

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: Safe Haven Camp

Year: 2025-2026

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

Name of the Program: Safe Haven Camp

Year of activity: 2025-2026

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: 71 children attended the Sukkot 2025 session (10 days), 41 children attended the Hanukkah 2025 session (5 days), 62 children attended the Passover 2026 session (2 weeks), and 74 individual children attended the Summer 2026 camp across two sessions (3 weeks). In total, 93 individual children participated in Safe Haven Camp during the year.

Estimated number of impacted participants: 173. This number includes all 93 children who attended Safe Haven Camp over the year, along with secondary beneficiaries, for example the approximately 40 staff members (camp directors, counsellors, and National Service mentors) and the 40 Family Group Home house parents. Safe Haven Camp enables the house parents to temporarily close their homes during school vacations and take a much-needed break to rest and recharge, strengthening their ability to continue providing Orr Shalom's children with consistent, nurturing care throughout the year.

Give the actually state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines): Safe Haven Camp completed a full annual cycle of four camps, providing a safe environment for 93 individual children over the year. The 2026 summer camp which concluded in August 2026 operated over two sessions, serving 71 and 58 children respectively, with some children attending both sessions. 16 counselors worked at the summer camp, eight of whom were new, alongside 20 National Service mentors who rotated between the two sessions. The program included therapeutic surfing, swimming, a waterpark and hiking excursions, Lego engineering, arts & crafts, a talent show, and group sports. Camp Director, Zahava Abromowitz has now completed her first full annual cycle directing the program and has gained considerable confidence and experience. The program continues to adapt to a growing number of younger children and to campers with increasingly complex emotional and behavioral needs.

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 2025, Hanukkah 2025, Passover 2026, and Summer 2026, with the summer camp divided into two sessions. Each camp provided a safe, nurturing and structured environment with round-the-clock staff support. Across the four camps, Safe Haven recorded 303 camp attendances among 93 individual children, meaning most children attended more than one camp. This also represents an increase from the 87 individual children who participated in the 2024–2025 camp cycle.

The 10-day Sukkot camp served 71 children, including eight who had joined Orr Shalom's Family Group Homes at the beginning of the school year, only a few weeks earlier. Several counselors were called to reserve duty, and sounds of nearby IDF activity could be heard at the campsite, which is located in southern Israel. Although this was unsettling for some children, after two years of war, both the children and staff had developed ways to cope with these fears together. Activities included therapeutic surfing, bowling, robotics, dog therapy and an outing to the cinema. The older girls also participated in facilitated discussions about the anticipated ceasefire and return of the hostages. They shared their hopes and fears before creating signs that they hung along nearby roads to welcome the hostages home.

Hanukkah Camp served 41 children, including three who were new to Orr Shalom and attended camp for the first time. Attendance was lower because the camp lasted only five days, allowing some children to spend the short holiday with their biological parents or other relatives under careful supervision. Whenever it is safe and appropriate, Orr Shalom prioritizes preserving these important family relationships. Camp remained available for children who had no family they could safely visit during the holiday. The camp's smaller size created a particularly calm atmosphere and allowed staff to provide more individual attention. Activities included therapeutic surfing, dog training, mindfulness, logic challenges, arts and crafts and communal Hanukkah candle lighting. 30 children participated in the mindfulness activity, and several asked for the facilitator to return at future camps. Staff observed that the sessions gave children a valuable opportunity to slow down and regulate themselves within the camp's otherwise active schedule.

Passover Camp demonstrated the program's ability to adapt during an emergency. Due to the war with Iran, the camp was relocated from the regular campsite in southern Israel to four Orr Shalom Family Group Homes with easy access to protected shelters. The 62 participating children were able to remain in familiar homes and neighborhoods, supported by counsellors they already knew and trusted. A consistent daily schedule included physical activity, preparing meals, arts and crafts, workshops, games, movies and shared responsibility for maintaining the homes. Despite ongoing sirens and uncertainty, staff reported fewer behavioral escalations, stronger emotional regulation and a calm atmosphere. The familiar, home-based setting appears to have contributed to the children's greater sense of stability and security.

Summer Camp operated in two sessions, serving 71 children in the first session and 58 in the second. Activities included therapeutic surfing, swimming, a waterpark outing, hiking, a Lego engineering workshop, arts and crafts, performances, sports and camp-wide games. On Visiting Day, the children reunited with their Family Group Home house parents and support teams, and each bunk performed in a camp-wide talent show.

A particularly meaningful moment involved an eight-year-old boy who was placed in an Orr Shalom Family Group Home only three days before camp began. Although he initially found camp extremely challenging, he gradually developed trusting relationships with the counsellors. When asked what he enjoyed most, he did not mention the swimming pool or field trips. He answered, "That they love me there."

The summer also included an emotional farewell for an 18-year-old Orr Shalom boy who had completed his time in an Orr Shalom's Family Group Home and was preparing to begin military service. It was important to him to return to camp, speak about what camp had meant to him, and say goodbye. For staff and children alike, the moment demonstrated the lasting sense of belonging camp creates.

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

Safe Haven Camp's impact was evaluated through attendance records, continuous staff observation, monitoring of behavioral and emotional incidents, daily staff meetings, post-camp discussions and accounts from the Family Group Home teams. At the beginning of each camp, counselors receive information from social workers about each child's background and individual needs. At the end of camp, staff document relevant observations to support the child's return to the Family Group Home.

The Family Group Home staff also noted meaningful emotional and behavioral progress among some participants (see testimonials in the evaluation report).

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, Orr shalom is developing guidelines to ensure that the program remains responsive, therapeutic and meaningful for each child.

1. Adapt programming for a broader age range

Safe Haven Camp now serves children aged 6-18, with a growing number of younger participants. In the coming year, Zahava, the Camp Director intends to develop additional age-specific schedules and activities that respond to different developmental needs, abilities and attention spans. Orr Shalom will also seek to expand the variety of off-site activities, as remaining at the campsite for extended periods can be difficult for some children.

2. Strengthen staffing and individualized support

Adequate staffing is essential to maintaining safety while providing children with an enjoyable and therapeutic vacation experience. Orr Shalom will continue recruiting and training counselors and, where needed, assigning personal aides to children who require additional behavioral, emotional or medical support.

3. Strengthen emergency preparedness and evaluation

The successful relocation of Passover Camp demonstrated the importance of maintaining flexible operational plans for periods of war or other emergencies. Orr Shalom will use the lessons learned from this model to strengthen future emergency planning.

The program will also work to improve completion rate of post-camp evaluation forms and introduce more consistent measures across all four camps, enabling clearer assessment of outcomes and year-to-year progress. 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 seems 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.