

**Over the past year I considered a few study fields. By chance I spoke to Sharon Shatz, the Association's social worker, and she told me that it was possible to receive personal instruction for choosing employment and studies**

**Personal log of Arel Ezra, resident of Petach Tikva**

When I was one year old my mother noticed that I was developing slower than my sister. She was a year older than me and very mischievous. Because of this, my mother took me for testing and that's how the family found out that I have Duchenne (Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD)). My parents divorced when I was about 4 years old and my father is not in touch with me or my sister.

I remember that when I was six I started walking on the tips of my toes. More or less at the same time I was told that I would not be able to walk more than that (maybe not in those exact words, but that is what was burned

into my memory). I didn't believe that – it seemed so far-fetched, but all the time there was a gradual degeneration. At first I had a hard time dealing with the diagnosis but today I have come to terms with it.

A year ago I finished high school with outstanding excellence. Throughout the COVID period I have been volunteering to have telephone conversations with an elderly person because she cannot not leave the house. I too have been quarantined for over two years, first because of Covid and later because of an operation I had. The quarantine and social distancing is difficult for everybody.

I have always sculpted and painted and over the past year I had been wondering whether to study art and if so, exactly what field. It so happened that I spoke with Sharon Shatz, a social worker at the Little Steps Association, and she said that it was possible to join a new program that was just starting: Personal Advice with Lilach Shrack, an organizational and employment consultant and a coacher specializing in employment accompaniment, starting exactly from the point of "what do you want to be when you grow up".



Lilach is a wonderful person. She gave me assignments to carry out so that I try understand and find out for myself which area I love, what I am good at and what suits me.

For example, one of the assignments was to ask questions on groups of certain professions on social media, questions such as what kinds of work there are in the field I am interested in, and what they require. This is something I would not have thought of myself.

In another assignment I had to grade fields according to the level of my proficiency from better to worse, and to ask those close to me what they think. I needed to be very active during the process, but she guided me and helped me get through it.

We had 25 one-on-one meetings online, and the last meeting was face to face.

Because of the process with Lilach I now have a clear idea of what I want to study and what I want to do. I learned about the employment world. The world of professions, and I learned how to integrate into jobs that interest me and which of them are right for me you if you have fish for if not you want me not because of my strengths.

Next year I want to start studying. I'll give you a hint, it's in the field of art.

In the meantime, I continue to paint and sculpt to my heart's content. I already have a collection of hundreds of paintings and dozens of sculptures in my little home.

I will be happy to answer questions and help with any doubts and uncertainties and with the process.

For a consultation write to: [arel480@gmail.com](mailto:arel480@gmail.com)

