

Lifegate in April 2023

April is a month that can be likened to Swiss cheese (that we all like very much) - full of holes. But you have to take the festivals as they come, and this time around they all came in April.

It began in March with the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which ended with the Eid al Fitr festival on April 24. The Jewish people celebrated the Passover, which as we know is our Easter, but does not coincide because of the different calendars. The Israeli police had their hands full keeping apart the many Jewish pilgrims to the Western Wall (Wailing Wall) and the Muslims to the mosques above on the former Temple Mount and preventing radical religious groups from rioting, which did not always go well. Then came the Roman Catholic and Protestant Easter celebrations, with Good Friday processions on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem's Old City, precisely on that part of the route Muslims take to the mosques for the mandatory Friday prayers. The same was repeated a week later when the Orthodox Church celebrated Easter in the country. In Israel it was followed by Holocaust Remembrance Day, then Memorial Day for soldiers killed in Israel's wars and Israeli Independence Day. The month was again overshadowed by Palestinian terrorist attacks that killed and injured people, and the large Saturday night demonstrations in Israeli cities against the government and its "rebuilding" plans for the Supreme Court.

Because of our mixed team, and also children and teenagers, we observe all Christian and Muslim holidays at Lifegate; each working week had only 3-4 days and many Muslim children were not brought regularly during Ramadan. Daylight saving time will finally cease in the Palestinian territories at the end of April and then, after a quite confusing month, we will be living at the same time again in Jerusalem and Beit Jala/Bethlehem.

„Important time together“

We took advantage of a "holiday weekend" to hang on a long planned but always postponed staff trip and were very happy to be able to travel all the way to the north of Israel and go together on a hike to experience a beautiful piece of nature. Running water at the headwaters of the Jordan River with waterfalls and lush vegetation and a subsequent visit to Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee with the classic boat trip on the lake were part of the day's program, which many in the team had wished for. It was good to spend a day outside of work talking with each other and enjoying this day.







Three sisters and at the same time important pillars in our team

(Left: Suher runs our Lifegate office. Middle: Miriam administration, parent contacts, bakery coordination. Right: Suhad management of the Lifegate Garden guesthouse.

From the special school:

Jad Halayka

Jad Halayka is a nine-year-old autistic boy who has been in our care since he was five years old.

When Jad came to Lifegate, he had major communication problems; he barely looked at us, avoided eye contact, could not express his needs, and withdrew from the other children. He repeated the same sounds and syllables.

With his very small vocabulary he could hardly make himself understood and he very often did not understand what our teachers and therapists were saying and what their questions were. After a short time, however, we discovered that the little boy responded very attentively to what we were saying, could then quickly remember things and opened up to the other children, especially during games.

Jad can now look into the eyes of our therapists and even count to 7. He distinguishes colors and can name them. He also calls different objects by their names and remembers pictures and images and can name what he sees on them. His language is also developing. Jad can now understand verbs and put them into action.



With our occupational therapists, Jad also showed good improvement in various aspects, such as the development of his eye contact, his concentration and tolerance span improved, he became calmer, less hyperactive and more focused in class. Jad learned to solve small problems and tasks and now actively participates in the life of our support group, also his social behavior and communication skills (verbal and non-verbal) improved.

Jad is on a good path and we are grateful for his positive development!

Humor knows no boundaries

We were very happy when we received a request from an active lady from Germany a few months ago, who is engaged in a group "Clowns without borders" all over the world to bring joy to people and to bring humor and color into the often difficult everyday life. We were able to help a little in advance with our contacts and addresses to organize a „fun-tour“ in our country. So five motivated people from Germany came to the Lifegate guesthouse in April and from there they took their previously planned various appointments all over the country. In schools, in kindergartens and in different organizations their varied program delighted the young and the old! In addition, they also experienced a little bit of our everyday life in the West Bank and in Israel and they met many different people.

We thank the clowns and especially the nice people behind the costumes for their refreshing and cheerful contributions, which also did us a lot of good in Lifegate and we sincerely wish them all the best for life and clown work.





Of April weather the Germans say that it is capricious and „does as it pleases“. And this April did what it wanted (and sometimes what we did not want) but has come to a good end. We look forward to the "blissful month" of May.

The German association Lifegate Tor zum Leben eV. celebrates its 30th anniversary from May 12-14 in Halle/Saale, where dedicated people have been living and working for Lifegate for years. Lifegate ex-volunteers will meet Friday evening for a short city tour followed by a get-together in a restaurant. Saturday evening will be an open event, planned in the rooms of the Protestant Paulusgemeinde in Halle for friends and visitors with "Life reports" from the work in Beit Jala. In a solemn church service on Sunday morning in the Paulusgemeinde we want to express our joy and gratitude for 30 years of joint work. More details about the program can be found on the Lifegate Gateway to Life website.

We wish all our friends and supporters a good and blessed month of May and sincerely ask you to stay by our side. We need your prayers and support.

With warm regards

Yours Burghard Schunkert and the Lifegate Team