

ISEF'S 45TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

MOR ELGARISI



Ph.D. candidate Mor Elgarisi grew up in the development town of Karmiel with his parents and three siblings. His father worked in carpentry and as an exterminator and his mother worked with construction drawings.

He writes: "Growing up, there was no one in my family or in my immediate surroundings that had an academic degree. So though now I am a Ph.D. candidate at the Technion, as a teenager, it didn't occur to me that I would acquire an advanced degree. I didn't even think I would go to college. The distance between myself and higher education felt huge. I didn't quite believe that I'd be able to do it and I couldn't afford it, but finally, I decided to try anyway."

Mor earned his B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering from ORT-Braude College in Karmiel summa cum laude. He ranked first in his graduating class. He says: "I discovered that I love research and love to study! I could definitely see myself continuing in the academic world. But I first got a corporate job as a Thermal and CFD Analysis Engineer because having financial security first meant a lot to me." After two years, he was accepted into the Technion's graduate program in Mechanical Engineering in the Fluidic Technologies Laboratory, guided by Prof. Moran Bercovici. He was fascinated by the latest research into manufacturing optical elements using fluids and entered the direct track to a Ph.D.

As part of Prof. Moran Bercovici's group, Mor participated in the historic mission with the second Israeli astronaut, Eytan Stibbe. The mission was a collaboration by Axiom Space, NASA Ames Research Center, the Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Technology, and the Ramon Foundation under the Rakia mission. Eytan used the team design and experiment construction to test the ability to manufacture optical elements in space using a technology developed in Moran's lab called Fluidic Shaping. Eytan successfully fabricated several lenses by injecting special liquids into frames, forming liquid lenses, and polymerizing them to create solid lenses which will be sent later back to Earth.

Now married to Irena, the couple have a 3 year old son. Mor continues to collaborate with NASA, teach at the Technion, and volunteer as a mentor to a group of at-risk seventh graders. About ISEF, Mor says: "I joined the ISEF family and discovered a group of phenomenal people, who came, like me, from places that lacked opportunity, but then smashed their glass ceiling anyway and achieved so much."