



NEVE HANNA CHILDREN'S HOME

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Registered Israeli Charity 580225423

Mid of November 2023

Dear Friends of Neve Hanna,

With these lines, we would like to update you regarding the situation at the Neve Hanna Children's Home following the terrible events which unfolded in Israel since October 7, 2023.

Status Following October 7, 2023

Neve Hanna was still on vacation when the horrific acts of terrorism unfolded on Shabbat morning, October 7, 2023 in the border region of the Gaza Strip, from which our city is just 15 miles away. About 40 of our 80 children residing at Neve Hanna were brought from their homes a few days later, more came in the following two weeks afterwards. Our 40 daycare children could not come in at first due to the frequent rocket attacks.

All our children, whether they were still with their parents or had returned to Neve Hanna, experienced traumatic days. It is a situation that causes great mental stress. The uncertainty of what will happen next adds to that stress. Some employees also did not return to work because they live in regions with frequent rocket attacks; some are among the evacuees. Our volunteers from abroad returned home. Of our 12 Israeli volunteers serving a social year before the army duty most returned to Neve Hanna.

Neve Hanna massively increased the therapeutic measures. The petting zoo has never been so lively! Play and art therapy were increased, too. We immediately also offered a lot more yoga and "guided imagery". Our sports teacher was also very busy.

Neve Hanna in Mourning

The leadership of Neve Hanna learned a few days after the Hamas terrorist attack on Israeli civilians, that a former child of Neve Hanna Children's Home is among the victims. Shimi grew up in Neve Hanna from 2nd grade on. He was 29 years old, when he was murdered together with 260 other young people enjoying a music festival in the South of Israel.

Some of our current and former staff members lost family members and friends. The loved ones they mourn are among the murdered civilians and among the on duty killed soldiers and police officers. Our Muslim-Bedouin partners, we cooperate with for over 40 years, are also confronted with wounded and murdered family members.

Current Status

Over the following weeks, all children residing at Neve Hanna returned. With so many children back in Neve Hanna, all residential groups are now in action again. The daycare children come in according to day-to-day assessments of the Home Front Command.

We no longer have an "emergency routine" but are now developing a fixed roadmap for "dealing with a longer-lasting crisis situation." All children are back to schooling, some in their schools, and other via Zoom. We maintain our daily routine between studying, therapeutic meetings, and leisure time activities, still adjusted to the safety regulations of the Home Front Command.

The changed reality is present everywhere

- Our three former children in military service are very busy and need a lot of support. This is particularly the case for a girl who was at Kibbutz Nahal Oz on October 7th, where many Hamas terrorists carried out a terrible massacre. This kibbutz community is missing around a quarter of the 471 members who were either murdered or kidnapped.
- Several of our former children have been called up for reserve duty, including two who now work in NH. We also keep in touch with them
- In addition, we lack the presence of a social worker of our team who is, with her family, among the evacuees and no longer has a home to which the family can return to. Of course, NH helps with a solution.
- Many others from our team are affected by the shaken-up security situation. We have quite a few employees who live in villages and kibbutzim in the region. They all volunteered for armed night patrols; an additional burden alongside full-time employment.

Urgent needs

Neve Hanna is located in the Southern Israeli city of Kiryat Gat, approximately 25 km (15.5 miles) distance from the Gaza Strip. When there is a rocket alarm given for Kiryat Gat, a shelter must be reached in less than 45 seconds. Even though in 2011, Neve Hanna was able to add some shelters on its premises, from many areas of our compound it is impossible to reach these life-saving structures in time. To keep all our children, the staff members as well as the volunteers from Israel and abroad safe, we **urgently must add sheltered space in different spots**. Furthermore, the current situation presents us with the **immediate need to replace and secure our fence**, which is by no means an obstacle for intrusions.

Our compound is for all of us like our living room. Currently, our children cannot play in many areas. The staff and volunteers working in facilities that are spread throughout the camps cannot reach the shelters in time. Please help us to change this situation for the physical and mental well-being of all members of the Neve Hanna community.



Some children and team members in front of one of the shelters we could add in 2011

Please donate to Neve Hanna
through the American Friends of
Neve Hanna:

<https://afnevehanna.charityproud.org/Donate>

Please earmark your contribution for
the emergency/shelter fund.

Regular updates regarding the situation at Neve Hanna you find on the homepage of
our AFNH

<https://afnevehanna.org/>