

NEWSLETTER EASTER 2025

News from our team

This spring, we said goodbye to our long-standing teacher Wafa Azar who, after twelve years, can now enjoy her well-deserved retirement. Aseel Fattouleh joined us and took her place as a new special needs teacher. Jivaro Kharufeh ended his work in the olive wood workshop and Ramzi Ghorban started working in this training and production area. Jusif Amer left the LIFEGATE bakery and Luisann Shaheen took over his position. We sincerely wish all those leaving and starting work God's rich blessing. We are grateful that there is good spirit of cooperation in our team and that work can take place undisturbed on a daily basis despite the difficult circumstances in the country. The blessing we receive through a stable and meaningful job is the very blessing we want to pass on through professional support and loving care for children and young people. We thank God that HE provides for us through our friends.

Reflections

by Burghard Schunkert

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. ... Brethren, if any of you shall err from the truth, and if any man convert him, let him know that he that converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save his soul from death, and shall cover the multitude of sins."

James chapter 4, verse 17; chapter 5, verses 19 - 20.

James makes practical statements, even if not everyone likes them. Discipleship is most difficult in your own family, with your closest friends and at work. Because there you are known and transparent, pretending is pointless.

What happens when you, a friend or a family member goes off the rails? What should you do? You need to talk about it, it's on your mind, but you don't want to take any risks. It could reflect badly on you - "seeing the mote in the other person's eye and not noticing the beam in your own eye". Everyone whispers, but no one says anything. You remain entangled in sin or you leave people alone.

How many good, health-giving, liberating biblical truths are dissolved in the sentence: "I decide what is good for me". Can we really always know for ourselves what is "good"? Isn't there often an unpredictable power rebelling against God behind the supposed "freedom"? Living in the shadow of sin leads to death.

James counters this: Become active if you know what is "good" for you and the other person. Speak the word of God (or listen to it) and God himself will bring his word to life. The person can pause, reflect and turn back from the path into the abyss.

God will save this person, cover his sins and take away these sins in Jesus. Jesus wants to set you and me and all the heavy laden free today too. He wants to reach those who do not yet know him and lead them into a new life. He wants to start with us, to use you and me for others.

"We ask You for courage and wisdom, Lord Jesus, to find the right words and gestures when You lay people on our souls. We thank You that we can trust You in these encounters. Let us perceive people with Your loving eyes, listen to them and share the message of joy in word and deed. Help us not to remain silent when You want to say something saving and liberating."

Happy Easter, Jesus is risen!

Your Burghard Schunkert

LIFEGATE REHABILITATION

Beit Jala

P.O.B. 10369, Jerusalem

phone +972-(0)2 2741373

fax +972-(0)2 2741065

Email: reha@lgate.org

<https://www.lifegate-reha.org/en/>

account for donations:
account holder Lifegate-Rehabilitation
Mercantile Bank Jerusalem, Israel
branch 638, Swift code: BARDILIT
account no. 61-244988

As representation and because of financing of the institution "LIFEGATE REHABILITATION", the association "Tor zum Leben - LIFEGATE Rehabilitation" was founded in the year 1993 in Germany with its board in Würzburg.

TOR ZUM LEBEN –

LIFEGATE REHABILITATION e.V. (TzL)

PO Box 101018

D-44010 Dortmund

phone: +49 (0)931-5 80 69

mobile: +49 (0)15792361991

Email: geschaeftsstelle@lifegate-reha.de

"Tor zum Leben - LIFEGATE Rehabilitation" is a member of the Diakonische Werk of the Protestant churches of Germany and Caritas-Verband for the catholic diocese Würzburg. The dedication of LIFEGATE is based on and supported by personal and long-standing relationships with the Young Men's Christian Association, YMCA, national association in Germany, CVJM.



NEWSLETTER EASTER 2025

Editorial managers: Richard Sharp & Volker Metz



Photo: LIFEGATE

Children from the LIFEGATE special school with two students from a local university who are completing their social work internships at LIFEGATE.

Dear friends!

In the first two months of the year, there were reasons for hope in Israel and the Palestinian territories. On 19 January, the first of three originally planned phases of temporary ceasefires between the Hamas terrorist organization and the Israeli armed forces began. During this six-week ceasefire, the Israeli army withdrew from large parts of the Gaza Strip, significantly increased aid deliveries to the coastal strip, and released more than a thousand Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails and detention centers, and in return 33 Israeli hostages, most of them alive, and five Thai hostages were returned to Israel.

Indirect negotiations began in Qatar in February between Hamas representatives and the Israeli government on phase 2 that was to come after the end of the first ceasefire. But the Israeli government decided as early as the beginning of March that no further aid deliveries were to reach the Gaza Strip. From then on, the situation there worsened from day to day.

This was followed by a resumption of fighting, bombing by the Israeli air force, which killed hundreds of people in the Gaza Strip, and sporadic rocket attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip, Yemen and Lebanon. There are still 59 hostages in the Gaza Strip, of whom only 24 or fewer are still alive. The Israeli government decided to resume the fight against Hamas instead of further negotiations on phase 2. Many voices in Israel had warned that the last living hostages would be killed as a result of the fighting. Nevertheless, the government took the

decision to continue the fighting. At the same time, the Israeli government is continuing its political course of dismantling democratic institutions, such as the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches, and is pushing ahead with the possible annexation of areas of the West Bank. Many Israelis see the domestic political developments as just as dangerous as the war in which Israel finds itself. Week after week, many people in Israel demonstrate against the government's decisions in the Gaza war and in domestic politics. On the other hand, Jewish religious nationalists and religious orthodox support the government, as it pursues these goals.

