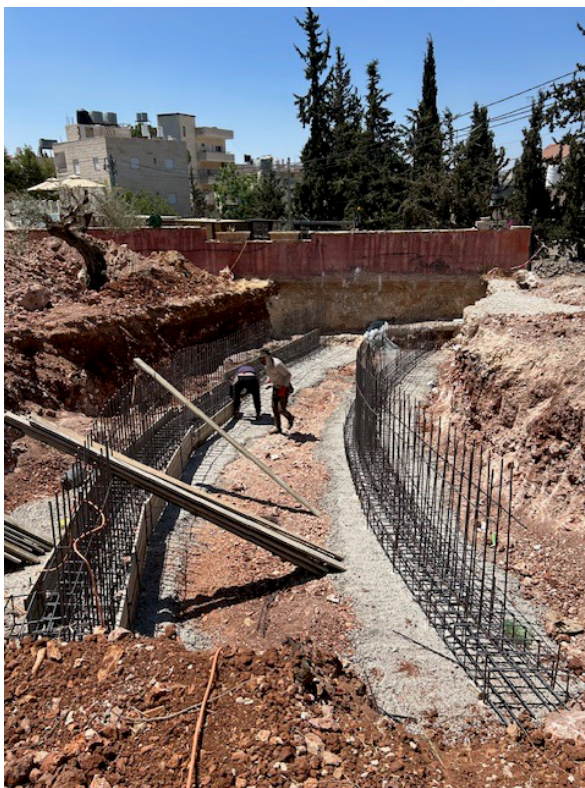


Lifegate in May 2025

Work on our neighboring property began in May. Solid boundary walls and a newly designed access to our land are the first steps on the acquired property. The design of the entrance area should ease the congestion on the road in the mornings and afternoons when Lifegate children are dropped off and picked up.

An adventure and play landscape will then be created on the site, and we hope that we will be able to recruit many volunteers in the summer and fall. We want to build play equipment from recycled wooden pallets, create a barefoot path, design beautiful seating areas and thus contribute to the training of our children's senses. If you are interested in helping out, please contact us directly at reha@lgate.org . Accommodation and food will be provided by us.



Entrance area of neighboring property with a "drive-in" and a wheelchair path

Olive oil soon back in stock

To our great delight, the first delivery of the delicious Lifegate olive oil in January sold out quickly, so we have now started a follow-up delivery. Olive oil will be available again in our warehouse in the middle to the end of June (werkstattverkauf@lifegate-reha.de) Tel. 0049 151 55 02 77 77 or 0049 9341 8 46 3720.



Olive oil follow-up delivery was packed and sent



Bethlehem University therapy students are able to gather practical experience at Lifegate throughout the year. Our team of therapists are there to provide guidance and must also provide a concluding evaluation. We get to know a lot of young people through the internships and we can take this into consideration when recruiting later.





Ivan before and after the operation on his legs and knee in the Israeli hospital

Ivan Qumsieh underwent a successful operation at Shaare Zedek Hospital in Israel and is being trained to walk in a walking trainer by our therapist Nicola Sahouri. Nicola was invited to take part in the operation by Dr. Lebel, a surgeon who has been a friend of Lifegate for many years. In this walking trainer, we can slowly increase the load on the legs. Ivan is also standing in a standing frame at home and slowly he has less pain and is therefore more cooperative. Ivan will now be fitted with an orthosis and will be able to walk without aids after a while. A great result from a successful cooperation.



Aya Mousa is 8 years old and joined our group of children with severe multiple disabilities in May. She is cognitively impaired due to a change in her brain. Aya has never been in an institution before and is a very friendly girl who is already making a very positive contribution to the atmosphere in this support group. The parents are happy about the support place and a heavy burden has, at least in part, been lifted from their shoulders.



At this month's *fathers' meeting*, 7 fathers of Lifegate children and teenagers met with life coach Dr. Renée El Ali to explore the topic of their role as a father of a child with disabilities. All the fathers gave honest insights into the challenges they face as fathers of their special children. Many of them reported prejudice, judgment and discrimination from their social environment. When they are out in public with their children, they often encounter people who reject their children, don't want them in their business or use evasions and excuses to communicate that they are not wanted. There are similar difficulties within the wider family circle. Relatives want them to visit without the special child or others seem to avoid contact.

It was something very special to observe how many fathers had similar experiences and to see how they were able to encourage and strengthen each other by sharing in the group. Many have no one around them with whom they can talk openly about such issues. We hope that more fathers will join this group in the coming months and be able to strengthen and encourage each other.



"Workshop" with Lourd (speech therapist)

Erik's training series on the topic of communication support came to an end this semester with a final workshop on augmentative and alternative communication. The colleagues from the early intervention kindergarten took part in three training sessions on how they can support the children in their groups with language in everyday life. They became aware of what children generally need to learn to speak and how they as teachers can act in a way that promotes language. For children with difficulties communicating verbally, they learned about additional methods with which they can help these children to understand more and express themselves in a non-verbal way.

For example, they learned about the possibilities of using gestures, which often help children with Down syndrome to communicate. For children with more limited motor skills or who have difficulties with interpersonal interaction, Erik introduced them to the possibilities of communicating via talker apps on the tablet, whereby children communicate by pressing symbols. The device then speaks for them. Erik conducted the last training session together with our speech therapist Lourd, who introduced the teachers to the PECS concept, in which children express their needs by handing over a picture card.

Through clear explanations and small role plays, the teachers were able to test out how this method works in practice and at the same time receive feedback and suggestions for improvement from Lourd. For the transfer into practice, we discussed with several children in the groups how we could best implement this concept with them, for which children it might not be suitable and what level of communication we could achieve with our children.

On the road in May

I was able to visit friends, acquaintances, support organizations, institutions for the disabled, but also many new people who were interested in the work of Lifegate on an 18-day lecture and meeting trip, mainly in the south of Germany. Many listeners were surprised that, despite all the negative news from our region, Lifegate's rehabilitation work could take place on a daily basis in a sheltered and protected environment, asked questions and expressed interest.

The friendliness, openness, hospitality and understanding of many people was a most beneficial experience and I look back on this intensive time with gratitude. The reunion with my son, association members and ex-volunteers and many friends in Triefenstein at the carefully prepared annual general meeting of Tor zum Leben towards the end of the trip were further "highlights".

Pupils and teaching staff from a special school in Hesse were delighted to receive greetings from our Lifegate pupils, which I delivered personally, and at the same time I was able to tell them a little about us. Fortunately, I had booked with the "right" airline and returned safely. "You look refreshed", a member of staff told me the next morning after my return to Lifegate. After more than 2,500 kilometers behind the wheel and 15 appointments in 18 days, the change of scenery must have left its mark. **Thanks be to God**, who gave the strength and joy! We hope and pray that peace will return to our region and that people will learn to live together. **Please stay by our side in prayer, in good thoughts and deeds!**

Yours sincerely, Burghard Schunkert

