

At Home in the Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors

When ICEJ staff visit the Home, they are made to feel they belong. There are warm greetings and hugs and invitations from residents to visit them in their rooms. We join in at meal times, visit a few we have got know well, and meet new residents. The sense of family is evident and the companionship a delight to observe. There is pain too and in shared moments, more of their story may be revealed and we are afforded a glimpse of the horror and the depth of their loss that they experienced.



The staff and volunteers are part of this family too. The Arab young man who works there has taken it on himself to call every resident each morning to say good morning, how are you today. We watched him react with concern and care when he noticed a cut on the arm of one of residents. One of the volunteers is an older man who was homeless for years until *Yad Ezer L'Haver* gave him a place to stay and his dignity back. Now, all the different tasks he undertakes are a valuable contribution to the work and maintenance required in such an enterprise. There is a volunteer in the office who is wonderfully dexterous with the hooks that serve as his hands which he lost in one of Israel's wars. A young Ethiopian woman volunteering there has her own tale of heroism and hardship and relates how as a 9 year old she experienced hunger and thirst and saw many die as she crossed Sudan with her family on their way to Israel. And so the Home has drawn many different people to it, bonding residents and workers in a very special way. It has been a privilege to have played a part in the formation of such a remarkable project and all those who support us are part of this wonderful family.

Daily Life:

In the Dining and Community area, friends are chatting together. In the courtyard outside, some more ladies are sitting together with a volunteer who comes twice a week for an art session. Charming pictures emerge as they created a sea scene complete with real shells.

On the notice board the week's activities included a Bible lecture which is very popular, gymnastic exercises, a visit to the museum and an evening with songs and dance. Chava tells us she conducts a Bridge class twice a week. A staff



member has begun a computer class.

Each Friday night is a special time together when the Sabbath is welcomed. On this evening the residents provide their own Sabbath cloths to cover the tables in keeping with tradition.

Time goes by:

In spite of the cheerful atmosphere, we are reminded of the age of the Survivors when we hear that the health of some residents is deteriorating to the point that they will need more individual care. Yitzak is in bed most of

the time now and he and Fanny have been moved to a room prepared especially for them and a live-in carer. Klara had a fall and broke her arm and her hip requiring hospitalization and is now in rehabilitation. She and Nachum have been married 61 years and he misses her very much but visits her every day. Elizabeta Rondel has not been well and has been in and out of hospital. On top of that she is dealing with the tragedy of the sudden recent death of her grandson in the Ukraine, the only child of her only daughter.

Family Ties:

Not only are lonely and needy Survivors being cared for through this important project, but a wonderful relationship of Christians and Jews has been established and continues to be strengthened. ICEJ sometimes coordinates the visit of Christian groups and one received a warm welcome a few weeks ago when they came to the Haifa Home to entertain the residents with songs. They were from an organisation in Austria that each year sends ladies to Israel to visit Holocaust Survivors who are living in various Homes for the elderly.



Holocaust Survivors are waiting anxiously for the completion of the Haifa Home Complex so they too can move in. \$US 72,000 - €50,00 is still needed.

More Adoptions will contribute towards the ongoing expenses, inquire at icejaid@icej.org