

The Feast of Tabernacles: A Time of Rejoicing

This past month we've enjoyed celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, as the nations came up to Jerusalem. According to Jewish tradition, the Feast of Tabernacles comes as a joyous celebration of God establishing His kingdom over all the earth and commemorates His provision of the people when they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. At this time, prayers are made for the latter rain to fall after the long hot summer months enabling a good harvest. With the current drought in Israel at such a dangerous point, the first storm of the season was received with great delight.

Blessing the People of the Land

Throughout the feast, our friends brought us beautiful gifts of new baby clothes, sheets and towels, toiletries, and much more to give out to those in need across the land. The love and effort represented in each gift lovingly packed in precious suitcase space; touched our hearts. ICEJ AID often receives requests for these items and is able to share that they come with love from Christians worldwide. Just following the feast, a community worker from the north of the country called and asked if we had



items for newborn babies. Her care facility had just received seven newborn Down's syndrome babies whose families have abandoned them. She needed our help to provide them with their first clothing and basic needs. Just the day before, a Finnish group asked if we could use seven beautifully wrapped packages of items for newborns. A warm thank you from ICEJ AID to all of our friends and supporters for your thoughtfulness, generosity and the effort put out to bring us such beautiful gifts. Your giving enables us to assist those in need like these precious little ones.

During the feast, where possible, we like to invite our guests to visit some ICEJ AID projects and give them the opportunity to meet the people of the land. This year, we visited Or Simcha, meaning Light and Joy, an educational boarding school facility established in 1970 by the Orthodox community of Chabad to provide care for 300 youth at risk unable to remain in their homes for their own well being. Besides being able to visit the project and get insight into the Sukkot customs of the Orthodox community, a highlight of the visit was the opportunity to participate in a "wall demolition" in preparation for the expansion of the new art room being funded by ICEJ AID. So, donning hard hats with lots of laughter, with sledge hammers in hand, we got that project started off with a bang. In addition, it was a pleasure to present Or Simcha with a gift toward the art supplies once the room is completed.



The second half of our tour focused on the Bedouin community in Taibeh. This community faces many challenges particularly in the area of education for their young people. When we first met our host, Said Asbarga, he was one of only three young men in that community who had completed high school in the past decade. The reasons for this are many and complex. However, difficulties between the various Arab communities in the area are a major contributing factor as well as Bedouin internal traditions and a way of life that is slowly changing to cope with the reality of a modern world. Said started the Bedouin Association for Education and Health Development in an attempt to meet some of these challenges head on. And the challenges are indeed great. Today in Taibeh, 90% of the women are illiterate and 100% of the young girls do not go on to high school.

Since the majority of the girls are not encouraged in their studies, they suffer from low achievement at school resulting in discouragement that there is no future for them in school. Additionally, some parents are afraid to send their girls to school as they feel insecure in sending them out unsupervised and instead keep them close to home.



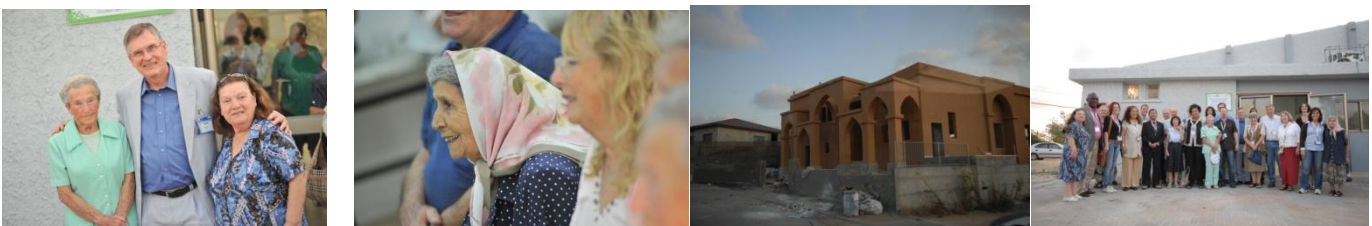
Unfortunately, the Bedouin community is further hampered by an unemployment rate of 70%. With many of the traditional occupations for women no longer a necessity in today's world, they do not have the ability to contribute to the income of the family in the ways they once did. Therefore, education is of great importance in enabling them to find employment. Considering the great need here, ICEJ AID was privileged to partner with the Bedouin Association for Education and Health Development a few years ago to refurbish classroom space within the community to provide a framework for afternoon classes. Now an intensive year long program has been established to reduce the percentage of girls leaving school. Besides remedial learning aimed at keeping them in school, focus is placed on health education, building self-esteem, developing inter-personal communication skills, and exposure to the outside world through field trips. Though the focus in this project is placed on the girls, the Association provides assistance to other Bedouin and Arab children in need of educational aid as well.



In the course of our visit, our guests enjoyed meeting some of the children in Taibeh and were treated to the famed Bedouin hospitality in the form of "Knafeh", a traditional sweet treat. It was hard to break away at the end of our visit! Due to the generosity of our donors, ICEJ AID was able to provide help for some 20 of the 60 Bedouin girls who will participate in the program over the coming year. The gift was warmly received with much appreciation. However, additional funds are still needed for the remaining young people. You can be a part of this important project. A gift in any amount is a blessing, however, the cost for one girl for the coming year is \$350/265€.

Remembering and Looking Forward

A trip to Moshav Mavqiiim on the coast just north of Gaza organized for our national director's gave insight into the ongoing process of rehabilitation and rebuilding that is taking place among the former residents of Gush Katif. Four years after the evacuation of the Jewish residents many are still waiting for a permanent settlement site to be agreed upon and infrastructure to be completed. Others are fortunate to have begun building homes. ICEJ AID recently renovated a club building for community activities in Moshav Mavqiiim and had the privilege of dedicating it in the presence of our national directors. A sign on the outside of the building states that *"this renovation was done by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem as a sign of our friendship."* The event was a special opportunity for us to express our support and the love of Christians worldwide. As conversations took place with the evacuees and holocaust survivors, we found two different groups who had suffered the loss of home and who knew grief for a life they could never return to. However, we also found them to be people full of strength, able to laugh and look forward to a better future together on a Moshav founded by Hungarian holocaust survivors 60 years ago.



Please prayerfully consider partnering with us.
Designate your gift to ICEJ AID:
Bedouin and Arab Educational Project #446000-018 or
ICEJ AID - Where Needed Most.

For more information contact us at: icejaid@icej.org

Help us make



CHRISTMAS and CHANUKAH



special for those in need this year!

You can help bless the Jewish people and Arab Christians during the holiday season.

- Chanukah gifts
- Children's gifts for Christmas
- Food for needy families
- Fund holiday parties and programs



Left: A Holocaust survivor celebrating Chanukah.



Right: A children's Christmas program in Bethlehem.

Designate your giving to ICEJ Aid: Holidays.