

Shalom dear friends!

One of the main reasons for raising retirement age in the world is lack of planning on the national and personal level. Many of those who have reached retirement age and haven't prepared wisely over the years, for lack of knowledge or attention, are paying the price today. As part of our work at the Home we feel the importance and responsibility of preventing a similar situation for the elderly believing community in Israel. On the one hand we have always set before us the Psalmist cry (71:9): "Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength fails", and on the other hand God's promise in Isaiah 46:4 "And even to old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you, I have made, and I will bear, yea, I will carry, and will deliver."

We thank the Lord that in October the Amuta committee gave their consent that we go ahead with the building project, which includes a Nursing Ward.

I asked our maintenance manager, David Phillips, who is also the project manager, to write a few words about the project:

"Just recently we had a very encouraging meeting at the preservation office in the Municipality. They gave us very strict building restrictions regarding the building design for we are in the German Colony, which is recognized by UNESCO as a heritage site. One of the demands is that the building be faced with stone so that it blends in with the old German Colony homes. (Honestly speaking, it does look good!)"

Amos, our Architect, did a very good design job that complies with all the requirements so we can now proceed towards receiving the building permit.

In the coming months we will concentrate on planning the electric and communication systems, the nurse call system and the integration of medical equipment as well as water, air conditioning and fire systems. There is still a long way to go but by the grace of the God it will all be done! You can be updated on the progress of the Nursing Ward Project on our Home website:

<http://www.ebenezer.co.il/nursing-ward-project>

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/EbenezerProject/likes>



*Planning team:
David, Amos, Nira, Nurit & Avi*



In December 2016 I visited the Netherlands and was received very warmly by believers who are willing to support our project and help us connect to more people and inform their congregations and friends. We would appreciate your help in informing others of the urgent need for a Nursing Ward for the believing community in Israel! Please join us in praying for all those who labor on this project believing that this Home will be established for His glory. Please also pray that all the funds will be provided.

In the coming weeks I plan to travel to the Netherlands (Feb. 9th) and to Essen in Germany (Feb. 11th) and participate in meetings that have been organized so that I can present the project to all who are interested. It is important for me to mention that the need to build is not a matter of choice but a requirement. The Health and Welfare Ministries in Israel have demanded that Old People's Homes that function in old facilities must renovate and upgrade all their wards according to the new standards. The license of Homes that do not comply will be revoked. It is a matter of 'to be or not to be'!

Thank you for supporting this project in prayer and in any other practical way. We believe that the God who put the burden for this project on our hearts will also provide all the funds and needs to make it possible!

Please note that we have a special account for the Nursing Ward project. (Details are at the end of the newsletter - thank you!)."

Dr. Faith Goldberg that started working as the new Physician in the Home willingly agreed to share some of her experiences: "I've been working as the doctor in Ebenezer home for half a year now, and have experienced a warm welcome from the staff and residents. After working at the Carmel Hospital for the past four and a half years, it is such a contrast for me to work in a believing environment; to start the day with staff prayer and have devotions later on in the morning, to be able to pray with the residents who are not well.



There are many things I'm learning, most of all from the residents themselves, not only their illnesses but things they say and do. One of the comments that I received from an elderly saint went something like this, 'Look, you need to stop giving me all these medications, you are keeping people alive for too long here. I've been here for a year and a half and so far only one of the residents has gone to be with the Lord. At this rate, it will be ages before I can go and be with Him.' As I was listening to this veteran saint, one of my eyebrows was raised.

Daily, I witness the struggle of some of the residents with deteriorating memory, difficulty in walking and long lists of medical problems that limit their independence and lessen their joy. One of the most painful things for me to see is the progressive loneliness of some; family relationships broken or distant, many times because of the resident's faith in Yeshua, the Messiah.

For the beginning of a New Year I received a wonderful daily devotional book as a gift from the Home. The first devotion that I read mentions the reason behind the tradition of giving gifts at Christmas time being the gifts given by the three wise men – gold, frankincense and myrrh. These gifts symbolizing Yeshua, His Person, life and work; gold symbolizing His deity, frankincense the fragrance of a perfect life and sacrifice, and myrrh – the bitter suffering that He endured. I see that same pattern of giving repeated in our lives, starting with our recognition of His kingship in our life – gold, the fragrance of a life well lived – frankincense, and often towards the end of life that precious and most difficult gift of suffering – the myrrh, that we offer to our King.



Art class with Jonathan Goldberg



An outing to the zoo

Many of the residents have amazing stories of how they came to faith, their testimonies have been recently recorded in a book 'Remember What God Has Done: the Ebenezer Home – the first 40 years', which I highly recommend. In my experience the fragrance of a life well lived lingers despite the erosion caused by Alzheimer's disease. Every morning I receive a hearty blessing in Yiddish and Russian from a former colleague – a neonatologist – who struggles with her memory now, but blesses me daily, and sometimes a couple of times a day, with 'good health for you and for your children, blessing in your work place and your home'.

And finally there is the suffering of the residents; some with chronic pain, nausea, depression - and the list goes on. Most of my day is focused on how to help relieve or prevent some of this load of suffering – with varying degrees of success. But I am encouraged by those residents who are examples to me, and in the face of pain and difficulties are ready with a good word, still eager to serve, and looking out for the needs of others – there is an aroma of myrrh at Ebenezer Home!"



Rosh Hashanah in the garden

At the end of 2016 Natalia Bizhko ended her work as House Mother and has retired after almost 22 years! We thank the Lord for her work here at the Home, a job that required 24/7 attention. The Lord is faithful who will also reward her with grace upon grace.



Magda Shaechterle who was trained at housekeeping and worked as Natalia's helper now has the heavy responsibility upon her shoulders. We pray that God gives her much wisdom and patience in this new position.

Thank you again for your prayers, faithful support and love!

Johnny and Shoshana Khoury

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Bank details for donations designated for the building project

Account name: Ebenezer Home

Bank name: Mercantile Discount Bank

Name of Branch: Haifa Business Center

Address of Bank: 147 Bar-Yehuda St., Nesher

Bank Number: 17

Branch Number: 650

Account Number: See below according to currency

Swift code: BARDILIT

IBAN	Currency
IL60 0176 5000 0007 3093 469	Euro
IL82 0176 5000 0007 3093 655	Swiss Franc
IL38 0176 5000 0007 3093 477	NOK
IL38 0176 5000 0007 3093 671	GBP
IL29 0176 5000 0007 3093 639	US Dollars
IL19 0176 5000 0007 3079 075	Shekels