

## Lifegate in March 2026

Spring has arrived and is displaying all its colorful splendor.



We can only enjoy it sporadically, since we constantly hear sirens and have to seek shelter. Many people are barely sleeping and planning their days according to what the best means of protection are available.

At the beginning of March, seven volunteers from Germany and the Netherlands had planned to visit and actively support us, but the war unfortunately prevented this. At Lifegate, we know we are under God's "shield of protection" and work daily with the entire team and the young people aged 15 and up at the facility. As directed by the Ministry of Education, the younger children are taught via Zoom. Here, our years of work with parents, who are now well-trained and actively help at home, are proving invaluable. We are grateful that our facility has two shelters that can accommodate everyone and can, in case of an alarm, be reached in less than five minutes.

These days, people in Israel are remembering the Exodus from Egypt (Passover) and the Passover lamb, whose blood on the doorposts protected the Israelites from the angel who struck the firstborn during the plagues in Egypt. On the cross of Golgotha, the "Passover Lamb" Jesus Christ, who redeemed the world and gave his life for our sins, bled and died. But thankfully, the story doesn't end there! More at the end of this month's report.

### **..Investing in young people..**

Therapy students (52 female and 18 male) from Bethlehem University complete internships at Lifegate throughout the year. The upper-level students in physiotherapy and occupational therapy are required to complete a practical project during their four-year degree program (e.g., building an assistive device, designing and producing an educational game, or creating a therapy device using simple materials). The Lifegate workshops are available for these projects. Our teams provide guidance and practical support to help the students achieve positive results. At a joint event at the university, the students present and

celebrate the results of their workshops. The assistive devices they have created are then used in therapy sessions.



*Assistive device construction by students of Bethlehem University*



### *...natural turf for the "adventure garden"*

Our gardener and his apprentices oversaw the sowing a grass lawn on the neighboring play and adventure area, as well as a planting project in a greenhouse built from plastic bottles. This greenhouse will now be set up in the garden of one of the young apprentices, where he can learn how to use the planting beds and grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers.







*Planting bed in the greenhouse made from old plastic bottles*

### ***...small works of art...***

Our new mosaic workshop is already producing many small works of art, which we plan to offer in our Lifegate shop. The young people enjoy working together around the table. Besides the task itself, it's the sense of community that gives them so much encouragement, and they look forward to coming to our workshop every morning.



**... we can be sweet too...**

Next to the Lifegate whole-grain sourdough bakery, a small pastry shop is being built, which will produce items according to orders from our team and external customers. The sweets, too, are made with fresh dates and dark chocolate to be as healthy as possible and delight a steadily growing customer base.



### *Lifegate Confectionery*

In May, Lifegate Germany's annual shipment is scheduled to be dispatched to Germany. This time, the boxes will be transported by sea freight to the warehouse in Tauberbischofsheim. We ask for your prayers for safe transport routes within the country and during the long journey. Fortunately, the Strait of Hormuz is not on the route.





### *Early intervention by Erik Pratorius*

*Osaid:* We've reported on Osaid quite a bit in recent months. Thanks to surgery at a Jerusalem hospital and the orthotics our orthotist, Awwad, made for him, he's now very steady and quick on his feet. He often plays soccer with the other children at the kindergarten. In addition to his motor development, Osaid has also made wonderful progress cognitively and socially over the past year. When he first came to us a few years ago, he barely responded to being spoken to; the input at kindergarten was too much for him, and he cried and screamed a lot. Over the years, he calmed down and was better able to absorb the many impressions and activities. He began to take an interest in the toys in the group. However, it was very difficult to communicate with him. If you asked him a question or told him something, he usually repeated what was said but didn't understand the meaning of the words. He interacted very little with the other children and the teachers.

Thanks to the intensive and varied work of our colleagues, he was able to overcome these difficulties in interaction and now enjoys playing together. He has become very creative and now has many of his own ideas that he incorporates into his play. We are particularly pleased that he now even brings animals and objects to life in his play, immersing himself in different roles. For example, our special education teacher, Erik, recently had the pleasure of acting out a game of cows and chickens, in which the cows repeatedly tried to steal the chickens' eggs, and the chickens had to call the police to catch the thieves. We hadn't expected him to play on such a complex level until recently, and we are delighted with progress, which greatly helps him build relationships with other children and navigate society more effectively later on.



