tikkun Olam, social welfare and educational projects throughout the city. In addition to working at the local schools, both Elhanan and Tsippi host Shabbat meals for lower income families and volunteer at the local food bank.

Somehow, he still manages to devote time to a lengthy list of educational projects that reflect and support the mission and vision of Koach Tzvika. *“Tzvika believed in acts of loving kindness, being a good role model, personal responsibility, Jewish unity and a strong commitment to the Land of Israel and Jewish Sacred texts. All of our educational materials and programming are designed to continue his legacy.”*

“Ultimately, we are trying to create something positive out of a tragedy.”

Captain Tzvika Kaplan was killed in action during the 2014 *Operation Protective Edge* in Gaza. He was only 28 years old and left a wife and two small children.



Elhanan Abta (left) with teens from northern Israel enrolled in Koach Tzvika educational projects.



The Koach Tzvika program develops supplementary bible study resources entitled “Simanim Baderech” (Hebrew for ‘signs along the way’).