

## HANDS ON TZEDAKAH

### SUPPORT PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR IN 2023

Since the Israel-Hamas war began on October 7, *Hands On Tzedakah* (“*HOT*”) has distributed in excess of 4,365,000 shekels (\$1,201,300) through December 31, 2023. Leveraging the generous donations that have been received since October 7, *HOT* has worked with trusted partners to identify critical needs and make grants to address these needs. Following is a breakdown of how *HOT* has, thus far, supported the people of Israel:

- Ashkelon (\$92,288): From the first evening of the war, *HOT* was helping the residents of this city which is just over 5 miles from the Gaza border. We immediately funded the cost of 1,000 mattresses so people didn’t have to sleep on the concrete floors of the public bomb shelters. In addition, *HOT* purchased many other items during the first days of the war (\$15,176): 400 portable electric chargers; hot food for three days for 15 shelters and shut-ins; 50 sets of protective vests and helmets (for emergency forces volunteers); snacks and light food for 15 shelters for three days; 125 emergency lighting devices; food (more substantial than snacks) for families in dozens of shelters; toys and games for dozens of families displaced by the war; and toiletries for people in need.

After the first few days of the war, we continued to provide food, water, and other supplies for many of the residents until other resources were found (\$77,111). With other organizations directing resources to Ashkelon, *HOT* has since shifted its focus to other areas. Nonetheless, we remain in contact with the emergency staff in Ashkelon at least twice a week and are constantly reevaluating needs.

- Sderot (\$55,752): This city of 30,000 is a half-mile from the Gaza border. Even before the current war, Sderot has been under constant bombardment over the past 18 years. This time almost the entire city was evacuated to hotels and other housing arrangements (paid for by the government) since it was nearly impossible to protect the residents from the shelling. Although most homes have safe-rooms, being forced to live in those rooms non-stop is inhumane.

The displaced families took with them clothing and supplies for 3-4 days, only what fit into their suitcases. With thousands of residents in hotels for months, *HOT* purchased washing machines and dryers for the now semi-permanent residents of the hotels. *HOT* supplied the necessary educational and school items so the children could continue in their studies: school supplies, schoolbooks, tables, chairs, and closets for the new “schools” in the hotels’ ballrooms. In addition, with their stay extended for several more months, *HOT* has helped pay for small plastic closets for the hotel rooms so the families will have a place to store summer and winter clothes, and personal items.

- Beit Elazraki (\$13,664) is a home to over 200 at-risk children in Netanya. When the war broke out, their needs increased (staff was called up to reserve duty,

children were traumatized by hearing rockets overhead, etc). Due to travel restrictions, people were forced to shelter in place for long periods of time, so *HOT* paid for activities for the children and staff (who were once again, like with COVID, under lockdown).

- The Netanya Foundation (\$47,577): Also in Netanya, we work closely with the Netanya Foundation, a wonderful, trusted, partner for many years. They asked for funding to begin therapy immediately for many displaced children who witnessed the horrific acts of Hamas terrorism. After the first round of therapy, we have funded a second round as well; and if they are not able to fund additional rounds we will consider making yet another grant. *HOT* believes severe PTSD is a natural resultant of what these young children have experienced.
- Widowed in All but Name (\$36,050) helps girlfriends of IDF soldiers who were killed. We have worked with them for 20 years and now, sadly, there are hundreds of girlfriends in need of support groups. *HOT* proudly (and immediately) sponsored the first group forming as these words are being written, and now has helped with a second group.
- Gumat Chen (\$26,463) is a boarding school for teenage girls at risk, located near the Gaza border (Kibbutz Sa'ad). *HOT* responded to their request for computers (for "Zoom school"), buses, meals, workshops, therapy sessions, outings, entertainment, and accommodations further away from the border fighting. In addition, *HOT* has supplied food and basic needs to some of the staff, teens, and their families.
- Shachen Tov (\$23,154) feeds hungry people (with near zero overhead). Due to their relationships with the families in the 9 cities where they operate, it was easy for them to use their volunteer force to assist as needed. *HOT* paid for games and toys for children displaced from the homes, in addition to food and basic needs.
- Amit LaDerech (A Friend Alongside) (\$57,396) works with released IDF soldiers who come from backgrounds with no family support. While a significant number of Israeli reservists have been called up for emergency service since October 7, only one-third of Amit LaDerech's soldiers were called. These are people who finished the army but aren't crucial to the war effort, and most of them have an exemption from further service due to the need to work and stay on a new life path. *HOT* paid for immediate emergency assistance to those in need, and for new work and support groups for those soldiers starting their post-army life now.
- My Piece of the Puzzle (\$32,916) combines at-risk teens with special-needs teens in a variety of programs. *HOT* has helped to address such needs as the post-high school gap year program requiring extra counselors (one of their staff was killed on October 7), transportation, added educational activities, added staff, and emergency needs for the families of the teens.

