

Shalom dear friends,

Often people ask me "How is work at the Ebenezer Home?" I answer: "Never boring!" Indeed, there is never a dull moment...

In the previous newsletter we asked for your prayers especially for the summer which is always full of challenges, since many employees are on vacation. And indeed this summer was very challenging!

A number of employees became sick and some even had to be away for an extended period. Furthermore, following the operation in the south some volunteers announced, on a very short notice, that they decided to postpone their arrival for the autumn. We had to find replacement workers to ensure the routine in the Home.

Although the operation in the south took place relatively far away in geographical terms, like most people in the land, we were not disconnected from what was happening. We all mourn the cost of this operation to both sides.

Along with many parents of soldiers who were serving in the front lines during the operation, for Shoshana and me it was a period that kept sleep from our eyes. We thank God for protecting our daughter who experienced the war first hand, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

In Haifa the alarm sounded only once, and it happened at 03:00 in the morning. Immediately after the alarm I went to check the situation at the Ebenezer Home, and to my delight (and surprise) I found that quite a few residents had gone to the secured areas on their own, as we had practiced. The rest of the residents didn't hear the alarm, and were spared the disturbed night.

By the grace of God and with the help of generous donations we received, we were able to complete the first phase of the renovation of the water heating system. This system was converted from diesel fuel heating to heating with gas. Over and above saving water heating costs (there are less maintenance expenses), the new system is cleaner and it allows more accurate stability of the water temperature thus preventing the formation of dangerous bacteria, according to the requirements of the Ministry of Health.

This change was necessary in light of the planned construction of the nursing floor. In addition, thanks to the installation of a water recirculation pump, we have also gained savings in water consumption, due to the fact that the residents get hot water almost immediately.



Gas system for water heating



Part of the old heating system

In the autumn, just when we were preparing to transfer the central air-conditioning system from cooling to heating, we found that the heating system was about to collapse. At first we hoped that we could wait until the warmer spring days to replace the system, so that we could prepare financially for the big expense. But after carefully checking the system we found that we had an emergency on our hands. It became clear that there was no point in trying to fix the old cumbersome system, the pipes were too rusty and some of the taps and control mechanisms were no longer functioning properly. The system, now almost 40 years old, has done its job,

and there is no alternative but to install a new system. David, the maintenance manager, has already designed a more compact and efficient system which will also work with gas instead of diesel fuel (like the water heating system). We thank God we have had a spell of warm days, renovation works are already underway and we hope that we will soon be able to run the new system.

We are also near the end of the designing phase for the construction of an additional floor and the nursing ward with 12 beds. After much deliberation of the situation, we have decided to examine the possibility of building an underground protected area for emergencies for the use of the nursing ward, under the parking lot that is next to the Home (like the model of the Rambam Hospital). In comparison with improving the protection of the present nursing floor construction costs would be reduced and there would be a better utilization of building rights. In the coming days we will be sending these plans for review and approval of the Ministry of Health. After the Ministry of Health approves the plans, we can turn to the Haifa Municipality for approval in principle. We need much wisdom and guidance for this complex subject, and we value your prayers.

In November we had the comprehensive annual inspection of the Ministry of Welfare in order to renew the license for the Home. The supervising nurse strengthened our hands and noted that the planning of the nursing ward is the right and obvious thing in light of the clear trend in this land and in the world. It is expected that in the coming years Nursing Home's services will focus on nursing wards. In any case, a nursing department is essential in order to ensure continuity of service and care in Nursing Homes that have independent and frail residents.

At the New Year's party we said goodbye to a devoted nurse Vibike Lukatz, who retired after working in the Home for many years. One of our residents said moving farewell words and described Vibike as a gardener who cared faithfully for each of the flowers in His garden!



Rosh Hashanah celebration in the garden

During the past six months three of these flowers have gone to be with the Lord, and they were ready to meet Him:



Miriam Munce (92): Born in the USA and very attached to her Jewish tradition. She came to faith in Christ after two different incidents when the lives of her children were miraculously saved when believers prayed for their healing: Her daughter was healed from a double fracture in her skull after falling from the second floor, and her son was cured of eye cancer. Her husband came to faith only later, after one of their sons was killed at school. However, he never got over the tragic death of their son and died two years later of a broken heart. About 7 years later she remarried and fulfilled her dream to move to Israel, and lived in Caesarea and became a member of the Beit Asaf Congregation. She left behind a list of miracles God did in her life!



Inna Weisburd (92): Born in the Ukraine under Stalin's regime, her father was from a religious home and her mother an atheist. At 18, she experienced the 2nd World War. By God's grace she was able to escape from the Nazis and from fatal bombings. In one case, she found refuge with others in the basement of a building. Catherine, an 11 year old girl who hid with her, saw the fear in her eyes and told her to pray to God. That was the first time she turned to God in prayer. In retrospect, she discovered that the building where she hid was the only one left intact after the bombings in the area! Another time she was saved, when she called to God for help during a storm and was alone. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a woman appeared and told her where to go. She learned from the Bible that a friend loaned her about this God who saved her life again and again. After coming to faith, she joined a congregation that gathered in the underground. 14 years the KGB prevented her from immigrating to Israel, but she was helped by a German pastor whose daughter later volunteered at the Ebenezer Home! Inna claims that Psalm 91 is the essence of her life story.



Hans Meyer (94): Was born in Haifa to a Swiss father and a German mother that left the Templar community after her marriage. Hans, who grew up in Waldheim (Aloni Abba), was very attached to the history of the Messianic Jews in Israel: He met his wife Esther when he worked as an electrician at Beit Shalom. After their marriage, Hans worked as a maintenance man at the Elias Church and managed their warehouse. He installed the electrical system in the Messianic Conference Center, Beit Yedidia on the Carmel. After the place opened, the couple managed the place for about 6 years: Hans worked as the maintenance man, and Esther worked as the cook. In 2011 the couple entered Ebenezer. Hans was eager to see the Lord, whom he served quietly and faithfully.

We now have 25 residents living in the Home, and we expect some new residents to join us at the beginning of the coming year.

In early December we held a bazaar and were very happy to see that many people came from near and far. Apart from the handwork our residents offered for sale, there were tables with art work made by believers from different congregations, a craft area for children, a stand for sharpening knives and of course the cafeteria that was busy as always. I take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the success of the event and to all the guests.



Handwork and cafeteria at the Bazaar

We thank God for His faithfulness and all those who support us faithfully - we need you!

We wish you all a very fruitful and blessed year for 2015!

In the Love of Christ, Johnny and Shoshana Khoury.