

Marc 20th, 2024

Subject: Reselience Programs for kids and youth during “routine war time” reselience and recreation

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for your support, love and prayers for the people of Ashkelon.

The residents of the city of Ashkelon, woke up in horror, on the Saturday of October 7th 2023, along with the whole country to a brutal and murderous attack by the Hamas. On this murderous occasion the city lost 27 of its town citizens with 1 citizen still among the hostages of its 170,000 residents. On that terrible Saturday morning, the Ashkelon Municipality immediately gathered its Directors to switch from routine to emergency mode and to respond to all the needs of all the residents that arise.

Roughly 40% of the residents of Ashkelon live in low income areas, **most live without safe rooms**, at the time due to ongoing mass attacks targeted at civilians, more than a quarter of all the rockets fired to Israel were at Ashkelon and the region, with many direct hits that harmed buildings, private houses and infrastructures. This led to power outages and a lack of clean water supply. Many citizens were forced to move into public communal shelters that are located in the neighborhood underground. In order to facilitate and assist the residents, the city provided a few thousand of mattresses, renovated and restored shelters, installed A.C units, distributed games and toys, and daily hot meals. Furthermore, the city purchased immediately a few hundred back up generators, emergency lights and provide hundreds of gallons of daily water to public shelters, private houses and buildings. During the first two weeks of war Ashkelon became a ghost town with closed supermarkets and suppliers not willing to distribute in the city so the city management took a stand and started to take care of the citizens with hot food and all needs and delivered it to all households that asked. In parallel to food and all the essential products the city management provided activities in the public shelters including shows, after school classes, reselience kits which includes coloring books, craft materials, box games, markers, crayons and anti-anxiety products such as soap bubbles and relaxing dolls (balloon filled with flour) etc. All enabled by the generosity of donors from around the world.

In early Januarary 2024, Ashkelon was cleared to open of the educational system, after 3 months with no school structure for our children. However, the formal educational structure is focused on closing the academic annual gap. Therefore, we have created a program focused on **strengthening emotional and mental resilience**, as well as, respite activities that will help the children process what they experienced and reduce gaps created by the reality that the children were isolated in their homes without friends for so long.

Solution: for the 7th graders in junior high school who had a sporadic return to school, due to the lack of sufficient shelters in the schools, initially used our solutions once a week to hold social and cultural meetings in our protected space. In this age group, **many are suffering from high levels of anxiety and stress, vast loneliness**, we have placed an emphasis on social activities and on strengthening the self, tools for teamwork and experiential simulations, and the students will be able to create connections and friendships with their friends. In **Ashkelon there are 2,440 children in 7th grade, roughly 80 classrooms**.

Breakdown: the cost of this program in 2024 is \$131.2 (~\$1,640 annually per class) Each session costs around \$82 per gathering.

- Each class will participate in 20 sessions, each session is 90 minutes, the activities will take place in the in the schools protected areas as part of the school framework. The sessions are psychodrama, music, camera simulations, and other forms of theraputic tools. A professional organization will perform a semi and annual evaluation report of impact .

We have a current gap for 18 classrooms roughly \$30,000 USD to add 576 students to this program immediately. We have matching funds commitment from the Government around \$65K + \$35K pledge from Ronson Foundation U.K

	Accepted and Agreed:	
	ELI DAYAN, ASHKELON FOUNDATION	
SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME, TITLE	DATE

CC: Dafna Amira Biton, Director of the Youth Culture and Sports Department