

*MATANEL FOUNDATION*

*ACTIVITY REPORT*

**Program:** Safe Haven Camp

**Year:** 2024-2025

Please present your activity report according to the following lines. The whole report will not exceed 2 or 3 pages (as word document).

**Name of the Program:** Safe Haven Camp

**Year of activity:** 2024-2025

**Name of the report's writer:** Dalia Goodhardt

**Function of the report's writer:** Donor Relations Manager

**Mail:** daliag@orr-shalom.co.il

**Phones:** +972584073796

**Website / Facebook address of the organization:**

<https://orr-shalom.org.il/en/>

<https://www.facebook.com/orrshalomisrael/>

**Number of active participants in the program:** 52 children attended the Sukkot 2024 session (1 week), 49 children attended the Hanukkah 2024 (1 week), 68 children attended the Passover 2025 session (2 weeks), and 87 children attended the summer 2025 session (3 weeks).

**Estimated number of impacted participants:** 157. This number includes all children attending Safe Haven Camp, along with secondary beneficiaries such as the 30 staff members (camp directors, counsellors, and national service volunteers) and the 40 family group-home house parents who are able to temporarily close their homes and take a much-needed break to rest and recharge, enabling them to care for Orr Shalom's children throughout the year.

**Give the actual state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):**

87 children attended Safe Haven's Summer camp. Three children were referred to Orr Shalom only days before the camp opened and were integrated into the program. Approximately 30 staff members, including directors, counsellors, night counsellors, National Service mentors, social workers, and an on-call psychologist, provided continuous care. Activities included nature walks, yoga workshop, pool days, laser tag, sports, baking, and a therapeutic surfing course. Zahava Abromowitz is currently transitioning into her new role as Camp Director, as we bid farewell to the outgoing director, Rachel Erez. This year, Orr Shalom reinforced the team by increasing staff numbers and offering additional guidance, as many of the children arrived with even more complex backgrounds and trauma intensified by the ongoing war.

**The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.):**

Four camps took place this year: Sukkot 2024, Chanukah 2024, Passover 2025, and Summer 2025 - each offering a safe, nurturing, and structured environment with round-the-clock staff support. 52 children attended the Sukkot camp, 49 children attended the Chanukah Camp, 68 children attended the Passover Camp, and Summer Camp was the largest yet, with 87 children.

The highlight of all four camp sessions was the therapeutic surfing workshop. The workshop is led by professional instructors and helps children build confidence, face fears, and experience failure and success in a supportive setting. From the cooler days of Chanukah to the relentless sun in August, campers embraced the waves with courage and enthusiasm.

Chanukah Camp activities included movie nights, a Lego engineering challenge, and lots of arts and crafts, providing children with structured fun and therapeutic engagement. One night, a missile siren sounded, prompting staff to swiftly evacuate children to shelters. Their calm and professional response kept the children safe and reassured, underscoring the importance of preparedness and trauma-informed training when responding to crisis.

Passover Camp offered similarly enriching activities and marked a special milestone, a farewell ceremony for Natalie<sup>1</sup> and Tomer<sup>2</sup>, two 12th graders who had attended every camp session over the past nine years. For Orr Shalom's children, saying goodbye is often challenging. Many face ongoing transitions and struggle with a deep fear of abandonment. Including the theme of 'Farewell' in camp, not only honored Natalie and Tomer, but also provided a valuable opportunity to model healthy goodbyes.

Daily activities at Summer Camp included field trips, nature walks, baking, and group sports on the camp's large lawn. The on-site swimming pool was in constant use, providing welcome relief from the summer heat. Visiting day is a highlight of the summer camp session. House parents and support staff reunited with children after two weeks apart, bringing snacks, gifts, and warm hugs. Each bunk prepared a special performance—dance, video, or song – before everyone joined together to sing and dance to the Safe Haven Camp song.

**The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...):**

Safe Haven Camp's impact over the past year was evaluated through a combination of participant feedback, staff assessments, and structured reporting. At the start of each camp, counselors receive detailed reports from social workers about each child's background and needs. At the end of camp, they compiled follow-up reports to support the child's reintegration into their Family Group Home.

Staff also noted meaningful emotional and behavioral progress among some participants (see testimonials in the evaluation report).

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Name changed to protect the identity of the child. <sup>1</sup>  
Name changed to protect the identity of the child. <sup>2</sup>

These insights, along with internal staff evaluations, continue to inform the development of future camp sessions. A more detailed evaluation report is attached.

**Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:**

As Safe Haven Camp continues to grow in scale and complexity, we are developing a set of provisional guidelines to ensure the program remains responsive, therapeutic, and impactful for every child we serve.

**1. Responding to the Impact of War and Increased Demand**

The ongoing war has significantly increased the number of children attending Safe Haven Camp. Just a few years ago, camp sessions typically hosted around 30 children. Today, we are reaching 87 children per session. This surge is driven by several factors. Host families who would normally care for children from family group homes during holidays are stretched thin. Many are overwhelmed by extended school closures, reserve duty, and heightened stress, leaving them unable to accommodate additional children, resulting in a higher attendance at Safe Haven Camp. The war has also intensified challenges within fragile families, leading to more referrals to Orr Shalom. However, due to strain on the welfare system, many children are being removed from their homes later than usual, arriving at camp with deeper trauma and more complex needs. The conflict has further impacted the children emotionally, compounding existing anxiety and stress. In response, Safe Haven Camp is expanding its capacity and strengthening its therapeutic framework to support a larger and more vulnerable population.

**2. Improve Long-Term Impact Tracking and Strategic Learning**

In the coming year, we will work closely with Orr Shalom's newly formed Monitoring and Evaluation Department to strengthen our evaluation processes. This collaboration will help us better assess the camp's impact, identify areas for growth, and inform strategic decision-making. With the arrival of incoming Camp Director Zahava Abromowitz, we also anticipate fresh energy and new ideas that will shape the next chapter of Safe Haven Camp.

These guidelines reflect our commitment to continuous improvement and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the children we serve. With the support of generous partners like the Matanel Foundation and our dedicated staff, we are confident in our ability to increase the impact of Safe Haven Camp in the year ahead.

**Please join the Evaluation Report, the Financial Report and the list of the participants to the program (as PDF documents)**

**Please join photos – as JPG files – and any link or any other document connected to the program which will seem to you relevant – as PDF document.**

**Please join a 5 minutes movie which presents your institution and the particular project supported by the Matanel Foundation. The movie should be accessible to the philanthropic world and to other potential donors.**