Biblical prophecy tells of a kingdom of peace that the Messiah will establish for all people. We believe that as Christians we can already live out this messianic hope in the midst of troubling times. Jesus Christ died innocently on the cross. But death could not hold him. He is risen, He lives and He gives life. Because we know Him and follow Him, no situation is hopeless. So we have hope for the people in this country and in all countries.

Happy and blessed Easter,
Yours, Burghard Schunkert

A closer look at autism

Children and young people diagnosed with autism are welcome in all LIFEGATE support groups. Within LIFEGATE, we enable them to spend time alone from time to time or to be together with a person. We provide them with "retreats" when they need a "time-out" because too much stimulation can cause them irritation. At the same time, we always invite them to find and take their place in "our world". This often means having the same seat or workplace, the same good routine at the start of the day and the people who are familiar to them. The familiar routines give them security and stability. Changes must be made cautiously, and with a great deal of empathy, in small steps.

With our support, we want to help them find their place in society in the future. First of all, we want to carefully get to know the inner world into which they often withdraw and learn to accept it again and again. This also means respecting their decisions as to when we can enter and when we sometimes have to stay outside. As is so often the case, "love" for people is the key - and this must and may be given to us every day.

Some young people diagnosed with autism are currently in the vocational training program at LIFEGATE. Ameer is 20 years old and Ramzi is 19. Both young men are learning to make gifts and jewelry from this very hard and beautifully grained wood in the olive wood department. They are also learning to communicate with our therapists using language. They are now able to express their wishes and have developed great fine motor skills. It is planned that Ameer and Ramzi will later find a job in their parents' woodworking businesses.

17-year-old Adam is learning to repair wheelchairs and orthopaedic aids in the LIFEGATE assistive technology department and to adapt them individually to people. In this department with many "customers", the young man often needs time to retreat to a quiet place for a few minutes, only to return later. Adam's father runs a car repair shop. We want to use our technical training to carefully introduce Adam to working with vehicles later on.

Ahmed is also 17 years old and wasn't initially interested in any of the areas in our workshops. We were then able to persuade him to take a look at our cross-stitching department. He quickly made friends with this very concentrated, fine-motor work and is now already able to embroider simple patterns. The work takes place in a room with other people in a quiet atmosphere. And the young man feels accepted, secure and has gained trust in our employee. He is at the beginning of a good path.

Photos: LIFEGATE



Ameer and Ramzi are training to work with olive wood at LIFEGATE.

Aids for young and old

The LIFEGATE assistive technology department has been providing people in the Palestinian territories with wheelchairs, standing frames, rollators and walking aids of all kinds for many years. We make sure that our aids are individually adapted to each person. We were delighted to receive a delivery of wheelchairs and other aids from the USA from the "Joni and Friends" organization in the spring. These aids will be distributed to many people in the country in April and June. The LIFEGATE service vehicle is on the road in the country to provide local people with aids in their homes. There we can carry out minor repairs or, if necessary, provide a replacement wheelchair until we have repaired or refurbished the



LIFEGATE employees at a celebration, partly to mark Mother's Day.

previously used wheelchair in our workshops and then return it. We make cushions and build standing frames in the LIFEGATE workshops. The aim of our aid work is to create "contact points" for people with disabilities throughout the country. For the moment we set appointed times where our service vehicle will be present locally and people can come on an outpatient basis. But in the future we want to have established contact points in cooperation with local authorities or local organizations where assistive devices can be permanently available. In this way, we want to sustainably improve the situation of people who are dependent on assistive devices in the long term.

Our training of students and our own further training courses

LIFEGATE has been working with local universities for many years and students regularly complete their internships at our center. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy students and, more recently, young people on the social work course work with us during their internships. As part of their practical work with the children and young people, the students receive feedback from experienced LIFEGATE staff. Many of the young people apply to LIFEGATE after completing their studies - we were able to get to know them in advance through the internships.

Further training in proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF) therapy was provided for our therapists by Torsten Neumann in March. PNF therapy stimulates and activates movement sensors in the joints, muscles and tendons through targeted stimulation. All participants successfully completed the training and received a certificate. We are excited about the Paulustherapie Halle initiative, which has been running for two years now, on various training topics that have had a very positive impact on our team of therapists and therefore on our practical work.

"Women Power"

International Women's Day on 8 March and the Arab Mother's Day in the second half of March were the occasion in our masculine Arab society to focus public attention on women. Even in these difficult times, women are the ones who raise and care for children, keep large families together and often also earn money. The men, who have often lost their jobs in Israel or in tourism in Bethlehem through no fault of their own, are assigned the "honor" in local society, but as we know, no family can live on honor alone. On the occasion of the two Women's Days and two birthdays of female employees, we organized a small celebration that the entire LIFEGATE team enjoyed. We honored our female team members with small gifts of thanks, their male colleagues received symbolic gifts and there were small culinary delights for everyone. We listened to the biblical story of Naomi and Ruth, two women from Bethlehem, and in a Bible quiz we discovered even more "strong women" who wrote exemplary history. We are delighted with the many motivated female employees who we support wholeheartedly, and not just on International Women's Days and Mother's Days.

Your help counts ...!

Thanks to your help we were able to ...

- ... purchase olive wood for our production of olive wood products and store it for drying (€ 15,000);
- ... expand the water supply of LIFEGATE Garden (€ 25,000);
- ... compensate for outstanding parental contributions and travel expenses (€ 50,000).

With your help, we'd like to...

- ... finance our vocational training for young people with disabilities (€ 50,000);
- ... support the LIFEGATE aids department and equip the service vehicle (€ 30,000);
- ... ensure the support of children diagnosed with autism by purchasing tablets with communication programs (€ 10,000).

These concerns make up a certain part of our monthly costs, which are in total about 80,000.- €. They are the most urgent of our concerns and we'd be especially grateful for your support.

Thank you very much for your support!