



# DAYBREAK

## Initiatives of Healing and Hope

## No Time for Bureaucracy

Yosef Aluf



While residents of Israel's southern region begin to return to their homes and rebuild their lives, they face a daunting challenge: In order to access aid, compensation or even basic services they must overcome a labyrinth of forms, delays and confusion and to cope with a slow, cumbersome and sometimes inaccessible system. For the elderly, new immigrants or those unfamiliar with digital tools, the process feels impossible - and many give up on receiving the support they are entitled to.

The "No Time for Bureaucracy" initiative offers a fast, accessible solution to residents from Ofakim, Netivot, Sderot, Ashkelon, Gan Yavne, the Eshkol region, Hof Ashkelon and Ashdod. A dedicated team of 7 volunteers assists individuals in securing their rights from the National Insurance Institute, Healthcare provides, and various government ministries. They offer hands-on support: accompanying people to meetings, organizing documentation and forms, and helping overcome language and bureaucratic barriers.

the initiative supports over 5,000 people. The team promotes the initiative through targeted landing pages and distributes vital information via accessible channels specifically designed for the populations in need. The goal: to ensure that no one is left behind in the process of obtaining everything they deserve.

## Engineers for Residents

Mark Shir



For many citizens of the southern region, repair of war-damaged homes entails complex bureaucracy that includes engineering plans, approvals and permits, along with expenses that many simply cannot afford.

“Engineers for Residents” Founded by and for local residents, the initiative brings together six certified engineers from the south, offering free professional engineering consulting to communities in Ashkelon, Netivot, Ofakim and other smaller towns not included under the umbrella of the Tkuma Administration. The team provides on-site assessments, surveys, planning and support with official forms and professional printouts, ensuring that residents can get the engineering approvals required to receive compensation and begin vital renovations.

The offered solutions focus also on essential safety additions. These include installing safety ramps for senior citizens, improving access to shelters and protected rooms, adding firefighting equipment and addressing structural challenges, so residents can reach their protected space on time.

Over 3,000 residents have already benefitted from the expertise and dedication of this volunteer-driven effort, proof that professional know-how can be a powerful force for healing and hope.

## Tzav 7

Avraham Yedid



Behind every uniform there is a human story. Since October 7, thousands of soldiers have been carrying the physical and emotional scars of war - long after the fighting has subsided.

The Tzav-7 Association was founded in the earliest days of the conflict by a former combat border guard previously wounded in service. Today, nearly 100 volunteers provide psychological and emotional support to members of the security forces, individuals living with PTSD, those coping with physical or mental injuries, their families, and even their employers who often struggle to understand or respond to the new situation.

Group sessions are led by professional therapists - residents of the south themselves - who guide participants through meaningful emotional processing, empowerment and a reconnection with life. In parallel, volunteers visit hospitalized soldiers and conduct workshops and lectures to raise awareness about post-trauma, encouraging a broader and more open conversation on the topic.

The Tzav 7 vision goes beyond healing. It aims to transform our collective understanding of trauma - from a source of silence and separation, into a space for dialogue, empathy, and hope.



## "Air": A breathing and healing space for women from hostage families

Yael Arad and Orly Weisselberg Zur

For many women in the hostage families, daily life is a continuous struggle. The “Air” initiative- a unique therapeutic retreat held at Pelion, Greece, was born from the realization that even the strongest people need a moment to breath. The physical distance from home allows participants to step away from the constant pressure, focus on emotional healing, and reconnect with themselves and with others walking the same path.

Each retreat brings together 13 women connected to hostage families: sisters, cousins, sisters in law, nieces, and others who are deeply involved in the events and in the public and personal struggle to free the hostages. Over several days, they engage in trauma-informed therapy, nurturing dialogue circles, and gentle rehabilitative activities developed based on the experience of past retreats. The complete disconnection from their daily environment is essential for creating a space for deep emotional processing and healing.

The initiative is led by eight volunteers from the “Shiloni Project” and the “Mitchabrim” Association who are closely attentive to the evolving needs of the families. Together, they create islands of healing and restoration in the midst of turbulent Israeli reality.

