



The Matanel Perach Zahav for Arad Immigrant Seniors

2020

The Matanel Perach Zahav project is a life changing Matanel Foundation project partnered closely with the G.I.L.A.D organization in the city of Arad.

The essence of the project is to alleviate the loneliness of the elderly by volunteers who visit regularly once a week, assist them with their day-to-day needs and provides an address for any problem that may arise. This is the second year the project is running in the city and we see that both volunteers and seniors love the project, feel connected to it, some are dependent on it and constantly talking about how much it helps them with all their needs.

At the beginning of the year, it was agreed that there would be three meetings with a social worker so that the welfare department could train the volunteers and provide them with tools and a better understanding for the needs of the elderly. Unfortunately, only one meeting was able to take place as the others were scheduled for March, but with the outbreak of the Coronavirus epidemic we were prevented from implementing the other two.

In addition, the outbreak of the Coronavirus epidemic affected the volunteers' ability to reach the elderly physically, while sadly, the elderly became lonelier as a result of the social remoteness they needed according to the health regulations.

With the recommendation of the Municipal Welfare Department, all program volunteers are in continuous telephone contact with the elderly at least twice a week, and there are volunteers every day. Of course, the volunteers also assist the elderly in purchasing food and medicines according to the elderly's needs. Around Passover, the volunteers were there for the elderly, providing them with emotional support who felt an even greater loneliness in addition to their worry about the virus. In honor of the holiday, they were sent a box of matzah or a bottle of wine for the holiday in order to warm their hearts and have feel of the festival.

From conversations I have had with some of the seniors, it is evident that the constant telephone calls by their volunteers, helps, encourages, and sustains them during this complex period where they are forced to embrace a dual health and mental challenge. The seniors also say they are already waiting for the day when they will be able to meet again physically.

It is my hope that we can continue this important project in our city, especially in light of this complex period for our senior population for which the project is sometimes life-saving.

Immediately after Passover festival, we conducted a gathering with the municipal welfare department to work on making the most of our resources to maximize our efficiency in assisting the elderly in light of the outbreak of the virus. After much thought, we set a goal for each volunteer to make two long phone calls each week with the senior he/she are accompanying. In addition, we instructed the volunteers to make sure they are available to address every request and need of the seniors. For example, a volunteer whose elderly woman is confined to a wheelchair had booked her a special taxi to go on an outing with her to relieve her of the loneliness she has been in. Another story is of an elderly woman suffering from the heat who needed terribly an air conditioner, however, she could not afford it. Her volunteer raised the amount needed to purchase and install the air conditioner.

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We see every day and even more so during this challenging period, the importance of the bonds created and keeping in contact with the elderly, it is just incredible and sometimes even vital.

We would like to thank you for your support of this program and wish you all the best and best of health! We would love to continue the project for another year with your partnership.

Yours sincerely,

Ariel Yifrach
C.E.O
G.I.L.A.D for Arad

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