

Finger on the Pulse

by Dr. Faith Goldberg, Ebenezer Medical Doctor



Rawda - celebrating twenty-five years of faithful service at Ebenezer

Rawda's kingdom is deep in the bowels of Ebenezer Home. From two rooms in the basement she



transforms piles of dirty laundry into stacks of fresh-smelling, ironed clothes that she delivers in person to the residents.

When I met Rawda in my office at 8:00am she had already loaded and set her industrial-sized washing machines in motion. As Ebenezer's longest standing worker, I was curious to know more about her.

Rawda comes from an Arab Catholic background and came to a personal faith while working at Ebenezer Home. She remembers the exact date she started work at Ebenezer, the 8th of January 1994- twenty- five years ago. Her husband was temporarily out of work and with four small children at home it was hard to make ends meet. Rawda's relative, who was working in

the kitchen in Ebenezer, suggested she fill a temporary vacancy as kitchen helper.

The housemother at the time saw the potential Rawda had and encouraged her that she had a future at Ebenezer. Rawda took on more responsibility in the kitchen and eventually became the cook for more than eleven years.

During her time in the kitchen she worked with May, a girl from an American Arab background. May took Rawda along to meetings at the Arab brethren church in Haifa. It was here that she came into a living relationship with Jesus, her Messiah.

"It is only by God's strength that I get through the days," Rawda says, with tears glistening in her eyes. "I don't know how I would have managed without Him." This is a phrase that she repeats often in the half hour we are together, and as I listen to more of Rawda's story I understand why.

Rawda's only son, Rami, died at the age of twenty-two. At the age of five he started having epileptic fits and a neurologist discovered a brain tumor. It was considered to be benign and lodged in a part of the brain that made operating very risky. Finally, at the age of nine Rami underwent an operation and the tumor was partially removed. He continued to have frequent fits and went to a school for special needs. His symptoms got worse, the tumor had transformed from benign to malignant. The same neurosurgeon performed the second operation, however Rami died five months later.

Rawda's grief is raw. A few years back her husband died, leaving her a widow with three grown daughters. "It is only by God's strength, I keep going," she repeats. The strength and joy that Rawda draws from her faith, radiates in her friendly smile and her concern for others. Rawda enjoys the quiet routine of the laundry room and the fellowship with other workers during break times. "It is good to have work", she said. "Recently the local authorities put up the property tax, it has made it very difficult for me to manage. It is impossible without God's help."

After the interview I reflected that being God's child certainly doesn't give us immunity from all the troubles of this life; sickness, bereavement and financial difficulties. But for the believer, we have taken refuge under the wings of our Heavenly Father and experience His daily, loving care.

Bread and Fish - Devotional

by **Johnny Khoury**, Ebenezer Managing Director



Words that always warm my heart are when I hear residents, who are temporarily hospitalized, say they want to return "Home" to Ebenezer. Indeed, one of our goals as an old-age home is for the residents to actually feel at home.

Our aspiration is not only that the residents will feel at home, but also the workers and volunteers. However, one of the challenges of family life is that you do not choose your brothers and sisters. In Ebenezer this challenge takes on a special significance as living in community continues 24/7. In addition, the residents, employees and volunteers come from different backgrounds, languages and cultures (not to mention habits and traditions). This reality increases the potential for friction and misunderstanding. Our vision statement clearly states: "Ebenezer aspires to function as a Christian home, where the Word of God is declared regularly, in a Christian atmosphere of love and tolerance." - this remains valid for all residents and staff.

As manager of the Home I am often required to intervene in interpersonal disputes between people in the Home. In such cases I recall Solomon who wisely asked God for wisdom, as it is written in First Kings 3:9: "So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" One needs patience, the ability to listen and discernment.

The struggle for unity and love is not only a challenge to the individual it is also a corporate one. Therefore, one of the most important tools to fulfil our vision is corporate prayer. Apart from the daily morning devotions with the residents, the staff and volunteers start every shift with prayer asking for the grace of God. Because our challenge is daily, our prayer is daily. We believe that in the end the love we have in Christ will win!

What's New?

by **Christie Livingstone**, Ebenezer Home Secretary



From the beginning, part of the vision for Ebenezer Home was to have volunteers serve side by side with the staff. Originally all the volunteers came from NCMI, (Norwegian Christian Mission for Israel) and several other supporting ministries.

They were people who loved Israel and the residents and wanted to give their time and labor, wherever they were needed. Their knowledge of various languages was invaluable in the Home's setting, with residents coming from so many backgrounds. However, the most important language in the Home has always been LOVE.

As the work continued and as our volunteers finished their service with the Home and went back to their countries to tell the story, people from many countries started applying. Volunteers from all over the world including New Zealand, India, Vietnam and Mexico have come to work alongside us, giving love and support to our residents. And the residents love to have them around!

To me personally, it is very encouraging to see that many young girls choose to spend their time, after school or before continuing their education, to work with the elderly, giving sacrificial care. I am also amazed every time someone drops in saying something like: "I volunteered here 20/25/30 years ago and just wanted to show the Home to my friends/family, as we are visiting Israel again". It is wonderful to hear again and again that Ebenezer Home has not only been blessed by so many, but has become a blessing to so many as well.

We are grateful to God for each volunteer. Without them the Home would not be what it is.

