

## Lifegate in January 2026

### *December review*

To our great joy, children, young people and our team were able to celebrate a joyful Christmas. The house was beautifully decorated and presents lovingly prepared and the Christmas story was played and told. After a two-year "war break", Christmas trees were also put up again in public at the original site of the event, Bethlehem, and Christmas lights reminded us of the festival. Church services were held and Christians experienced a small return to old customs. A special gift was given to us by a doctor and professor from Jerusalem who has been a friend of ours for many years and who has operated on many Lifegate children. As a labor of love, he examined many Lifegate children at a neutral location on his day off, assisted by a French doctor who was with us as a volunteer. Two children will soon receive orthopaedic surgery as a result. Our therapists and the parents of the children examined are very grateful for this professional and uncomplicated help, which we intend to repeat this year.



*Lifegate Specialist Clinic*



*Our team: Dr. Vieux, Prof. Lebel, Nicola Physiotherapy and Awwad from Orthopaedic Technology*

### **Our children with severe disabilities**

The mother of one of the children with severe disabilities prepared a Christmas party with our team that was tailored to the needs of the children. We had calm music, the Christmas story with pictures and a short movie and self-made presents for all children. All the children and mothers enjoyed this harmonious and successful last day before the Christmas vacations.



Adam is five years old, a wheelchair user and new to this group. We are delighted with the little boy, who is already building with Lego bricks and pointing to the foods he likes. He enjoys being with the other children and clearly shows us non-verbally what he wants and understands. He is now receiving all the therapies at Lifegate that support him and he will continue to develop quickly.



*Adam a new boy in the group*

*We would like to take this opportunity to say how deeply grateful to all friends and supporters of our work. Thanks to your commitment, we were able to end the year 2025 in good financial shape, a special gift in these times when many local revenues (guest house, visiting tour groups to Lifegate for lunch, laundry for hotel businesses, etc.) were not possible. We have been carried, were able to experience protection and blessing and do good work every day. Thank you!*

The year 2026 has begun with the long-awaited winter rains and our rainwater cisterns are now well filled. All the children, young people and our team have returned safely from the vacations.

### *Special school*

Handicrafts and creative design are part of our program at the special school. The children had a lot of fun creating works of small art along with teachers and parents, and these activities promotes fine motor skills and help in learning about colors and materials. The children create their own decorations in the school and decorate the classroom from time to time. Parents are delighted to receive a small "art folder" that the children bring home. There is only beautiful and successful "art" at Lifegate, so the children are happy and proud and this is how the self-confident artists of the future are born.



*Mila*



*Salamah*

## From the workshops

Thanks to a new sponsorship initiative, five new training areas have been added to the fourteen Lifegate training and service departments that have been established for many years.

### *„Stone Age“*

In a small mosaic workshop, young people can learn to design and then lay small mosaics under supervision. This is also an activity for young people with severe spastic paralysis, who are already making good progress.



*Natalie with young people in the mosaic workshop*

### *„Baking bread and cake“*

In the wholemeal bakery, young people learn how to make healthy baked goods and bake cakes at the same time.



*„A garden is the place where patience turns into flowers (vegetables)“*



*„this is already growing in Lifegate Garden“*

In our garden project, we will continue to work with young people to build greenhouses from waste materials and teach them how to grow vegetables and spices. Each trainee will take a greenhouse home with them and cultivate it there. At the same time, we are planting organic vegetables for our kitchens (Lifegate and guest house) on a piece of land in Lifegate Garden. The first harvest will take place in February.



*Old wooden pallets are taken apart for the construction of greenhouses*

*„Soap-making“*

For many years, we have been buying soap made from olive oil, which we then package and sell in our shop. Now we want to produce this soap with young people in Lifegate. Small soaps for hotels and guesthouses and perhaps naturally flavored soaps are in our plans.



*„Our world should become more beautiful“*

It has taken a very long time to establish the Lifegate "Beauty Salon", which was actually planned from the moment we moved into the new building. Now we want to provide ladies and gentlemen with the right hairstyle and beautify many fingernails. Young women and men are trained in the "beauty trade" and can then work in their home town. We look forward to welcoming courageous customers!



Until the next floor is built the Lifegate *ceramics workshop* had to provisionally move to create space for our Beauty Saloon. It now shares this space with the new mosaic workshop. It is a bit cramped but still cozy and we hope to have more space available again soon.



