

August 16, 2004

Limor Livnat
Minister of Education
34, Shivtei Yisrael Street
Jerusalem 91911
Israel

Re: Daniel & Melanie Silverman
Tajer 13
Jerusalem 97585
Israel

Dear Sir:

We are writing this letter on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Silverman, who have homeschooled their children for the past year in Jerusalem. They have taught their children responsibly, effectively, and with a total commitment to their children's success. Mr. and Mrs. Silverman are now in the process of becoming citizens of Israel and would like to continue their homeschool program in Israel. I am writing to urge that you officially recognize their homeschool. We know that the Silverman children will become productive and honest citizens of Israel when they reach adulthood.

By way of introduction, the Home School Legal Defense Association is a national organization of attorneys dedicated to protecting the right of parents to educate their children at home. We presently represent over 80,000 home school families throughout the 50 states. The Silverman family is a member of our organization, and we want to make certain that they can continue their homeschool program in Israel.

In the last few years, the homeschooling concept has spread around the world at a rapid pace. Parents in more and more countries are turning to home schooling as a way to effectively tutor their children and build strong families. These parents are contacting us to request assistance to help them get started and learn from our experience on how to have their right to homeschool clearly recognized.

In my role as Director of State and International Affairs, I have had the privilege of working closely with several countries to help advance homeschooling. I presently serve on the boards of national homeschool organizations in South Africa, Canada, and Germany. I am also working very closely with a new national home school association in Japan, as homeschooling is beginning to become accepted there. We are also working in the Czech Republic, Belgium, Switzerland, Taiwan, Philippines, England, France, Australia, New Zealand, and many other European countries. Homeschooling is also legal and prospering in all 50 states of the United States, with over two million students being taught at home nationwide.

So what is homeschooling? Homeschooling is exactly what the name implies: a school in the home. It is an age-old time-tested approach to education that uses the most highly successful method of instruction. The method is called the “tutorial method” of instruction. Many passages in the Torah record the ancient history of Israel and the predominance of homeschooling.

The teachers in a homeschool are the parents and these parents have a commitment to make the necessary sacrifices in order to personally provide an education for their children. Their primary reason to homeschool is to teach their children strong moral principles and give them a thorough academic education in a close, nurturing environment.

Homeschooling works. In the United States, over nine state departments of education and scores of independent surveys have found that on the average, homeschooled children score 30 points above the national average on standardized achievement tests. Homeschool students also score above average on both the SAT and ACT college entrance exams.

Furthermore, these students are being accepted into nearly all universities including the Ivy League schools of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Two colleges have conducted surveys of homeschool graduates in their student body and have discovered that the homeschooled students have a higher grade point average than the college average. Studies also demonstrate that nearly two-thirds of homeschool graduates are self-employed demonstrating their entrepreneurship and self-reliance.

This success is being achieved by homeschool parents, where over half have only a high school diploma. Their success with their children, confirmed by hundreds of other studies, demonstrates there is no positive correlation between teacher qualification and student performance. This exposes the myth of the necessity of teacher certification. Whether or not a homeschooling mother has a teaching certificate, college degree, or simply a high school diploma or less, makes no difference: all of their children on the average are scoring above average.

Furthermore, these homeschooled children are protected from negative socialization, such as drugs, sexual diseases, and violence. Instead the homeschooled child is trained in traditional, moral values and their self-esteem, which is the best measurement of

determining the socialization of a child, is nurtured. Studies have provided evidence that homeschooled children exceed the average in socialization skills and the ability to communicate with both adults and their peers.

Historically, homeschooling was one of the major forms of education until the early 1900s. Hundreds of great leaders in America have been homeschooled, including at least nine presidents, Patrick Henry, John Jay, Benjamin Franklin, John Marshall, John Singleton Copley, John Stuart Mill, George Bernard Shaw, Thomas Edison, Abigail Adams, Mark Twain, Pearl Buck, Agatha Christie, Andrew Carnegie, and Douglas MacArthur.

Today, with the resurgence of parents' homeschooling their children over the last 15 years, the number of homeschooled students is climbing rapidly.

Homeschooling is spreading throughout the world and it is not a passing fad. Homeschooling works, and as it steadily grows, it will continue to promote academic excellence and graduate productive citizens.

Therefore, we urge you to specifically recognize the Silverman family's homeschool. We are confident that the education they provide their children is thorough and efficient. Mr. and Mrs. Silverman are completely committed to ensuring that their children are diligently taught the necessary subjects to make them productive citizens in Israel.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding a formal recognition of the Silverman's homeschool program. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Klicka, Esq.

CJK/jdb

CC: Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Silverman