## Healing Begins Here

Ella Machluf



Since the start of the war, many older residents of Israel's south have been coping with complex physical and psychological symptoms - pain, stuttering, jaw tension, nerve damage—that are rooted in stress and trauma but fall outside the coverage of the national healthcare system.

That's why "Healing Begins Here" was founded. Fourteen independent therapists - residents of the south - joined forces to offer free, professional and personal care to residents of the Gaza Envelope region, evacuees, and individuals living within 40 km of the border.

Treatments take place at a dedicated clinic in Gedera, through in-home visits, or even via facial rehabilitations sessions over Zoom - acknowledging that accessibility and flexibility are essential to healing. The initiative focuses particularly on older residents who face unique clinical challenges. Thanks to continuous therapy and rehabilitative follow-up many have already experienced a significant improvement or even full recovery.

Thanks to this compassionate initiative, some 2,000 residents are once again able to speak, smile and live free of pain. When the need is so great, and many are left without the ability to solve acute problems that affect their quality of life, the "Healing Begins Here" team offers not only effective treatment, but also restores dignity, vitality, and hope.



## Team Spider

Yaniv Alush

A new model for community mutual aid has emerged at moshav Shokda in the Western Negev: "Team Spider" - A volunteer network that operates as a local logistic task force, mobilizing to organize both private and public events driven by the aim to strengthen social ties and build local resilience - both essential assets during difficult times.

The initiative was born out of the belief that no one should have to face life's challenges alone, whether in routine or emergency times. Since October 7, the meaning of such mutual support has become more realistic than ever. From joyful celebrations to remembrance ceremonies, holidays or communal gatherings, Team Spider shows up, sets up, runs the event, and clears it all away, through coordination, teamwork and a whole lot of heart.

34 volunteers serve over 200 residents in Shokda and neighboring communities. Recently a new branch was established in nearby Shova, a team named "Salamandra" at Moshav Nir Galim and the "Spiderettes" - a dynamic women-led team who now handle the creative design of events.

The team's vision is to grow to become one big "Spider" network across the Gaza envelope. this initiative proves time after time that true resilience is built one act of kindness at a time - with helping hands, and a shoulder to lean on.

## Food for Soldiers with Love

Keren Dahan



When the war began a round-the-clock food center sprang to life at the southern city of Sderot. Hot pots simmered on the stove and phones rang non-stop with an endless stream of requests from soldiers in need - many with no other source of support. From that moment on, the center has been cooking, packing, and delivering hundreds of hot meals daily, along with care packages filled with toiletries, clothing, and above all - a hug from home.



The center, operating out of the private home of its founder, caters mostly to the Gaza Envelope and nearby region. It currently includes 10 dedicated volunteers who cook and send hundreds of meals every day to soldiers serving in Gaza. In addition to the daily meals, an entire community of local volunteers has evolved, connected through WhatsApp groups - organizing barbecues, preparing Sabbath meals, and responding to every need with warmth and speed.

Rooted in purpose, these grassroots efforts remind us that a hot meal can mean more than nourishment - it is a message of care, solidarity, and home, even in the midst of a very complex reality. Day after day, this expanding circle of support shows what's possible when people choose to show up - exactly where they are needed most.



## A Healing Orchard

Nethanel Landau

Amid the open landscape of the Gaza Envelope, surrounded by fruit trees and agricultural fields, lies an orchard that is so much more than a garden. It is a place for listening, healing and building emotional resilience. It invites soldiers, emergency response teams, the wounded, those living with post-trauma, and local residents, offering them a unique therapeutic framework that is rooted in nature.

The orchard, spanning an area of over five dunams, offers a wide range of workshops and sessions including yoga, art, therapeutic gardening, agricultural work, lectures and emotional processing sessions - all through direct contact with the soil and trees. Alongside the therapeutic aspect of the initiative, rehabilitative agricultural work also takes place, including the cultivation of a vegetable garden, caring for fruit trees and tilling the soil as an inseparable part of the healing process.

