

Ten Years of Remembering Raphi Amram

The Society for Excellence through Education (SEE) recently marked the 10th anniversary of the death of its founding CEO, Raphi Amram, with many of his friends and family members in attendance. Most of the people at the event, however, had never actually met Raphi. Current students at the Israel Arts and Science Academy (IASA) and recent graduates did not know Raphi personally, and yet felt compelled to attend the January 10th, 2008 ceremony to "remember" him.

Chairman and co-founder of SEE, Mr. Bob Asher, spoke at the event. Among Mr. Asher's comments was a clue as to how one can remember someone they never had the opportunity to meet.

"A man can be measured by his accomplishments", explained Asher. This is why students at the Israel Arts and Science Academy feel as if they knew Raphi – because they are intimately acquainted with the myriad achievements and successes to which Raphi's lifelong dedication to improving education led. IASA graduates have benefitted directly from Raphi's commitment to establishing an equal-opportunity school to meet the special needs of talented youth. His vision has touched their lives.



Friends of Raphi Amram, sharing happy memories with his son, Roi.

Each of the evening's speakers related their personal experiences with Raphi – as a father, a friend, a teacher, an employer. While these various roles led the speakers in different directions, certain threads of similarity ran throughout. Everyone stressed the basic belief in the equality of human beings which governed how Raphi treated people and what kind of a school he worked to create. All of the evening's speakers mentioned Raphi's uncanny ability to convince others of the worthiness of his cause, of joining in the attempt to raise the bar of education in Israel. Receiving such an education, in Raphi's vision, comes with the obligation for contributing to society in return.



Musical interlude by current IASA students.

The overwhelming message of the event was that Raphi Amram's vision lives on; through the Academy, its graduates, their accomplishments and contributions to society. This point was made even clearer when Israel Arts and Science Academy alumnus Roni Kostin stepped on stage to deliver a lecture about his ground-breaking research at the Hebrew University on Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, "Big Words, Small Science".

The nanometer (1×10^{-9} m), as Kosti explained, is a unit of length equal to one billionth of a meter. To help make this astonishingly small scale better understood, Kosti offered the following comparison: The relative size of the planet earth to a single orange, is roughly the same as that of an orange to a nanometer. Objects on the nanoscale can only be seen with a high-powered, electronic microscope. Kosti wowed the audience with the advances that his laboratory has made in manipulating nanomolecules, cultivating "nano-weights" (barbell-shaped particles, measuring a few nanometers in length). The structure of these nano-weights (one element on the ends and another element stretched between them) gives them unique properties of mobility and chemical binding. The lecture covered the momentous contributions that nanotechnology is expected to make in the fields of medicine, optics, communications, electronics, ecology, alternative energy, etc.



Roni Kosti delivers his memorial lecture on nanotechnology, "Big Words, Small Science".

The evening and the lecture epitomized Raphi Amram's vision – talented students receiving an exceptional education, rising to the top of their fields of interest, and making inestimable contributions to society. Raphi would have been very proud.