### *Mother training*

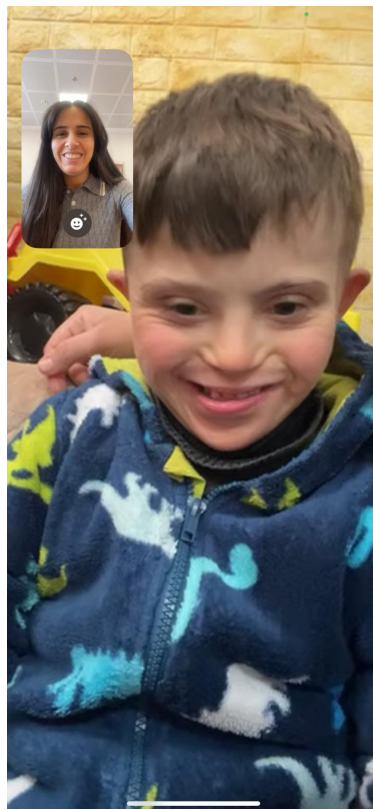
The training for the kindergarten mothers continued successfully at the beginning of the year. In further meetings, we focused on how they could support their children's development through play. Many mothers filmed themselves playing with their children and sent us the videos. It was a great pleasure to watch these videos together as a group. The mothers gave each other feedback on what each mother did well in the play, which play techniques she implemented, and what she might still be able to improve. At the end of this session, one mother said that she had learned more about interacting with children through this method than she had ever learned before. The positive and encouraging atmosphere was truly remarkable.

This encouraged the mothers, reinforcing their belief that they themselves can contribute to their children's development. In a subsequent workshop, we showed them how to create developmentally appropriate play materials from simple household items such as toilet paper rolls, plastic containers,

bottles, etc. Each mother then chose one or two (or more) items to make for her children during the workshop. It was wonderful to see that they selected items that were truly suitable for their children, demonstrating that they had understood much of the previously discussed topics and were able to apply it. Many fantastic play materials were created. Right now, during the difficult time of the war, when the children cannot attend our facility, we are seeing the fruits of the training and the work of each colleague. Parents are sending us videos showing how they play with their children at home and implement activities suggested by the educators. Many of the materials are from the workshop, or the mothers have come up with new ideas themselves. And we are also seeing in the ways they play that many of the ideas we shared are being used and incorporated by the mothers.

### ***...Special needs school via Zoom...***

Having already proven successful during the COVID-19 pandemic, our team in the kindergarten and school has once again switched to teaching via Zoom, following the directives of the Ministry of Education. Vocational training and work in the workshops can continue as normal, since young people aged 15 and over are exempt from this regulation. The children are happy to see us again via Zoom, and we also use these connections to encourage the mothers and support them in getting through these challenging times.





### **... Construction stories...**

Work on the next floor began with clearing the roof area and installing safety barriers to prevent objects from falling, and now things are really getting underway. The planned construction time is 18-24 months. We sincerely ask you to accompany us in your prayers and ask our Lord for success!

Our neighboring property has already become an inviting park; now that the grass has grown in, the sensory training stations are being set up. Our appreciation for beauty, balance, and tranquility that is reflected in the layout of the park has been warmly received by the workers and our Lifegate team.



### **...Visitors from Jerusalem...**

**Our** longtime local friends from an American news station gave us a very special Easter gift: a well-equipped little food truck, which will now be parked at the entrance to the neighboring property. We'll decorate the truck with bright colors, and then we plan to sell our delicious bread and homegrown vegetables in the Lifegate "Food Box ." Perhaps an old coffee maker and some healthy snacks will also find their way into the little truck. We're so excited! Thank you so much!

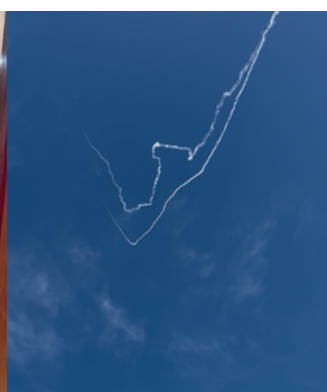


***.. "Shabbat – Shalom" in Lifegate Art..***

On Friday evenings in Jerusalem, you can hear this greeting, which people exchange before Shabbat. We were able to hold a second Lifegate Clinic on a Saturday with a long-time friend and dedicated Israeli professor (pediatric orthopedist and orthopedic surgeon) who examined 20 Lifegate patients, both young and old, free of charge on his day off and provided us with invaluable assistance. Nicola Sahouri, head physiotherapist, and Auwad Bardawil, orthotist, supported Erik and me. It is always these small but important gestures and the courageous people behind them that give us hope for a better future in our country.



***...Glimpses from a war... in the Lifegate shelter***





*Death has been defeated once and for all.*



*...the tomb still sealed, a centurion guarding it with his sword...*





*...Young people and children are paying close attention...*

A Roman soldier guards the sealed tomb in which Jesus had been laid. Five Swiss friends living in Jerusalem vividly recounted what had happened that Sunday morning during the Jewish Passover festival. The women who arrived early at the tomb found the boulder rolled to one side and within the linen cloths in which Jesus had been wrapped, lay neatly folded. No body had been stolen, nor had anyone suddenly disappeared. Someone had simply woken up (or been awakened), unwrapped himself from the cloths, and had all the time in the world to fold them. Then he left. The angel announced to the women that Jesus was alive, and with that, death was defeated once and for all. The news spread, and Jesus visited his friends several times before returning to his Father in Heaven. *Life, not death, always has the last word!*



***We wholeheartedly wish you joy in  
the resurrection of Jesus Christ and  
every day the hope that extends  
beyond this life on earth.***

***Please remain by our side in prayer  
and support!***

***Happy and blessed Easter***

***Yours sincerely, Burghard Schunkert  
and the Lifegate Team***