

# Humans Without Borders - Annual Report 2016

## Mission

Humans without Borders (HWB) is a volunteer organization devoted to helping West Bank Palestinian families whose children require advanced medical treatment only available in Israeli hospitals. It occupies a unique niche in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and fosters close relations between Palestinians and Israelis. Volunteers bring the children and their families to the hospitals and provide any additional necessary assistance. Details about these and other HWB activities can be found on the HWB website <http://www.humans-without-borders.org/>. A brochure entitled Humans Without Borders, Activities 2009-2013 can also be viewed at the website.

HWB believes that it is every child's right to grow and develop in a caring and supportive environment, and is committed to improving the safety and well-being of Palestinian children and Palestinian communities. By promoting direct, friendly, contact between Palestinians and Israelis, HWB hopes to contribute significantly to greater mutual respect in this troubled region

## Highlights of our work in 2016

### *Driving sick children from the West Bank to Israeli hospitals*

The principal activity of HWB is in taking sick children from the West Bank to hospitals in Israel for medical assistance. In 2016, some 65 dedicated volunteer drivers and another 25 occasional drivers made more than 3,200 trips (more than 60 trips each week) to and from border checkpoints to hospitals, mainly in Jerusalem but also in the greater Tel Aviv area (Schneider, Ichilov, Tel Hashomer and others), without receiving any compensation for their time or vehicle use.

Palestinian families must first receive permits from the Israeli Civil Administration and the Palestinian Authority before they can enter Israel for medical treatment. Once the parents of the sick children are informed of a hospital appointment, they contact our HWB coordinator for assistance in finding a volunteer to pick them up from an Israeli Army checkpoints to take them to and from the hospital. A computer program greatly facilitates and simplifies coordinating trips by e-mail between Palestinian families and HWB volunteer drivers. At the hospital, volunteers assist the families in communicating with the staff and in taking care of their needs. HWB applauds the volunteer drivers for their unflagging humanitarian contribution to Palestinian society.

Most of the trips take place in the Jerusalem area, to the Shaarei Zedek and Hadassah hospitals and every effort is made to ensure that a volunteer is available also for the longer inter-city trips, to the Tel Aviv and Haifa hospitals, even when there is very short notice for such trips. From time to time, when volunteer drivers are not available for longer intercity trips, we have been helped by a grant from the UK Michael Sobell Foundation, specifically earmarked for the use of a taxi service. Some 185 trips to hospitals outside the Jerusalem area were made in 2016 using these funds.

### ***Family outing***

As a part of what has now become an established tradition, a very successful seaside project was organized by Humans without Borders, with the support of the British charity Children of Peace. On 17 August, 52 Palestinian children, those we assist on a daily basis, their sisters, their brothers and their parents assembled at the Bethlehem, Qalandiya and Zetim checkpoints to be taken to the Tel Baruch beach in north Tel Aviv. The excitement was already evident in the buses. Chats between friends, music and snacks. “When will we get there? How far is it? Who will come?”



The children and their family members were accompanied by volunteers from Humans without Borders, a social welfare worker from Shaarei Zedek hospital, youth from the “Hand-in-Hand” bilingual school in Jerusalem and young volunteers from Ein Rafa who are part of the “Salamatkom” organization. The volunteers, especially the young people immediately connected with children and amused themselves playing together, while ensuring there were no difficulties or discomforts. Volunteers also handled all the logistics, unloading supplies, inflating tubes. They spread mats on the sand, made sure everyone had drinking water, served the food and took care that everything was clean and in order.

As in the previous year, a delicious lunch cooked for us by Alia, a lovely woman from Jaffa, was served. Alia and her friend stayed with us a while, talking with mothers, taking a real interest in their lives and the HWB activities.



What beleaguered this wonderful day was the rejection by the Civil Administration of the request for one-day permits for eight siblings who are over the age of 14. And it was particularly difficult for a young sister who was not allowed to enter Israel for no logical reason, even though she was not yet 14. The sad child returned home with her father while the mother and other family members went to the sea.

### ***An evening honoring our volunteers***

On June 13 a large group of our volunteers met at the Jerusalem Cinematheque where we screened the amazing film by Gilad Baram,| *Koudelka: Shooting Holy Land*.

The Czech photographer, Josef Koudelka, grew up behind the Iron Curtain always wanting to know “what was on the other side”. Forty years after capturing the iconic images of the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968, the legendary Magnum photographer arrived in Israel and Palestine.

On first seeing the nine-meter-high wall built by Israel in the West Bank, Koudelka was deeply shaken and embarked on a four-year project in the region which confront him once again with the harsh reality of violence and conflict.

A vibrant discussion followed the viewing in which Baram fielded questions and spoke at length about his experiences with Koudelka and the process of making the movie. The whole evening was a remarkable experience.

## **Financial report**

The Financial Report (in Hebrew) for the year ending December 31 2016 is attached to this document.