

Last month, rockets were fired from terrorists in southern Lebanon into northern Israel. Thankfully, no one was injured or killed, although property was damaged. Immediately, everyone's thoughts went to the 34 days in 2006 when northern Israel was blanketed with rockets. Seventeen percent of Israelis (1,100,000) live in the North within range of rocket fire from Hizbullah, an Islamic terror group with close ties to Iran. As I write, many in Israel are concerned about an escalation. During the 2006 Second Lebanon War, we were inundated with requests for help from communities all across northern Israel. We brought many truckloads of food to terror-stricken people living in underground shelters.



WORKING on the Front Line

After the war, we felt led to establish an Assistance Center in northern Israel, and so the Bridges for Peace Karmiel Assistance Center was born. Today, that center provides food to towns and villages and organizations and individuals all across the North. As you know, we are also storing food there for times of crisis, averaging about 500 tons of food. Through our dedicated staff, we carefully ensure that the stock is rotated so that nothing spoils.

I split my time between Jerusalem and Karmiel (just 10 miles or 15 kilometers from the Lebanese border). In Karmiel we are establishing Bridges for Peace as a trusted organization. I am pleased to tell you that the municipal leadership has recognized us as a part of their emergency planning team. Today, many in Israel think that the North will be the next war front. When in Karmiel, we constantly hear fighter jets flying overhead. Recently, I was in the Karmiel shopping mall, and just past the high-end stores selling international brands were two tables manned by soldiers distributing gas masks to Israelis lined up to receive one for each member of the family.

I was struck again by the tenuous nature of peace in this neighborhood. We must be prepared for more difficult days ahead. Our facility is large and has room for emergency accommodations, but it has no bomb shelter and there is not a municipal shelter within running distance. We need to provide for the safety of our workers and those we are helping who may be in the facility at time of attack.



Extending Our Arms to Those in Need

I know that God has placed us in northern Israel for times like these. Nothing speaks more loudly about our unconditional love than when we steadfastly stand with the people in hard, dangerous times.

We have established the food programs, the immigrant programs (Welcome Gifts and Adoption), and the Feed a Child Program in Karmiel. We believe that it is now time to reach out with short-term community service projects. This will include repairing homes for the needy and organizing short-term volunteer groups to do a variety of projects to assist the needy. We have a program we call "Discovery Groups" whereby tour groups arrange to stay an extra week and do a community service project. Let me tell you how these projects make an impact. Brent, a young adult from Canada, tells about a project:

Working at the Ethiopian community center was an exciting time. A group of young adults were with us to help with this project. We took them to the center to clean up the grounds as well as the basketball court, paint the fences, and even plant some flowers in their garden.

While Daniel (Discovery Group Administrator) was overseeing this project, I took six of them just up the street to repair a home. The lady in the home was one of many Holocaust survivors living in Israel who does not have money to pay for the repairs herself. The apartment above her was leaking and had caused significant damage to the ceiling. But also from downstairs, there had been a fire which had damaged the walls and window jambs. So after much stripping of old plaster and washing walls, we replastered the damaged spots and painted her entire apartment.

Now what makes this project so exciting was because she was so hesitant about letting people into her home who did not have the skills to fix her home, and especially Christians! But the social worker assured her everything would be fine. The work went extremely well. A few of the people I took along were young ladies who were a God-send. Although the language barrier hindered us a bit, we prevailed. The girls fell in love with her, and she fell in love with them.

By the third day there, we were barely in the door and she had cake and tea in our hands. Needless to say, by the end, there were hugs and kisses and even a few tears. She was so grateful for our help and had nothing but good things to say about the work and the love that we were able to show her.

Hear what other participants have said:

As I reflect on the adventure, I'm so grateful for our time with you and Bridges for Peace in Jerusalem, Karmiel, and for going to the school. Clearly, these types of opportunities gave us the chance to experience the heart and soul of the people. We have become advocates for your work.

—Jeanne C. Leland

Meeting the Bridges for Peace organization was a dream come true as my heart is so much to bless the people of Israel, both with hands-on and financial support and praying for the peace of Jerusalem.

—Discovery Group participant from the USA

It was a wonderful experience, and I would love to come back and volunteer again for a longer period of time.

—Joanne



Can You Help Us?

In order to step into the next level of ministry in Karmiel and northern Israel, we need to make some renovations to the physical plant, set up a workshop, buy a vehicle for the community service projects, and put in a bomb shelter to protect the staff and short-term volunteers who work there. In all, we need just over US \$100,000 to do the necessary expansion. (See the box below for an itemized list).

Please pray about helping us get ready to minister to Israelis under fire. I believe that as you bless the people of Israel, you will experience God's blessings in your life. Please also pray with us that God will send us volunteers who feel called to work in the North and be part of a small but vital team who are doing great things for God. "Yet who knows whether you have come into the kingdom for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

In His service,

Rebecca J. Brimmer
International President and CEO

- **Renovations, US \$14,000** (electrical, plumbing, shelving, concrete work, block wall and tool cabinets)
- **Hand tools, US \$11,500**
- **Power tools, US \$10,500**
- **Vehicle, US \$30,000** (with five seats and cargo area)
- **Bomb shelter, US \$36,000**