*Nisrin runs the ceramics workshop*

*(from left) George, Nicola and Yusif* work together in the *aids department*, which is growing slowly but steadily and now cooperates with three city councils. At these locations, our service vehicle comes to a meeting point once a week and brings aids (wheelchairs and walking aids, etc.) to the people who are called in. In this way, a reliable supply is growing at these locations. In further steps, we want to train local people with disabilities to permanently staff this "service station". This will provide people with local help and further support measures can follow, such as a therapy station, a medical clinic, work with parents and the integration of children with disabilities into local kindergartens and schools. We have made a start, and now we want to work with the people to further develop how their lives can change locally.



*Awad our orthopaedic technician* is fully occupied. He builds orthoses (leg braces) and makes insoles. He is happy and committed to his work and word of the good quality of his work is already spreading around in our area. We are very grateful for this young man.



In our *textile workshop*, in addition to the training and alterations workshop we now have a customer who has doll clothes sewn by us on a weekly basis. The bed linen for our friends' vacation facility in Tabgha on the Sea of Galilee can also be sewn at Lifegate again. Orders that help us to generate a small income and provide young people with work.



*Shehinaz our trainer with Issa Jereiseh a new young man in textile training*

### *Joni and friends*



*With Joni Erikson Tada and Monique and Gene American friends from JAF, Lifegate and myself who I met in the USA, we have been and will continue to do many joint aid distributions in Jordan and the Middle*

**Story:** Joni Erikson Tada had a swimming accident as a young girl and has been paralyzed and wheelchair-bound ever since. Through God's help and support, her life has become a shining example for many people with similar challenges around the world. The organization she founded, "Joni and Friends", combines God's loving care for us, as described in the Bible, with practical help in many countries around the world. Joni herself gives talks and speaks from her own recording studio on Christian radio stations around the world.

Wheelchairs and donations of aids as well as courses for church members and pastors have the aim gaining recognition for people with disabilities and including them in Christian churches. The organization's program also includes meeting places and camps to help strengthen families with people with disabilities. Under the heading "Jonis House", the organization helps to set up rehabilitation and meeting centers for people with disabilities in various countries.

Three years ago, I was asked to take over the coordination and management of these activities in the Middle East, which I have been happy to do ever since with the help of my American colleagues. We are supported annually with an aid container and can send Lifegate teams to these countries to help with wheelchair deliveries and adaptations. We are part of the Jonis House project and bring our "Lifegate experience" to the other countries, who are very grateful for it.

Through this connection, we now have a presence in the countries of the Middle East. In January, I was invited to the annual meeting of Joni and Friends regional leaders in the USA and met colleagues from India, South America, Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and China to exchange ideas and plan for the coming years. As in previous years, Joni and her team gave us a warm welcome and we received loving and caring attention and encouragement for our ministry. A container from JAF with wheelchairs and aids is currently on its way to Lifegate and we are looking forward to carrying out another wheelchair distribution here in March, with more to follow this year in our neighboring countries. A regional

conference will take place in Dubai in May with representatives from all countries. To be able to pass on the blessings we have been given over the years and our experiences and to see how something is growing and bearing fruit everywhere is the special gift of this wonderful connection with Joni and Friends.

### **Outlook**

The last (dead) Israeli hostage was found in a mass grave in Gaza and then transferred to Israel in an operation involving 2000 Israeli soldiers. A traumatic story is coming to a conclusion of sorts. The consequences of the events of October 7, 2023 will continue to haunt many people in our region for a long time to come. The threatening situation surrounding Iran is a matter of daily tension and concern in our country.

Hezbollah militias in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip have yet to be disarmed. Syria has not been pacified, minorities such as the Kurds and Druze are now being harassed and attacked by Syria and/or Turkey and the world remains silent. The terrorists of yesterday are the rulers of tomorrow, if it suits the rulers of this world.

At Lifegate, we are committed to people and will not be dissuaded. We want to radiate light and hope and bring care, warmth and perspective into the sadness and resignation of many people. Every day this can happen in deed and word with every child and young person, the parents and the team in our facility. We have been preserved through the Corona and the war period and have been able to continue a work of hope and pass on the love given to us every day, a gift.

Thanks to the help of our friends, the children and young people entrusted to us have received extensive support and development and the team has been given financial stability and faithfulness and will continue confidently in 2026. May our Lord give us daily courage, preservation and perspective! **Stay by our side in prayer and with your support!**

Best wishes from Beit Jala/Bethlehem

Your Burghard Schunkert and the Lifegate team