

News from our team

Our three annual volunteers from the German Association "Deutschen Verein vom Heiligen Lande" - Amelie Hohmann, Lilith Lüning and Annemarie Ott - finished their work with us in July and returned to Germany. We thank them for their commitment and dedication, which left a good mark on children and team members everywhere, and we wish them a blessed start in their next phase of life.

Two local speech therapists, Shorough Bannoura and Marian Jareiseh, began their work in the support groups of our school. They will help to meet the increased demand for language therapy at LIFEGATE. We are glad to be able to strengthen this branch of therapy. Reem Al Attrash joined the school team as a new teacher. Hanin Obaidallah, who was employed in a sheltered workplace in our textile department, found a job outside of LIFEGATE and has thus arrived at the level of independence that we desired. We wish her all the best. Our head chef, Mario Kheir, has moved to a position in Haifa, and will be replaced by Eyad Farhoud. Jeries Shahwan will be joining the bakery. Two cleaners, Ghada Misher and Rita Abu-Sada, left LIFEGATE. We are looking forward to new volunteers who will join us in the fall and throughout the rest of the year to support the LIFEGATE work. Eline Wilke has already joined us and is working with the most the severely handicapped children. Please support our team in your prayers - thank you!

Reflections

by Burghard Schunkert

**"We proclaim to the coming generation the glory of the Lord, and his power, and his wonders that he hath done." Psalm 78, verse 4**

The writer of this psalm reminds us here of what the people of Israel experienced with God on their way out of Egypt to the Promised Land with God. This is not nostalgia, a harking back to the good old days, but rather a testimony and encouragement that the same God is also active and blessing today. Every generation has a responsibility for the people who are growing up and are entrusted to them for a certain time, until they are released into independence and personal responsibility. This precious time, in a world full of influences and distractions, is becoming ever more difficult to find. Technological progress means that parents and grandparents are competing with a flood of information that reach us in seconds, some good and some not so good.

Perhaps that is why these words want to encourage us to tell the stories of the Bible personally to the next generation and also to speak of our own experiences with God. These do not have to be anything sensational. Our trust in God's Word, our faithfulness in

prayer and our struggle for support and comfort in difficult phases of life, both for ourselves and for others. We should not keep these things to ourselves but allow God to use our sometimes faltering words to reach hearts and bear fruit in the lives of others. May we have the fortitude, not to hold back, but to share God's word joyfully and to scatter it like seeds. And be assured that those seeds will „be fed and watered by God's almighty hand“.

Your Burghard Schunkert

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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.

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"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.



Photo: LIFEGATE

Music therapy with children of the severely disabled group at LIFEGATE

Dear friends!

In contrast to the hot and very dry summer in Europe, the weather here was comparatively pleasant. But for us this was not a summer with a prolonged period of relaxed holiday feeling. Another armed conflict lies behind us, which began when Israeli forces killed a leader of the Jihad Islami leader who had been preparing attacks in Israel in his home in Gaza. In retaliation, attacks were carried out by militiamen who launched more than 900 rockets from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel. The Israeli missile defense system "Iron Dome" / "Kipat Barsel" intercepted about 97 percent of the rockets. Nevertheless, a few Israelis were injured by rocket fragments and a dozen people were injured when they fell whilst trying to escape into shelters. In response to the rocket fire, the Israeli Air Force attacked targets in the Gaza Strip, killing more than 44 people. The second highest-ranking leader of Jihad Islami died in one of the Israeli attacks, while the "Number 1" gave his orders from Tehran.

A few days after the start of the ceasefire between the Israeli military and the Jihad Islami, the Iranian reconnaissance satellite "Khayyam" was launched by means of a Russian carrier rocket into Earth orbit. Now speculation is rife as to the extent to which Iranian and Russian military can spy not only the Israeli army in Israel, but also troop movements including movements of Ukrainian armed forces in Ukraine. More than this, we are following with concern the news we are receiving about Iran's nuclear program. The new international negotiations on the

so-called "Iran nuclear agreement" (JCPO) have since failed. Moreover, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported in June that within a few weeks, Iran would have produced sufficient fissile material for a nuclear bomb. According to Israeli officials, development of an Iranian nuclear bomb can no longer be prevented peacefully. Despite this situation we believe that the "Guardian of Israel" does not sleep nor does he slumber (Psalm 121) and that, in the end, all the inhabitants of the land and all people who want to live together in peace, will profit.

There are many places in this world where we need patience, strong faith, and the certainty that God's power, working through the weak, will come to fruition. God's power will carry us through difficult situations and our connection to HIM will always bring us new hope. This applies to everyday life as much as it does to the big issues of this world. As "salt" we may provide some „spicy“ contribution and as "light" illuminate the darkness and thus enable growth and development. Both are given to us. We can open ourselves for it to happen through us and that our world thereby becomes "tastier and brighter".  
 Yours Burghard Schunkert

### Mobility for people with disabilities through the LIFEGATE aid supply

It is a cause of rejoicing to be able to supply children and young people in our region with aids that contribute to their mobility and thus to their quality of life. And many expressions of gratitude reach our team. In the following, we describe the activities in this department of LIFEGATE, which is progressing well, in large part thanks to the cooperation with various individuals and organizations.

