



OUR NEW PROJECT—SURVIVORS COME AS GUESTS

*„On that day they will say to Jerusalem,
Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp.“ Zephaniah 3:16*

Holocaust Survivors-Guest project:

For the past several months we have started to take, on a more regular basis, groups of Holocaust survivors as guests in the Ner Yaakov home, who come on holiday or for rest. Gita Koifman, the leader of the Holocaust Association, who herself stayed with us, sends us these survivors and their spouses, when she knows that they are in need of a holiday, or those who could not afford to travel otherwise.

First it was a big change for us! We were so used to only taking care of a few survivors at a time, but building long-term relationships with them. We were wondering a little how it would be, when many different people came for only one week.

Well, some of them entered the house and felt „right at home!“ When they left after a week, happy and blessed, some even made new plans to come visit again and others wanted to stay in touch with us. Then we all were reassured about this new project.

I believe that some of the „homey feeling“ also has to do with the fact, that Sachar and Raja still live with us. At first they had to get used to the idea, that many different people now come into „their“ home. With some of the groups they interact wonderfully, but of course, we always make sure, that every guest knows from the beginning, that Sachar is the „house-father“ and the „boss!“

The volunteers both enjoy showing the survivors around Jerusalem. Chana is our chef-cook now, loves to prepare nice food and Shabbat dinners and Simone is praised for her homemade cakes and hospitality. On the Shabbat we light the candles and sing, and one survivor, who originally came from Moldova said to us proudly, „You know, in your home I feel that I am a Jew!“ Isn't that beautiful, if he can say that in a home, which is lead by Germans? It was also great to host Lev, who only immigrated to Israel a few months ago.

But it is also not without challenges!

What do you do, when suddenly in a nice coffee shop a survivor opens up her painful heart and tears come to her eyes. Here they come for a holiday-and I believe they enjoy seeing their Jerusalem- but the suffering of the past has come with them and often shows up at times we never expect. Some shared their tragedies even after the Holocaust, where family members died of cancer or loved ones were killed in an accident. I myself, am totally helpless in these situations. It was very interesting for me, especially at the Western Wall, when they came from their prayers, that they started sharing and needed an open heart and ear to listen. Please pray for them!



Jana

Chana with Julia

Inge

Salamon

Lev

Ida

Berta

Klava