- The Jaffa Institute (\$13,500): *HOT* has provided funding for food and supplies for people in need in the greater Tel Aviv area, including those displaced from their homes.
- Beer Sheva (\$3,000): *HOT* is paying for an after-school fitness program for teens at risk. These teens are all known to social welfare services and without some structure they will be on the streets. Their previous programs have all been cancelled due to the constant sirens in and around the city.

There are two organizations which are helping *HOT* do the vast majority of the on-the-ground work:

- Galila (\$745,189): Though located in the north (an area that, while not near Gaza is still experiencing sirens every day), they work throughout the country. Galila is able to pinpoint specific needs to individuals, families, and communities. The list of recipients (covering dozens of localities throughout Israel) and the types of items provided is quite long (see below). Also, please note the project which Galila is facilitating, also listed below.
- Eckstein Fund (\$54,351): Located in Jerusalem, the Eckstein Fund operates in the same fashion as *HOT*: carefully checking each and every request, doing due diligence, and speaking with the social workers and community workers to ascertain needs. Only after this process (which takes a day or two at most), they are willing to assist those in need. *HOT* is happy to help fund it.

The grants to Galila and the Eckstein Fund have enabled them to provide:

- food and toys/games for more than 500 families displaced by the war
- diapers, baby formula, strollers, baby clothes for displaced families
- toiletries for hundreds of people in need
- transportation and relocation accommodations for those in harm's way
- therapy (social workers/psychologists) for children from the south
- more than 100 first aid kits
- approximately 400 hot meals for people in the south, who can't leave their homes
- over 600 pizzas for displaced families and for wives of reservists
- 16 sets of washer and dryers for people in need and for displaced families
- 30 memory cards for the people documenting the atrocities of October 7
- payment of utility bills for single moms in need who are out of work due to the war
- more than 200 dinners for women with children (special-needs and the like) whose husbands are on reserve duty
- 50 wrist bands that vibrate when there's a red alert siren, for deaf and hard of hearing people
- tours and entertainment, including Hanukkah programs, for displaced families

Project with Galila (\$542,000, included in the \$745,189 noted above): Galila has also undertaken a special project to provide 42 sets of basic equipment for civilian guards across communities in northern Israel. These communities are prone to attacks from Hezbollah, a terrorist organization that operates in southern Lebanon along Israel's northern border, and is one of the most powerful non-state entities in the world. Estimates of Hezbollah's total rocket count are upwards of 150,000 (more than 10 times what Hamas has/had). In addition, Hezbollah possesses anti-aircraft and anti-ship missiles, as well as thousands of anti-tank missiles. Dozens of these are shot into Israel daily, and several civilians have been killed and injured in the last few months. All of the Israeli towns in the northern border area have been evacuated, from Rosh HaNikra and Shlomi in the far west to Shtula and Shomera in the center, and Margoliot and Misgav Am to the east. The IDF has been operating heavily inside Lebanon (and Syria) hoping to contain the fighting, but war on the northern front seems imminent.

The civilian guard members have remained behind in order to protect their communities and the factories and farmlands in the area. The hens are still laying eggs and the cows are still giving milk; workers come for a few hours every day to maintain their businesses. The civilian guard groups were severely underequipped and/or their equipment has aged and is not as effective as it was when it was new.

Each of the 42 sets includes equipment for approximately 12 members (depending on the size of the community): flashlights, first aid kits, protective ceramic vests, reflective clothing, helmets, knee pads, tactical gloves, canteens, goggles, thermal storm suits, headlamps, paramedic bag, road spikes for deployment at the entrance to towns, and professional binoculars. We are proud to have partnered with Galila, who has raised additional funding beyond the donation via *HOT* in order to cover the full costs involved.

Since the war began, *HOT* has received over \$1,600,000 in gifts from more than 600 donors. Regardless of what happens between Israel and Hamas (or Hezbollah) in the coming weeks and months, the need for therapy, supplies, temporary shelter, etc. will continue. *HOT* plans to continue to work with its partners to identify the most impactful ways to allocate the approximately \$400,000 it has not yet distributed, and expects that it will need substantially more funding.