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Machaseh Family Crisis
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NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends and Supporters

All of us were going through very challenging times. It is not the end of the Corona crisis yet, but it is already possible to take a deep breath and look back, trying to comprehend the process and to learn some things about life and about people.

We always were keeping records about cases and situations that we are dealing with, but even without it we have such remarkable stories, that we will remember for a long long time. Some of these stories we would like to share with you. All names are changed and/or details altered to protect the privacy of our people

The day before the lock down, Sunday 15th March, was the last day in the office. A young lovely Chinese lady came in and brought an envelope with cash. She was tearful and asked for forgiveness for the virus that came from her country and brought so much suffering, especially to the groups of risk like the elderly people. In Israel they are mainly Holocaust survivors and her gentle heart was just broken for them.

Now we know, that it was not only dangerous for their health and life-threatening. The lack of communication, of fresh air and social activities was even worse.

Life is much more than the physical existence, first of all we are all social beings and it's all about relation. We were calling our people, we were singing happy birthday by phone, we were trying to comfort and to encourage them, but for some of them the isolation was unbearable.

Abraham, 88 yrs, broke the locked door in his hostel and ran away over a distance of 5 km. When the police stopped him, he was screaming and crying. Instead answering their questions, he gave our phone number to the police officers. When the police called, we were able to provide all necessary information. Our Avraham was not able to recall, and we are the only family he has. The police took him to the hospital and he got medical assistance. Praise God, it was not too late.

Roman, 91 yrs, took care of his grandchildren together with his wife, 80 yrs. 35 days they were not able to leave the house. But when lock down got lifted, he went out, fell down and broke his feet, because he was dizzy and couldn't keep his balance anymore. That's what the lack of moving does to elderly people. We are helping this family already for many years, and would like to ask you to pray for his full recovery. Corona became the focus of our lives, but all the other problems did not disappear. So many people were not able to get medical help in time, and some of them had to pay a very high price, sometimes too high. One of the precious members of our Holocaust group, Chava, 81 yrs, lost her special need son, Andrej, 40 yrs. He got very high fever and felt unconscious. When the ambulance finally came, it was already too late. Unfortunately, there are a lot of similar cases. These people, who passed away, were also victims of Corona. These are the side effects of the victory that we claim in Israel over the virus, but at very high costs. Liora was the owner of an Orthopaedic shoe shop. She suffered of cancer and could not get medical assistance for more than two months. She felt, that her days are short and insisted to donate 250 pairs of very good orthopaedic shoes to Machaseh. Two days later she passed away. Her son gave us permission to mention her full name - Liora Sasson. Liora leaves behind a loving husband and two sons. May her memory be a blessing.

**Have I not
commanded you?**

**Be strong and
courageous.**

**Do not be afraid; do
not be discouraged,**

**for the Lord your God
will be with you**

wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9



Roman and his wife
Svetlana



Anton and Darja - their
grandchildren



Liora Yaffa Sasson

For the majority of households this time turned out to be a time of great challenges. Monika was living in Israel for many years, married to an Israeli. They have children and grand-children. When she called us, we were shocked to hear that she wants to go back to her home country in Europe. We tried to encourage her to stay and to deal with the situation, but she said that this quarantine at home with her husband was the last drop and it is over. She escaped on one of the rare flights that still were available.

Another newly wed couple, married only for half year, contacted us to recommend them a lawyer for divorce. The husband lost his job, also cultural differences - combination of Latin American and South-Eastern Asian - were too overwhelming. Passionate love turned into passionate enmity. Law agencies were closed and we decided to make Skype sessions with them. We still work with them and hope for the best.

Sometimes these conflicts are getting violent. One husband got angry and abusive with his wife, the tensions escalated and he attacked her with a knife in the kitchen. To protect herself, she used some heavy objects and fought back. When she realised that she broke a few of his teeth, she called us in panic. Fortunately, the son of one of our team members is a dentist with permission to continue to practice in his clinic. He was able to help the husband immediately. Interestingly, since this fight the couple is living together in peace and harmony. Violence, anxiety and depression are terrible byproducts of this virus crisis. People with preconditions, emotionally unstable or mentally disturbed, were suffering even more. A number of our clients contacted us again after a number of years, complaining that symptoms returned or got worse. Some people got back on drugs or alcohol, some people were fighting suicidal thoughts and this was the most scary thing for us. Some of them we could meet on the street, because meeting inside was not allowed. With some of them it was possible to talk by phone.

But there were a number of cases, where police got involved and compulsory hospitalisation was required. In many cases it was life saving, but not always. A real tragedy happened in the family of a single mother. Her son was working to support her and the younger children. When he lost his job, he got depressed, then psychotic and took his life. It happened all so quickly within a few days. When life runs „normal“, people can somehow manage and/or function, but in a situation of chaos and insecurity it is easy to feel lost. In one of our families one member crippled with fear. Finally this person got fired from his job. Now the family lives literally on the street. We hope to find for them support for cheap housing in the South. One day we got an email from a religious man, Izchak. He wrote that he has mental problems and is afraid to leave his home. He was starving without food. When we called him, we were surprised to learn, that he just lives five minutes away from the distribution center and soup kitchen, which was open all the days of quarantine. We calmed him down, invited him to come and to get ready kosher meals which are distributed twice per week. His next email to us was like he got his life back. Sometimes people need only a little bit encouragement and help, but it should be a right bit.



Visiting a family

One the most significant calls we got were from Natasha, who got trafficked many years ago from the Ukraine. When she testified against the pimps, she got protection from the police and could stay in Israel without citizenship. But with lock down she lost her job, her apartment and could not get any help from the government. Her situation was really bad. She called from the South. Jerusalem was closed, no transportation permitted... And it was one of the most difficult situations for all of us to deal with. Praise God that we have good connections and wonderful partners, so we were able to find for her a safe place in her area and one of the lawyers we are working with could apply for funding for a special foundation helping victims of human trafficking in Israel.

In general we could see a lot of weakness and social problems coming with this crisis, but also we could see the strength and resilience of our community and our country. So it is not surprising that a lot of Jewish people made the decision to immigrate to Israel, especially from the Ukraine and United States.

We are so thankful for all the support we got, that we were able to bring food, supplies and medication to the people who were lonely, sick or not able to take care on themselves or their families. We are thankful that God protected us, our team and our own families, because we are only human beings and sometimes it is all too much. But we just want to thank all of you, dear friends, colleagues and supporters. We try to prepare ourselves and get ready for the whatever will come, because we and our work belong to God and in Him we trust.

We wish you all the best and many greetings!

With many greetings from Jerusalem

Lena Levin and the Machaseh Team