

Humans without Borders: Annual Report – 2019

In 2019, the core activities of Humans without Borders – assisting Palestine families with children requiring medical attention in Israeli hospitals – increased significantly. The total number of trips was about 4650, involving about 85 children. About 97% of the trips were to hospitals in the Jerusalem area. We can proudly state that we were able to meet 98% of requests for transportation.

We supported children requiring a wide variety of treatment, extending from dialysis, on a daily basis, to chemotherapy or radiation once or twice a month.

All our activities originate at the military checkpoints around Jerusalem, especially Qalandia and the Bethlehem crossing points, with trips to hospitals in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Tel Hashomer.

In 2019, about 100 volunteers assisted Palestinian families without receiving any compensation for their time, gasoline, or vehicle use. Some of these people commit to one trip a month and others drive a family four times a week. Each member of our NGO fully understands the profound significance of her volunteerism.

With the steady increase in the number of children being assisted, during 2019 we made a real effort to increase the number of active coordinators who, day and night, coordinate the shuttles, chat with volunteers and family members, and find solutions for every trip. We now have four individuals sharing the load and we must take off our collective caps in their honor. Our day-to-day activities would not be possible without these dedicated souls.

In late January about 70 volunteers of "Humans without Borders" converged on the Jerusalem Cinematheque for the annual gathering of our supporters.

As part of a standing tradition, before the screening, we mingled over drinks and delicious homemade cakes. We had a lot to chat about as we usually only meet a few times a year. It was especially heart-warming to be able to talk about the various children and their families and share our experiences.

The movie, "The Ramadan Canon" is an unusual documentary co directed by Nimrod Shanit and Atta Awisat, in which Rajae Sanduka struggles with the daily hardships of a Palestinian resident of Jerusalem during the Holy month of the Ramadan, upholding a 120 years-old family legacy of firing a cannon twice a day (marking the beginning and ending of the fast). To express his frustration, he stages a satirical play mocking his circumstances.

The discussion after the screening with Nimrod Shanait was interesting as the audience asked challenging questions which further enlightened our understanding of this moving film.

In June, on a lovely summer evening, Hadassah Jacobs treated the volunteers and supporters of Humans Without Borders to a very special event in which she presented her memorable performance: "Ring the Bell of Farewell". Hadassah, together with her husband Eitan, are the founders and driving force behind Theater in the Courtyard in Nafat – and she is also an active volunteer in Humans Without Borders.

Hadassah's performance presents a painful parting from her daughter Inbal which develops into an expression of love, humor and a lust for life, bringing a reconciliation of their intertwined fates.

None of us departed from the amphitheater without a deep feeling for the pain and understanding that Hadassah so wonderfully offered in her soliloquy.

In the beginning of July, Humans without Borders held a wonderful fun day at the Murad Resort in Beit Sahour for the families we assist. To our delight, a huge number of people attended – more than 120 children and about 45 adults. Further, we had a record number of volunteers. This ensured that every child and every family was personally taken care of, in the pool, in the playground, during lunch and during the entertainment.

The goal of the day out was to give the sick children and their families a day of relaxation, and to break them out of their difficult daily routines. The meeting, the refreshments, the pool, a wonderful lunch and the clowns were the obvious and visible elements of the program, that indeed gave great joy to our guests. But beneath the surface subtle threads of true friendship between Palestinians and Israelis are woven, and this is the beauty of HWB.

A new and prominent presence was that of volunteers from a Palestinian organization called Greenland Society with whom Human without Borders cooperates. Members of this organization help transport the sick children from their homes in Palestine to and from the checkpoints.

Our on-going activities would not have been possible without the generous assistance of the DEAR Foundation (Zurich). Jim and Debby Stein Sharpe (Canton, MA), Project Rozana (international), the Rinat family (Rehovot), and several other Israeli contributors. We humbly thank them for their support.