

## Letter from our Israel Partnership Chair

by Michael A. Abel

It is an honor and a privilege to serve as local chair of our Israel Partnership. Through Partnership and its many programs, our Jacksonville Jewish community has grown and cemented close bonds with the Hadera-Eiron region of Israel.

I have had the opportunity to travel to the Hadera-Eiron region during several recent trips to Israel. On these occasions, it has been deeply gratifying to witness first-hand the many programs and facilities in the region that our community supports, all of which contribute in a meaningful way to the long-term growth and economic success of the region and the state of Israel.

More importantly, Partnership also presents the special opportunity to form close, personal bonds with residents of the region. Social media and technological advancements have made the world a much smaller place. It creates opportunities for meaningful, sustained contacts involving our educators, teenagers, and others in our community who enjoy building and maintaining relationships with our friends in the region. It is deeply gratifying to see that the personal connections we enjoy with the Hadera-Eiron region of Israel transcend the geographical distance between us. Through Partnership, Jewish life has been greatly enriched both here in Jacksonville and in Hadera-Eiron.

When you plan a trip to Israel, please try to include some time in Hadera-Eiron. Our Partnership region offers endless opportunities for everyone, whether these opportunities involve volunteering, socializing, learning or relationship building. The Jewish Federation of Jacksonville and I stand prepared to assist in any way we can.

Natan Sharansky, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, recently stated: "There is no better weapon to guarantee a Jewish future than the Israel experience." In my view, no Israel experience is complete without our Partnership.

