



Lifegate in April 2026

"Ceasefire" ? ...but unfortunately not in northern Israel ...



Our support work in April returned to a healthy routine and was able to proceed **without** the “daily trips” to the shelters. We are very grateful are taking place!

The new **drive-through** at the entrance of the neighboring property significantly eases the traffic situation on the main road. Parents, taxis, and our team members received different colored stickers for their windshields to indicate their designated loading and parking zones.



The small **park for sensory training** for our children and young people has continued to take shape. Flowers have been planted, the entrance area landscaped, and our newly sown lawn is thriving. Next, the play equipment will be assembled and installed. We plan to hold a small opening ceremony at the

beginning of June, at which time we will bless this piece of land and dedicate it to its purpose. The children, teenagers, and the Lifegate team are very excited and extend their heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped!



Roof secured - elevated platform burned down...

The subcontractor who was securing our roof in order to prevent anything from falling caused an accident himself, which thankfully had a happy ending. His rented elevated work platform, parked in our yard, which he had spent all day repairing—its oil pan and electrical system—caught fire in the evening due to a short circuit. So, for the first time, we had to call on the local fire department and our fire hydrants. Thankfully, everyone worked quickly and efficiently, and apart from some minor damage to a window and the floor, nothing serious happened. Nevertheless, this incident shows us how we depend on God's grace, protection, and preservation every day, in both small and large ways. At the same time, we had the entire neighborhood on our property for the first time—a special event that we would like to repeat on a more joyful occasion.



..arrived after a long wait. Aid provided by Joni and Friends USA

Once again, it took over a month for the container with assistive devices from the American organization Joni and Friends to leave the port of Ashdod and arrive at Lifegate. For each item (wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, etc.), we had to submit the corresponding international standard declarations, which wasn't easy since the devices came from different locations across the USA. In the end, thanks to the help of the JAF team, we were able to successfully overcome all the bureaucratic hurdles and are now happy to be able to help many people with these wheelchairs, walking aids, and spare parts. A heartfelt thank you to our friends in the USA and our Israeli shipping company, who greatly assisted us! For several months now, we have been working intensively with three small towns near Bethlehem to assess the situation of people with disabilities and then provide them with appropriate assistive devices.





Nicolas and George from the assistive devices department have stored all the wheelchairs in the warehouse.

...Winning mothers to help...

Our speech therapists provided information about their work at the "Mothers' Meeting Point" and asked for help with exercises for the children at home. The mothers were very interested and asked many questions. At the end, each mother received a small Mother's Day gift. When you give people affection and attention, it often has a multiplier effect in the lives of those who receive it, and it reaches even more people. That is our experience and always our hope.



A small bouquet of flowers for Mother's Day

Mothers of our severely and multiply disabled children

Six self-help group meetings for mothers of children with special educational needs took place in March and April. The aim of these meetings was to create a supportive environment in which the participants could exchange experiences, strengthen their self-confidence and improve their ability to cope with everyday challenges.

The first meeting served to identify and select the main topics of the program. Based on feedback from the participants, several key themes were agreed upon, with a focus on self-awareness, including recognizing personal strengths and weaknesses.

The meetings were moderated by our course leader, Miral, who introduced the topics and encouraged open discussions among the participants. Most meetings took place at the facility, but one meeting was held outdoors in a garden to create a more relaxed and stimulating atmosphere.

The main goal of the meetings was to help mothers better understand their personal challenges and develop effective strategies for coping with them. Furthermore, the program aimed to empower participants to act independently and apply what they had learned even after the meetings.

Overall, the self-help group offered participants a valuable space for reflection, mutual support and personal growth.



Self-help group led by our therapist Miral (second from the right)

...making up for missed inclusion encounters...

Due to the limited mobility during the war, we had to cancel many planned visits to mainstream kindergartens and schools. Now the situation has changed, and we are happy to reschedule some of these activities. Here is a visit from our special education class to a mainstream school and to a local kindergarten at our early intervention center. Children quickly overcome any initial apprehension and begin to play together and make friends. We hope that this will encourage more and more kindergartens and schools to open up to children with disabilities, and that they will eventually find a place in the regular education system.



Lifegate children visit a regular school

...Oldies but Goldies...

Young people grew up in our kindergarten and school, then their parents decided from one day to the next to leave them at home. Financial problems, broken marriages, no more transportation options, etc., and sometimes we at Lifegate simply didn't have any job or training to offer them. These young people often stuck with me; their lives and their development had come to an unwanted standstill, and in a country with no alternatives.

We have re-established contact with four of these young people in the Bethlehem area and are trying to remove all obstacles to continue the path of hope they have begun. Two have already started working in the olive oil soap production department, and we are still working with the other two to resolve technical issues. Not only are the parents relieved that there are prospects (sheltered employment) for their young adults, but we are also very happy to be able to still have a role in their lives. Each of them was and is an important person to us, with a name and a story. As it says in "The Little Prince": "You become responsible, forever, for those whose confidence you have gained!"



Front row: Nicola and Hala, back row from right: Amira, Rana (training) and Nicola's mother



Hala at the olive oil soap production Domiana and Nicola Domiana and M. Rani

...Lifegate Garden..

It's the most beautiful time of year at our guesthouse in the heart of Bethlehem. The flowers are in bloom, the house is beautifully decorated, and many couples come for wedding photoshoots. Even fashion companies film their commercials here at Lifegate Garden. The unique vintage decor in our lounge has become quite popular and is now literally paying off. We're hoping for even more guests, as we've only had a few so far. Lifegate Garden is also frequently booked for seminars, training courses, and day trips, and we make sure our guests have a wonderful time every day. Five young people are currently being trained in guesthouse operations and gardening, and they are doing so with great enthusiasm and motivation. Welcome to Lifegate Garden!



Young people are trained in the work in the guest rooms and in the garden.



Room service training

Photoshoot of a fashion house in Lifegate Garden (theme: "Wedding Season")



Students at Lifegate

Lifegate offers internships to students from various universities in its therapy department, social work, and special education. The young people are interested and motivated, and for some, this initial contact has led to later employment with Lifegate. Bethlehem University collaborates with the Lifegate workshops on a program for the cost-effective and creative production of therapy equipment with student participation. The assistive devices built at our workshops are presented at the university during a final session, evaluated by a panel, and then used by the aspiring therapists. Lifegate team members attend continuing education events and acquire further qualifications through programs offered at the university.



Good planning, good results – student programs at Lifegate

An intense month of work is drawing to a close, and we look back with gratitude. Opportunities to generate local income for our work are still almost nonexistent, and we are thankful that we were nevertheless able to pay our team's salaries on time. The many friends and people who help out every month have not let us down; a heartfelt thank you to them!

The daily devotional booklet of the Moravian Brethren contains the Bible verse from Hebrews 6:19 for the month of May:

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."

Yes, we have hope for every child, every young person, and every individual who turns to us seeking help. We also have hope for peace in this country because we know the "Prince of Peace" and live with Him. We spread this hope through our actions and words every day. Please join us and remain by our side; we hope for your support and wish you God's abundant blessings!

Yours sincerely, Burghard Schunkert and the Lifegate Team