Activities include over 20 workshops held throughout the year on a weekly basis, led by 8-10 committed volunteers. The orchard aims to provide a unique therapeutic experience for 150-200 participants who will enjoy this quiet space in which post-trauma is met with a breathing space and personal pain encounters nature and therapy through listening and a gentle path to regain an inner balance.

## Ruhama/Kfar Aza Community Woodshop

Doron Livne



In the aftermath of October 7, community centers at Shaar Hanegev Regional Council had shut down, and what remained of communal activity scattered across individual kibbutzim and towns. When residents of Kibbutz Kfar Aza relocated to their temporary housing at Kibbutz Ruhama, a new need arose - to create a shared space where people could meet, create and rebuild - together.

The community woodshop became such a space. Five dedicated volunteers from both communities operate the site, where over 50 participants - youths, adults and seniors - take part in collaborative carpentry projects. The practical handiwork coupled with the social encounter create a therapeutic, healing and strengthening space. The shared processing of wood and other materials facilitates the processing of emotions, shared stories and memories.

Activities are held three times a week, and serve as a permanent meeting place for men and women who enjoy carpentry, from both communities, seeking not only a pastime but also a sense of belonging and meaning. Here through joint work on the carpentry tables personal and community resilience is rebuilt in preparation towards an extensive period of living side by side, until the residents of Kibbutz Kfar Aza can return to their home.



## Every house has a story

Renana Gome Yaakov and Carmit Palty Katzir

On the morning of October 7, the fragile fabric of Kibbutz Nir Oz was torn apart. One in every four residents was either murdered or taken hostage, and nearly everyone was touched by loss or trauma.

In the midst of this devastation, the sons and daughters of kibbutz Nir Oz chose to hold their heads up high and return to their homes to rebuild and tell their story. This was the beginning of the “Every house has a story” initiative, a profoundly moving community project documenting the stories of the kibbutz’ houses and families, commemorating the lives of those who lived there and of those who still remain, holding on to life.

By now over 90 houses have been documented. Personal stories were written for each, and commemorative plaques were prepared and will be placed on the facades of each home as it is rebuilt. A dedicated website allows each family to upload photos and share their story. In time, the entire project will be gathered into a special book of photographs.

The project is led by 10 volunteers from within the Nir Oz community, moved by a deep need to hold on to memory and sorrow, while celebrating life. Each house is given a voice within the broken human mosaic that is cautiously starting to rebuild itself.

## Our Home - Southern Branch

Daniel, Neria and Sharon Sharabi



After the turmoil, the path to rehabilitation begins. For many victims of terrorism, the return to everyday life is a long and challenging journey, requiring much more than emotional resilience alone. The “Our Home - Southern Branch” center was founded by survivors of the Nova rave, to become a safe and empowering space that helps facilitate the first step towards recovery.

The Netivot branch of the center was established especially for Nova survivors from the southern region, to enable them to receive professional and community care without having to travel far to the center of the country. Participants arrive at the center once a week for a full day over the course of six months. During these days, they join others who are coping with similar challenges. Together they participate in dialogue circles, undergo therapy, take part in occupational and financial workshops, learn about their rights and receive professional help from a supportive and understanding community.

Behind the scenes are 35 dedicated volunteers and therapists who accompany 70-100 survivors. Together they offer a spectrum of care, from psychological and emotional therapy, through vocational training, therapeutic horseback riding, and even retreats and fun days. The ultimate aim is to gradually and gently guide participants back to a life of meaning, strength and renewed possibility.



## Halev Ha'Poem (Beating Heart)

Gadi Kedem, Yuval Levinger and Danny Onna

From a heavy personal pain that began on October 7, emerged an initiative aiming to bridge divides exactly where it seems that the rift is deepest. “Halev Ha’Poem” (Beating Heart) is an organization founded following October 7 by people from diverse backgrounds who believe that despite it all, it is possible and necessary to create a different discourse - one that is rooted in humanity, listening, and connection.

