

"Learn to do right!" PROJECTS WITH ISRAELI POLICE

*"Seek justice, encourage the oppressed.
Defend the cause of the fatherless,
plead the case of the
widow." Isa. 1:17*



1. Officer Raphael + Moshe planting a tree and saying the prayers 2. Officer Shai N. + Arieh, Michael + Yossi
3. Maya and Officer Igal on 'Tu bishvat' 4. Youth with gifts for Purim
5. Officer Raphael at home — visit 6. Survivor Shlomo blessing us all.

The survivors and myself were invited by a social worker and the police to a 'formal meeting' for the graduation of several teenagers. It was the end of the "Project Mila," which the Israeli police did with some young people. While it was a formal meeting, we witnessed a really more joyful gathering—a familiar crowd—with officers and youth at the end hugging each other. It was clearly seen that the officers had not only done their job, but it came from their hearts. I still remember the words of the Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem as she proudly said: "This is the face of our Israeli police"! Like I always said: The officers are examples to us!

How did we from Ner Yaakov fit in this picture? Well, last spring we had two projects together, where the teenagers learned how to bless and honour the elderly Holocaust survivors. I know many of you have prayed and as we went out—it is traditional for Purim—to deliver Purim gift-baskets to the lonely and sick, it seemed that God Himself had prepared something different in every home. At our first stop we visited a deeply heartbroken man who had just lost his wife and some of the youth really felt for him. Yet in another home they learned from the Holocaust survivor what a "Righteous of the Nations" means and how he was saved by such a person. One survivor told these young men how she fought in the woods as a partisan and encouraged them as they one day soon, will join the Army.

Each visit had surprises, but most moving was an almost blind survivor, Shlomo. He truly seems to have come out of "biblical times," a patriarch who loves God, and one can just imagine him serving at the temple day and night. He and his wife Jona live in a very simple home, but are so rich in spirit. Shlomo started wholeheartedly to bless his young guests, the social worker and even the officer—for me one of the most moving moments ever. We had another meeting with the youth and survivors at our Ner Yaakov home!

Holocaust Remembrance Day: Believe me, it is getting harder for the elderly to come early in the morning to the Ner Yaakov home. However, on Holocaust Remembrance Day they all made a great effort as they wanted to take part in the ceremony the police had invited us to. It was a moving ceremony as Julia shared her life story with the officers, but most appreciated by the survivors is usually when the officers, after the official part, take time to speak to the survivors themselves. So it was also this year, and some of the survivors poured out their hearts and shared very personally. Afterwards we had lunch and fellowship in the "Beit Cham," our warm home, as the officers call the Ner Yaakov center. It was a blessing! **Tu bishvat**, a holiday in Israel, with the tradition of planting trees was also one of our highlights this year. Several officers came to Ner Yaakov to celebrate this time with the survivors. Moshe, our "Rabbi" shared and explained to us the meaning of this holiday and together, the survivors and officers planted new trees in our garden and said the prayers. Meir and Sara, Jolanda Landau, Julia, Arieh and myself had a special

blessing at the beginning of the year in meeting the **Police Commissioner**. Arieh shared with me what it meant to him, as a Holocaust survivor to sit in the midst of these Israeli police officers, deeply moved.

Believe me, I could not have been more nervous than I was, when I openly, before so many officers we don't know, said a few words of thanks. I am still embarrassed, as I think about it, but it came from my heart! **Officer Shai Nachman** says: "We want to have direct contact with the survivors as we understand the difficulty and emotional pain and wounds and we try to make it a little easier for them. This is why we adopt and embrace them."



Survivors at Ceremony of the Police for Holocaust Remembrance Day

