May 18th, 2020

Matanel Perah Zahav – Adopt a Saba – updated project status

"Matanel Perach Zahav – Ametz Saba'' is an intergenerational social community project, aiming to reduce loneliness among the elderly, and to narrow the inter-generational gap by connecting students with senior citizens living in the same area. The strategic cooperation with the Matanel foundation and the Max Stern Yezreel Valley College has allowed us to open a new branch of our project in the Yezreel Valley area. Here is a video which describes our activity last year.

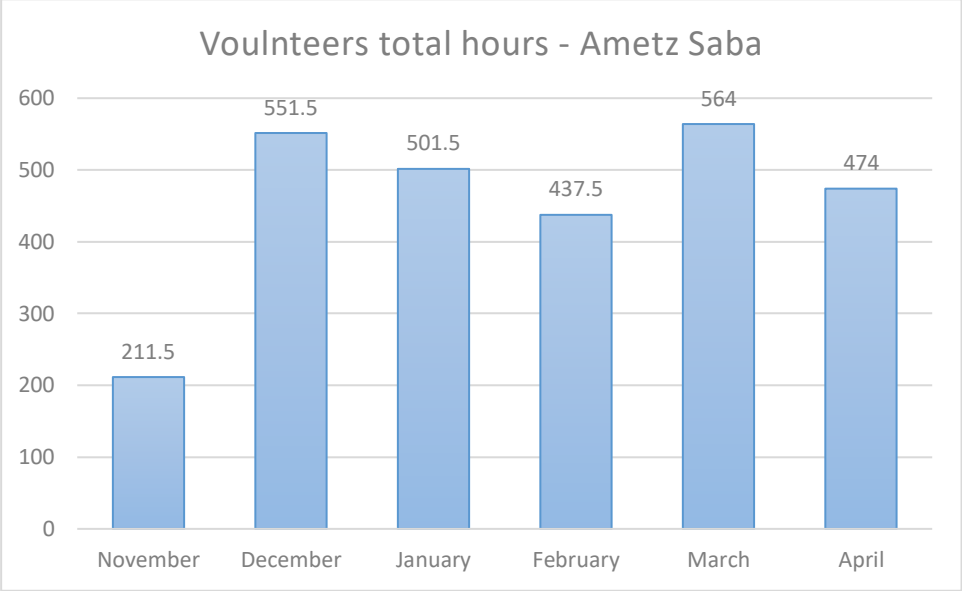
The Corona virus outbreak heavily affects the elderly population; due to the guidelines of the Ministry of health, hundreds of thousands are required to stay alone at home until an unknown date. The loneliness among the elderly - one of the greatest, although transparent, underlying problems of Israeli society, grows significantly these days. In times like these, our project is more relevant than ever.

Due to the unique situation, and out of great concern to our "grandparents" health we have changed the way we carry out our activity. We have started using landlines and cellphones as means of lessening the loneliness as well as ensuring that the basic needs of the elderly are being provided. Needs such as food and medication. Instead of visiting the senior citizens at their homes for two weekly meetings, the students speak with them over the phone almost every day. On these phone or video calls our volunteers make sure the seniors have everything they need, help them if something is missing and alleviate their loneliness and depression. The relationships between the pairs has not been suspended at all, and has even tightened during these days. for some of the seniors, the relationship with their student was the only real social interaction they had for the last few months.

Besides the phone calls, some students have visited the seniors "through the balcony", without entering their houses. Nof Gur for example, has baked some sweets and brought it to her "grandma", Rebecka Teiler. Others, As Michal Cohen, helped their seniors with medical needs. Michal organized a special driver to take her "grandma" Shoshana Pease to deal with some

medical issues. Alisa, who is Hodaya peles's "grandma", got flowers from Hodaya to celebrate her birthday.

To demonstrate the magnitude of our activity during the Corona crisis, here are statistics concerning total volunteering hours per month in the project:




As to our plans for the upcoming months. In coordination with the college, which sees the project as one of its successful and most meaningful social projects, we have guided the students to continue contacting the elderly until the end of the academic year (the end of June), and if possible to continue until the end of the exam period in the end of July. If the governmental guidelines will allow it - in person, and if not, by phone, video or "through the balcony". A major amount of the students have already finished their obligatory hours to get the scholarship but yet continue to volunteer as you can see below.

We are available for any further questions.

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Earlier this year – Victoria and Rachel with a donated laundry machine Victoria got for Rachel.

Alisa, with the flowers she got from Hodaya for her birthday