At the heart of the initiatives are tours of Kibbutz Nir Oz, where Gadi Kedem’s daughter Tamar Kedem Siman Tov was murdered together with her husband Yonathan and their three children. The visits are followed by honest and open dialogue circles, offering participants space to process grief, explore complexity and search for new ways of healing together.

Activities have spread throughout the country, welcoming groups from the Gaza Envelope, educational institutions, the Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) community, and others. In each encounter, people come together to speak, listen and sometimes also to open their hearts for the first time.

Thirty volunteers lead the initiative which by now has touched the hearts of over 20,000 participants. Within a reality of grief, loss and polarization, the “Beating Heart” initiative continues to offer an opportunity for connection, empathy and trust as a living tribute to Tamar’s legacy.

## Memory 710

Yaniv Hegyi and Lilach Shamir



“Memory 710” was born in the aftermath of October 7. The two entrepreneurs, both educators and community leaders from the Western Negev region, found themselves in the heart of the crisis and quickly began to document reality as they were experiencing it, through WhatsApp messages, videos and photos sent in real time.

The heart of the initiative lies in presenting the stories exactly as documented in real time, and preserving this collective memory through direct, personal and human digital items. In addition, personal video clips are created - each focusing on the story of one person, as reflected in a correspondence they received or sent on the day of the attack.

Dosens of volunteer teams across the country are now part of “Memory 710”, working to document, develop technologies, archive materials, and build an infrastructure to ensure wide, lasting and meaningful access to the archive. The ultimate goal is to transform this growing collection into an educational, commemorative and explanatory resource, for use in Israel and around the world.

To date, the initiative has gathered hundreds of thousands of items including text messages, photos, videos and voice recordings from over 30,000 people in 46 different towns throughout the Gaza Envelope and the Negev.



## Nir Oz Relief Force - Infrastructures

Smadar Korin



At Kibbutz Nir Oz, where the devastation of October 7 was among the deepest in the country, a community initiative emerged, linking between residents and volunteers from Israel and abroad, working together to bring life back to the kibbutz.

The “Nir Oz Relief Force” is a unique rehabilitation team comprised of kibbutz members and external volunteers, some long-term and others temporary, who collaborate, together with additional initiatives such as “One Heart” and “The Northern Team” as well as freed hostages who have returned to their home. Together, they address the complex task of recovering daily life at the kibbutz.

The work spans a wide range of areas: clearing and cleaning, restoring buildings, repairing furniture, a second hand center, gardening and agriculture. The entire operation relies on the close and collaborative daily work of residents and volunteering teams.

Today, about 20 volunteers are actively involved, working on behalf of the 250 residents of Nir Oz who need help in rehabilitating their homes and their community. It's much more than a logistic operation - it is a joint creation of renewed belongingness, community resilience and faith in the ability to grow from destruction.

## A light in the desert

Merav Madar



In the heart of Dimona there is a space for hope, healing and resilience dedicated to families who have lost a loved one in the war. Here, under the desert sky and close to home, families can find professional and meaningful support. The space aims to enable them to cope with their pain, process their loss and rebuild emotional strength within a caring and supportive environment.

Established by a bereaved mother, the center offers a wide array of weekly programs for the city's bereaved families. Activities include a range of emotional and physical healing methods, writing and visual diary workshops, art therapy, yoga classes, hydrotherapy, therapeutic sports, dialogue circles, family and couple counseling, and support towards returning to school and work. Each session is accompanied by skilled trauma and bereavement professionals, in an intimate atmosphere. A community embrace is given in the form of small performances that lift the spirit and provide solace.

Behind it all are 300 dedicated volunteers, working together to support 24 local families who have lost their loved one. In this quiet oasis, a new kind of resilience is slowly and gently built out of shared pain, boundless love, and a collective commitment to bring light even into the darkest moments.



## Rehabilitative Delivery | Social Delivery Association

Tomer Shemesh | Manager of the emergency and rehabilitation program: Talia Pluga

In both routine and emergency times, the business sector often holds vast reserves of unused equipment including furniture, consumer products, professional tools and raw materials. During a crisis, this untapped surplus becomes an opportunity to salvage, connect and rebuild.

