



ICEJ AID – ADOPT A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR UPDATE - JANUARY 2009

World Holocaust Day

For ten years now, January 27th has been reserved in Germany for a day of remembrance; a day the country remembers when the Holocaust became a lasting scar on world history. On this date in 1945, the Red Army liberated Auschwitz, exposing Nazi brutality to the world. This year it will be recognized by the United Nations as a global anniversary. Its recognition by the world body comes at a time when there is a frightening resurgence of anti-Semitism and continuing Holocaust denial. Each year too, the number of eye witnesses dwindle.



Sharing the light of Hanukah

Hanukah, also known as The Festival of Lights, is a festival that commemorates a Jewish victory over the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanies 200 years before the birth of Jesus. It generally falls during the month of December and this year, on the 21st of the month, ICEJ visited Pardes Chana, a small town south of Haifa. Holocaust survivors, including our adoptees who live in that town, received a beautifully wrapped traditional 9 branched Hanukah candelabra as well as chocolate. The visit was jointly organized by *L'Chaim*, our partner in this project, and ICEJ AID. The team visited several homes, lighting candles and singing favorite Hanukah songs. The day prior to this visit, the young male Academy students, who are very much part of the project through their visits and phone calls to each sponsored survivor, had also visited these precious elderly people to bring them traditional Hanukah doughnuts along with their bi-monthly food basket. These visits delighted and in some cases moved their hosts to tears.

Adela, a 89 years old who was forced to work in a labor camp during the war, was very happy to receive visitors. She is a different person now to the bitter woman she was before *L'Chaim* discovered her plight.

Maurice has lost most of his sight but he welcomes the visitors with a wonderful smile and blesses them for taking the time to *“visit an old man like me”*.

Rachel is partly blind and until she was adopted by an ICEJ sponsor she never left her house. Now the young students take her for walks in the sunshine when they deliver her food and fresh vegetables.

We reported on the wonderful Rosh Hashanah distribution in Katzrin in the Golan Heights when local high school children met Holocaust Survivors in their town. As they delivered the food baskets they experienced a special connection to those who were part of one of the darkest hours of the Jewish people. During Hanukah they also took around Hanukah gifts, lit the candles with the survivors and spoke to them for about an hour. Again, as their teacher reported, they were profoundly moved by the experience.



The Katzrin residents were also treated to a special outing and a festive meal, which included singing and a talk by a Rabbi about the significance and traditions of Hanukah. We need to remember that many of the survivors in Katzrin are immigrants from the FSU where communism quenched all knowledge of Judaism for most Jewish people. However, through the Adopt a Holocaust Survivor Program they are being put back in touch with their heritage.

It was through the support of all those who care for these special elderly residents of Israel, that ICEJ AID was able to make Hanukah a significant and joyous one for many survivors.

As Christians, we have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of lonely and disadvantages survivors.

Help us bring light to the lives of more Holocaust Survivors

In his message regarding Holocaust Day, Daniel Braun of *L'Chaim* says:

"I turn to you who feel the deep significance of this day and all it represents and I ask that you make every effort to help us adopt more of these survivors. Let us remember that this is our last chance to bring them the dignity, the pleasure and the happiness that they deserve. I give thanks from the depths of my soul to all those warm and sensitive people who are true and faithful lovers of Israel and who accompany us with their generosity and with their donations and so enable us to do all that we do."

Many Holocaust Survivors are still waiting for help

Following is only one example of someone on our waiting list:

Will was born in Hungary. During World War II he was deported to Auschwitz and became one of Dr. Mengele's victims, undergoing his horrific medical experiments. He also spent time in Dachau. Will lost all his family in the holocaust.

After the war, he immigrated to Israel in 1946. The terrible effects of the medical experiments and the trauma of losing his entire family still haunts him and recently he lost his beloved wife of 56 years.

Sponsorship will ensure that Will's medical expenses and other financial needs are covered and it will open the door for regular and ongoing companionship. This will be organized by *L'Chaim* who will assign young men from the Keshet Yehuda Academy on the Golan Heights to be his surrogate grandsons. It would be agreeable to Will to have his sponsor visit should they be in Israel anytime. (Please note that each person's situation is verified through the Social Welfare Department).

Monthly sponsorship is \$US250. A fellowship group may like to jointly adopt a survivor. Part adoption is also welcome. One off donations are used for special needs of the survivors. Write to icejaid@icej.org for further information and a commitment form.