



Birthright Israel Foundation Celebrates 18 Years of Birthright Israel at Annual Gala

Dr. Miriam & Sheldon G. Adelson Receive “Guardians of the Jewish Future” Award

Gala Raises a Record Breaking \$125M to Provide Life-Changing Experiences to Jewish Young Adults

New York – April 16, 2018 – Birthright Israel Foundation, the U.S. funding arm of Birthright Israel, held its annual gala at the historic Ziegfeld Ballroom last night. More than 650 attendees raised \$125 million dollars in celebration of Birthright Israel’s 18th Anniversary honoring the Adelsons at the sold-out event. In addition to numerous donations from wide-ranging institutional and individual donors, the Adelsons surprised guests by announcing a \$70 million gift.

“Before Israel was founded, my father always said he wished there was a place where Jewish people could live. He always wanted to go, but by the time I could send him, he said he was too old and too sick. I don’t want any kid to say they were too old or too sick to visit Israel,” said Sheldon Adelson.

Emceed by former *Saturday Night Live* cast member **Jon Lovitz**, the memorable evening included remarks by honorary Birthright Israel Foundation board members and renowned philanthropists **Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson**, who received the Guardians of the Jewish Future Award. To date, the Adelsons have contributed \$410 million in support of Birthright Israel. The Adelsons received the award from Birthright Israel Co-Founders **Charles Bronfman** and **Michael Steinhardt**. **Additional speakers included**, Birthright Israel Foundation Chairman of the Board **Thomas D. Stern**, Birthright Israel CEO **Gidi Mark**, Birthright Israel Foundation President and CEO **Izzy Tapoohi**, a former soldier in the IDF, who joined Birthright Israel as a *Mifgash* (encounter) participant and **Rachel Gerrol**, a participant from the first-ever Birthright Israel trip in 2000 and a Birthright Israel Foundation board member.

“Miri and Sheldon, on behalf of the Birthright Israel Foundation and Jews throughout the world, we owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude. Your philanthropy is never taken for granted. It’s what inspires us each day to make sure that every Jew who cares is a meaningful stakeholder in the Jewish future,” said Tom Stern.

“If Birthright Israel is your investment,” said Rachel Gerrol, “than I am your 18-year dividend.”

Since 2000, more than 600,000 Jewish young adults have experienced Birthright Israel’s programming that enables young people to develop connections with their heritage, the larger diaspora community and the State of Israel. Birthright Israel recently announced a new age category for the first time since the organization’s founding, offering a limited number of Birthright Israel trip options for 27 to 32-year-olds this summer season. The change was implemented in order to maximize the number of those able participate and to reflect changing lifestyle trends with young adults making important decisions later in life.

About Birthright Israel Foundation

Birthright Israel is funded by a growing number of supporters in the United States through the Birthright Israel Foundation, donors in Israel and outside of North America, and the Government of Israel, as well as Jewish communities around the world (represented by the Jewish Federations of North America, the Jewish Agency for Israel and Keren Hayesod). To learn more about Birthright Israel Foundation please visit: BirthrightIsrael.Foundation