“Social Delivery” provides an alternative to destruction and removal, enabling the business sector to transfer surpluses for the benefit of the social sector, thereby becoming partners to the creation of a significant impact in Israeli society.

Through a professional logistical system, items are collected, sorted, packed and delivered directly to nonprofits and local organizations, and from there to those who need them most.

Since October 7, more than 650 deliveries have been completed - valued at over NIS 59 million. A unique financing model allows every shekel invested to be leveraged into six shekels worth of equipment. Powered by 120 volunteers, the initiative has already provided tangible support to thousands of residents of Israel’s south and north.

## Ripplix Design

Einav Beser and Galit Rossman



In the long and often painful road to rehabilitation, there are sensitive spaces that often remain unaddressed. One of them is clothing, which becomes not simply a garment to wear, but a part of one's identity, self-assurance and the ability to once again feel whole in a transformed body.

The Ripplix Design initiative was born at the beginning of the Swords of Iron War as a unique volunteer initiative that provides a personally tailored solution to people who have been wounded in the war. Clothes are tailored to the complex and specific needs of the injured body, while adhering to personal taste, comfort, aesthetics and personal expression.

The unique combination between the entrepreneurs' background in psychology, product design and styling, joined by intimate field work with the wounded and their rehabilitation teams, facilitate a holistic solution that brings not only comfort but also a renewed sense of control and identity.

Twelve dedicated volunteers are involved in the initiative, which by now has worked with about 100 wounded men and women, and continues onwards. In this intimate process, every stitch, every careful alteration, helps reassemble something within the soul - one garment at a time.

## Envelope Mamas

Tehila Hania Yifrah and Efrat Harari



At Sderot and Moshav Tlamim, the work never stops. At the heart of it all is the “Envelope Mamas” center, run by local women who, from the very start of the war, were worried about the wellbeing of the soldiers in combat and chose to transform their worries into action, enveloping the soldiers with love, daily care and a never ending embrace.

Operating around the clock, the center begins its day by preparing warm, nourishing meals that are delivered to the front lines. In parallel, they organize team-building evenings, birthday celebrations at pillboxes, pizza deliveries and those extra touches that remind every single soldier at the front lines that someone is thinking about him or her even in the darkest moments. Operations are daily, and the circle of giving continuously expands.

Alongside the work for the soldiers, the center also serves as a source of strength for the women themselves who are empowered by the ability to take action, to give and to reinforce. About 100 volunteers take part in the activities, reaching thousands of soldiers serving in Gaza and the southern front.

Where the heart and the front are so close, the “Envelope Mamas” continue to embrace the soldiers, in the most human form of the word.

## Happy Tuesday for Wounded Soldiers

Hanan Tal



“Happy Tuesday for Wounded Soldiers” is a weekly initiative that brings moments of happiness, caring and strength to wounded IDF soldiers in rehabilitation. Every Tuesday, at one of three hospitals (Ichilov, Soroka and Tel Hashomer), volunteers arrive, bringing excellent food, music, karaoke, dialogue circles, hair stylists, and most of all a warm and encouraging presence that reminds the soldiers they are not alone in the long journey to recovery.

The initiative embraces not only wounded IDF soldiers in rehabilitation, but also families of returned hostages. Many of these gatherings offer something the formal systems are not always able to provide: a first beer, a perfectly grilled steak, or simply a few moments of sanity that are so needed.

About 100 volunteers take part in the initiative, supporting hundreds of wounded soldiers and their families. Time and again, former patients return as volunteers, knowing more than anyone just how important this small light is in the journey towards recovery.

Behind the effort stands a combat soldier, a reserve commander who served over 300 days in Gaza. He is also a key figure in Israel’s disability rights movement, and the CEO of “Disabled, Not Half a Human Being” - an organization that works to promote the integration of persons with disabilities in society and employment.

**“When the sun  
disappears from  
above, I myself  
had to become  
the sun”**

**- Anna Swir -**



