They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Isaiah 51:11

ICEJ SUPPORTS HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
MARK THEIR BAR & BAT MITZVAHS
The LORD has anointed Me... to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness... (Isaiah 61:1f)

The ICEJ Report you are holding in your hands deals with the plight of the remaining Holocaust survivors that are still alive in Israel. This last generation of survivors were either children, adolescents or young adults during the Holocaust.

Esti, one of the residents in our Haifa Home, was a young child when the Nazis invaded her village. She saw her parents be killed and had to flee with her older sister through the forests in Poland, where eventually her sister died in her lap. Running from one village to another, she managed to survive, and as a young teenager moved to Israel. She told us recently that the horrible images from more than 70 years ago are still alive in her mind. But living in the Haifa Home for Holocaust survivors gives her new hope.

The warm atmosphere of the house, regular visits from our caring staff, along with regular international guests – Christians from around the world – make the Home a joyful place that brings healing and excitement for this unique group of 70 survivors.

Please pray for our staff as they reach out to these broken-hearted people. At the same time, as you read this ICEJ Report, please consider partnering with us and taking this last opportunity to bless these courageous people in Israel, who suffered through so much. There are substantial regular costs involved with running this facility, and there is still a great need to expand the Home, as the waiting list for accommodation is long.

Time is running out and there is only a small window of opportunity to show the Holocaust survivors the love of God. Thank you for standing with us at this crucial time!

Yours in Christ,
Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ Executive Director

WE WERE FIRST INTRODUCED to Shimon Sabag in December 2009, when a few representatives of ICEJ visited a small home in Haifa, which housed several Holocaust survivors. As an initiator of this endeavor, already then he was a man with vision and a huge heart to help Holocaust survivors to live out their last years in dignity and with love and care.

A wonderful partnership was born between the International Christian Embassy and Yad Ezer L’Haver – the organization started by Shimon. With Christian support from all around the world, ICEJ was able to acquire buildings and apartments to house survivors who needed care and a secure place to live. As the Home grew, it became a well-developed assisted living facility for elderly survivors, which its director often calls “A house of God.” We have seen God’s hand over this project and His continuous, wonderful provision.

Over the years, new residents have moved in, more staff has been hired, and more facilities have been opened – for recreational activities and more. It has become a Home that is one of its kind in all of Israel, and which has become known not only in Israel but all over the world.

As this special Home does not fit any recognized category of a center for the elderly, it does not receive any government support. However, it is under close supervision of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and thus fully complies with all statutory standards and implements the ministry’s rules and regulations.

When residents come to live in the Home, they are usually still fairly independent and relatively healthy. However, with time, as most of them are in their 80s and 90s, we see a significant decline in their health, which can happen quite suddenly. Every case is unique, therefore creative solutions have to be found to take care of the needs of every resident.

We are thankful for every donation that we receive for this remarkable project. Your support is invaluable, and it is a huge blessing to the continuation of the Haifa Home for Holocaust survivors.
CLOSE TO 30 HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS MARK THEIR BAR & BAT MITZVAHS IN JERUSALEM

BY JANNIE TOLHOEK

IN THE JEWISH TRADITION, every boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah — son of the commandment — at the age of 13, while every girl becomes a Bat Mitzvah — daughter of the commandment — at the age of 12. Jewish families celebrate this milestone with great festivities, since from that age the boys and girls bear their own responsibility for keeping the law and traditions in Jewish community life.

The great majority of Holocaust survivors who are alive today lived through the horrors of the Second World War while they were still children. Because of this, that generation missed an important celebration in their youth: the marking of their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.

This summer, some of the residents of the Haifa Home for Holocaust survivors were given an opportunity to become Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, some 70 years later than the traditional age. The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem accompanied them in making this commitment, and what better place to mark this event than the Old City of Israel’s capital, beautiful Jerusalem?

The elderly survivors arrived at the Kotel – the Western Wall Plaza – with a police escort. Waving Israeli flags, they were greeted by crowds with singing and dancing, while the IDF soldiers saluted them with honor and respect. Chief Rabbi David Lau greeted the Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah participants and, together with MK Yair Lapid, they presented the male participants with phylacteries and prayer shawls.

“I experienced such a joy being in Jerusalem and celebrating my belated Bar Mitzvah,” said Yaakov, who attends the synagogue Wall Plaza – with a police escort. Waving Israeli flags, they were greeted by crowds with singing and dancing, while the IDF soldiers saluted them with honor and respect. Chief Rabbi David Lau greeted the Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah participants and, together with MK Yair Lapid, they presented the male participants with phylacteries and prayer shawls.

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“Meeting Christians from all over the world in our Home is so unique, and exciting beyond words,” said Amit, the Home’s Social Worker. “The love they display, with or without words, and the willingness to learn about the horrific past of the survivors is both deeply touching and healing for the residents.”

The Peacemakers project is all about learning from the past, and the young Europeans said they would never forget the testimonies they heard. “[The survivors] told us their stories,” shared David from the Czech Republic. “And the interesting thing was that they were not bitter. After the program finished, we left touched by their kindness and happiness.”

After the time of testimonies, the group and the residents gathered together in the main hall. The young visitors sang some songs in Hebrew that they had just learned on their bus ride there to bring a smile to everyone’s face. Soon the residents joined in and everybody got up to dance, young and old, and with great joy the residents joined the singing. These moments moved the hearts of the staff, as well.

Manya (middle), a Holocaust survivor, learned to deal with her difficult past through art.
even move their feet at special folk dance evenings. There are also joint activities with young people, e.g., a group of students teaches the elderly computer skills.

With no government support the Home is completely dependent on donations. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to join the mandate that God gave the ICEJ to “Comfort Ye My People”! We invite you to stand with us in providing these elderly survivors with a Home where they can feel secure and are surrounded with loving care.

HOW TO ADOPT A SURVIVOR

The average cost per resident is USD 2,250 per month. You can make a monthly commitment in the amount of your choosing to help offset the costs of providing essential care to the residents of the Haifa Home.

PLEASE FOLLOW THE LINK: HTTP://WWW.ICEJ.ORG/ADOPT
OR EMAIL US AT: ICEJ.AID@ICEJ.ORG

OVER THE YEARS we noticed that social activities and companionship are some of the most important aspects of the Haifa Home. Loneliness is one of the most difficult challenges that the elderly Holocaust survivors have to deal with. With age, their short term memory is weakened, but the long term memory becomes very sharp, so the memories from their past return to them with great intensity and detail, appearing in nightmares and thoughts. Loneliness amplifies this trauma and makes it almost impossible to deal with.

The Home in Haifa provides a much needed community for its residents. Most of them have forged close relationships with other residents. “We are a family” – we often hear, not only from the residents but also from the staff.

The recreational facility, one of the newer additions to the Haifa Home, has been a tremendous blessing and is used daily, buzzing with activities. Here the residents and other survivors from the area can sit down for coffee together, participate in gym classes, go to Bible (Tanach) teachings, learn English, and 

ADOPT A SURVIVOR!
The ICEJ is dedicated to caring for the Holocaust survivors in Israel and we are grateful for your partnership with us in this endeavor!
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