

## December Email Update 2010

### Therapy in Sderot

Imagine living each day not knowing if your house or office could be hit by a Kassam rocket. For those living in the communities on the border with Gaza, this is a daily reality. Many in Israel are concerned not only for the bodily safety of the citizens of Shaar HaNegev, located next to Sderot, but also for their mental wellness. Mental trauma from living in such an environment often doesn't surface during a time of conflict, but months or even years after.

The Resilience and Hydrotherapy Centre in Shaar HaNegev is dedicated to the rehabilitation of those who have disabilities, but also for those injured by rocket attacks. The centre has a pool for water therapy as well as gymnastic and exercise rooms and offers 2,000 therapy sessions each month.



In the past four years, they have been hit by Kassam rockets three times. The last Kassam crashed through the roof the night of July 31st leaving them without a roof for two months. No one was injured but the destruction done took months to repair. The caregivers showed their dedication in that, despite the hit, they were back in the pool for therapy just 12 hours later.

One aspect that is often overlooked is that many of the therapist and caregivers endure much trauma when working with their patients and the rocket alarm sounds. They cannot run for cover and leave the patient by themselves. These caregivers are strong in crisis, but find that they also need support in order to deal with their own trauma and the high pressure situations they cope with daily.

ICEJ AID was able to provide a two day therapy session for 33 of the 40 staff members of the centre. The staff will participate in unity building exercises as well as discuss some of the realities they face when dealing with the potential of rockets. Many issues surface during these sessions that would otherwise go left untouched. The mental health of these assistants is critical not only to themselves but also to the continued welfare of the centre and the patients in their care.

One patient is a soldier who was critically injured during Operation Cast Lead. After being treated and released from the hospital in Tel Aviv, his parents searched for similar treatment methods in the south. The hydrotherapy center was a perfect fit. They were overjoyed to be welcomed into an atmosphere that was professional, kind, and focused on the well being of their son. He receives therapy sessions 4 times every week.



Another patient lost his leg and suffered many other injuries from a motorbike accident when he was working on duty as a policeman.

The treatments at the hydrotherapy center put a smile on his face and have helped him return to a somewhat normal lifestyle.

## Together in the Galilee



On a kibbutz in the Galilee lies Yahad B'Galil. The Yahad Centre serves as a place of therapy and rehabilitation for many disabled young adults who have mild to very severe mental disabilities. The Yahad Centre has become a home to those who live there and offers animal therapy, therapeutic horseback riding, hydrotherapy, and challenge sports. The participants also attend workshops and learn skills such as paper recycling, building wood pallets, washing vehicles and attending to the animals in the animal corner. This helps to give the young adults a feeling of responsibility and it

enhances their emotional and interactive world.

ICEJ AID was excited to donate to Yahad B'Galil for animal therapy. Allowing the disabled to work with caring for and feeding the animals enables them to become care givers instead of care receivers. The members learn a sense of independence and become more sensitive to the needs of "others". This pet corner is open for the entire kibbutz community to see. This lets the members interact with those of the surrounding community as well. Having a petting zoo may seem like a small thing, but to these members of the Yahad Centre, it pushes them to do beyond what they thought they could do.



## Winter is Coming!

Please help those in need during the winter months in Israel. Give generously so that ICEJ AID can distribute blankets and heaters to Israel's needy. Click [here](#) to go to our donate page and designate your donation for Winter Needs.