US-American aid organizations provide us every year with used, but well-preserved, relief supplies. And our field team has been cooperating in the entire the West Bank and beyond with local organizations, institutions and individuals for years. In the LIFEGATE center, but also during visits, the first contacts are made with people with disabilities who are in need of wheelchairs or other aids. After a first measuring, the „fine tuning“ begins in our workshops. For example, a "standard wheelchair" is precisely adapted to the child or adult. At foot, head and side, supports and sometimes entire seat shells are specifically manufactured and fitted. A LIFEGATE vehicle is equipped with the individually adapted aids and tools for mobile use. Our employees can then carry out the supply and repair at various locations in our region. Also the distribution of replacement wheelchairs, crutches, rollators, hospital beds, etc. are part of the team's tasks. In addition to the Palestinian members of the aid team, German and U.S. experts provide practical support in this important area.



*In various LIFEGATE workshops, wheelchairs and other aids are individually adapted. Aya receives a new wheelchair from our employee Richard.*

### Request from our whole wheat bakery

Work in the LIFEGATE bakery is progressing well. Our local baker Jeries is learning from German and Israeli bakers to bake different types of bread. We would still be happy to have bakers who can support the work in the bakery for up to three months. The daily manual skills and the many subtleties of the craft that experienced bakers bring to the bakery can only be learnt by spending time at their side. We kindly ask you to contact us. Accommodation and meals will be provided by us.



*Richard distributes several aid supplies in a village on the West Bank..*

### Looking back on the summer

Our production and service departments were busy during the summer months as well. As a consequence our products could be delivered at the beginning of August and have now arrived safely at our distribution center in Tauberbischofsheim, Germany. Our shoe and leather repair workshop, laundry, orthopaedic technology and medical aids departments provided the necessary customer service. The LIFEGATE therapy department also continued to work throughout the summer for our external patients. The administration was present for days at a time, one reason being, to our great joy, to finalize the purchase of our neighboring property

### “Music is life”

All it takes is a drum and a groovy rhythm and the people here are moving to the beat. If a familiar song lyric is added then everyone joins in and in next to no time a small party has started. This seems to be part of their nature. North Europeans take some time to get used to it, but it is contagious. For years our local music therapist has been working with our children and young people. Currently she is supported by a German colleague. Often quiet music can get through to autistic children in a very special way. The young people at LIFEGATE also enjoy the weekly music lesson with different instruments. German and Israeli friends have brought us new and used instruments - among others drums, triangles, timbrels and xylophones. Every child should have the opportunity to discover this musical side of their being. Celebrations and events without music at LIFEGATE? Unimaginable - because "music is life".

### Your help counts ...!

#### Thanks to your help we were able to ...

- ...to finance the vocational training of young people with disabilities (12'000 USD);
- ...finance the rehabilitation costs for fifty foster children for a half a year (100'000 USD);
- ...finance the costs of medical materials and equipment, dental clinic, catheters, etc. (5'000 USD);
- ...cover repairs, service and insurance for LIFEGATE vehicles for one year (5'000 USD).

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

- ...compensate for the loss of the US-Dollar to the Shekel since the beginning of the year (6'000 USD per month);
- ...purchase a stand-by diesel generator, which will be used for the pumps in case of a possible power failure in the event of a fire. - a new purchase to comply with a new requirement of the Civil Protection Authority (100'000 USD)
- ... finance 400 square meters of the neighboring property - each square meter costs 530 USD.

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

Thank you very much for your support!

. This property has now been registered with the local land registry office under LIFEGATE Rehabilitation. A reason once again to thank all the people who have accompanied this process - for your financial help and prayers. We are very happy, and now we want to tackle the last hurdle with the help of our friends: the repayment of two private loans (240,000.- USD) that were generously granted to us for the purchase of land. We welcome any suggestions for fund-raising actions and initiatives. We are also pleased to announce that the LIFEGATE Garden has not come to a standstill during the summer months. Groups came to us for seminars and short stays. In the last weeks we could also welcome individual guests. Here in Bethlehem, in the Judean Mountains, the summer weather was more pleasant than in the hot Central and Western Europe. Hopefully, word of our pleasant summer months will soon spread and attract more visitors.

### Perspectives for the extended work of LIFEGATE

After the summer vacations we are looking forward to the next months with our children and young people and want to be able to provide a good and extensive support. 120 children from the special school are now being supported in eleven classrooms. Two of our original "all-purpose rooms" have already been converted into permanent classrooms.

We have now reached the limits of what is possible with the space available to us. In the kindergarten we are at the limits of our capacity with forty children in five support groups. And the waiting lists for special education places are already filled. We have to disappoint parents who are looking for a special education place. We can often only offer them therapeutic support for their children once or twice a week. We are making plans for the future and, in order to remedy the present situation, a further floor has been planned and the costs have been calculated. Several attempts to find the necessary funds have not yet been successful. But we want to keep trying, because we want to expand the LIFEGATE groups for severely and multiply handicapped children, for whom otherwise there are hardly any places in the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip. On an additional floor, up to forty children could be cared for.

A further department would be dedicated to the promotion of autistic children and their parents. The number of these children is rapidly growing in our society. It would then be possible to open a long-planned hairdressing salon in the vacated rooms in the workshop area, which would offer new training opportunities for our young people and also be a source of revenue for LIFEGATE. We place our plans in God's good hands and ask our friends to bring our concerns to the attention of individuals and organizations.