

News from our team

Aseel Amer, Rawand Awad, Mariam Jareiseh, Mary Nazzal and Reem Sway are in their probationary period as new teachers in the team of the LIFEGATE special school, where 120 children are taught. They were hired to fill jobs at the school that have vacant since the "Corona period." Yousif Amer, Mathews Hadweh and Issa Hanania are our young team of bakers who were introduced to this trade for three months by retired German baker Wilfried Brandau. Issa has been with LIFEGATE since kindergarten, the other two are from Beit Jala. We are now looking for bakers (gladly also retired) to be able to continue the training of the three young men. In spring 2023 many very motivated and committed volunteers, interns and trainees from Germany and the USA joined us again and support our work. Many thanks to all supporters of LIFEGATE!



Reflections

by Burghard Schunkert

"Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God."

2 Corinthians 3, verse 5

It was at the Jewish Passover feast that Jesus died for our sins in Jerusalem, and at his resurrection took the last word from death once and for all. His friends - at first sad and distraught, then surprised and delighted to see Jesus again - bid him farewell on the Mount of Olives before he returned to the Father. They then waited, as he had asked, in Jerusalem until the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot-Pentecost). Jesus promised never to leave his friends alone, to provide them with everything they needed, and to provide them with a comforter, a never-ending source of strength.

This was not Plan B, but the continuation of Plan A: "I love you - back to the original from the Garden of Eden." "I (Jesus) continue to live in you with my Spirit", you are now my hands, my feet, my ambassadors in this world.

Allowing HIM into our lives and claiming His promises daily remains our own choice, but His presence is available to us 24 hours a day. In Jerusalem, small flames of fire fell upon the disciples of Jesus. People of different languages could understand the message of the disciples and many immediately started a new life. God gives us signs of His presence, trust, peace and the never-ending hope that HE will turn it for good!

Happy and blessed Pentecost,

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.



Four-year-old Bushra practices building her leg muscles with our physical therapist Suhad Sahouri

Photos: LIFEGATE

Dear friends!

At the 75th Independence Day celebrations in late April, the mood was somber, not only among Palestinians but also in large segments of the Jewish-Israeli population. Violence in the Palestinian territories and Israel is worse than it has been in years. Attacks by Palestinian terrorists, as well as missiles and combat drone attacks launched from Gaza, Lebanon and Syria, have killed more than twenty Israelis and nationals of other states since the beginning of the year. In that time, far more than one hundred Palestinians have been killed in Israeli airstrikes and Israeli military and domestic intelligence operations. In April, representatives of the Hezbollah militia, which dominates Lebanon, met with envoys from Iran, representatives of the Hamas movement, which rules the Gaza Strip, and representatives of other radical Palestinian organizations to coordinate their joint action against Israel. Speculation about a possible military confrontation between an Iranian-led alliance and the Israeli army continues unabated. In this tense situation, the coalition of Likud party, Jewish ultra-Orthodox and extreme Jewish nationalist parties that has been ruling in Israel since last fall is trying to push through a far-reaching judicial reform. The planned reform and other measures of the nationalist government have led to a serious political-social crisis in Israel. For months, hundreds of thousands of Israelis have been demonstrating peacefully every Saturday night against the planned judicial reform, arguing that the reform would massively undermine the separation of powers between the government and the courts.

In large parts of the Israeli population there is concern that the government wants to create an autocratically run state, restrict civil liberties, and disadvantage the Arab minority. The transformation of a liberal constitutional democracy into an autocracy, combined with nationalist policies against minorities and other ethnic groups, is currently taking place in Turkey, Hungary and other countries. Now also in Israel? 75 years ago the state was founded in the hope that Israel should be a free people in its land. Many Israelis want to defend this freedom both externally and internally.

The situation is tense, but we live with hope. In the last but one newsletter we mentioned the promise that God, who keeps Israel, will neither slumber nor sleep (Psalm 121, verse 4). Trusting in God, we as Christians in the country want to contribute daily to understanding, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence of different people. We believe in the power of (small) good examples and want to be a model peaceful coexistence. Please stay by our side with your support and prayers, so that our courage, love and strength will be enough for every day and people will be "infected"!

Coordinated forms of therapy in early intervention

The earlier children with disabilities receive individualized support, the more they make progress in their lives and are able to develop well. We will use the coordinated speech, physical, hydro and occupational therapy for five-year-old Leilasan and four-year-old Bushra as an example of how children are helped in LIFEGATE's early intervention work.

Leilasan suffered damage to her brain, which was probably caused by a lack of oxygen during her birth. This cerebral palsy affects the girl through severe spasms. Her physical disability contributed to the fact that Leilasan also received far too little support in other areas of life until the age of three, and she is thus delayed in learning. Since 2020, Leilasan has been attending one of the LIFEGATE early intervention groups and is being supported in her development through various therapies.

Due to her spastic paralysis, among other things, her facial muscles are affected. At the beginning she was very shy and it was difficult for her to express herself. Leilasan articulated some words very unclearly and could not form long sentences. In speech therapy, she understands what we say very well and responds accordingly. With the help of facial massages, her muscles improved and now she can pronounce words correctly and make herself understood. This considerably strengthens her self-confidence and has a very positive influence on her behavior. Her cognitive receptivity is very good and especially in connection with games she learns quickly and with much joy. Meanwhile she communicates with her parents and siblings at home, with us, other children and some adults. Leilasan receives hydrotherapy in our small pool once a week and physiotherapy three times a week. From our orthopedic department she got leg splints and so she can stand with the help of a specially constructed orthopedic frame for one hour a day. In February, we started her on a treatment with Botox to reduce her spasm. This was a prerequisite for her to be able to stand. The intensive physical therapy and orthopedic care should help Leilasan stand and walk. Next year, she is expected to be enrolled in school. Her mental abilities have developed greatly in occupational therapy and early intervention kindergarten. She is able to perform tasks independently, her eye-hand coordination improved and she remembers things. She uses both hands and can control her upper body well in a wheelchair. Leilasan learned personal hygiene and can dress and undress herself with little assistance. She can now write and read her name and simple words in Arabic.



Leilasan and Bushra are making great progress in their development in the early intervention department. Ahmad is enjoying learning tailoring.

Bushra has been coming to our early intervention department since March last year. The severely developmentally delayed girl was initially very shy, withdrawn and did not talk to our educators, therapists and therapists at first. Bushra had a very limited vocabulary and could not pronounce many words correctly. Thus, she was hardly or not at all understood by her parents and other children. This had an impact on her behavior and concentration. In speech therapy, a development plan with appropriate exercises was created. Through the speech exercises, which she also does at home with the help of her parents, Bushra is developing well. She can now clearly name her body parts, knows the names of colors, names fruits, vegetables and animals in pictures. She uses "two-word sentences" to say what she wants and can already perform simple actions independently. In occupational therapy, Bushra practices her eye-hand coordination and does exercises to increase her concentration.

With the fine motor skills she has learned, she can string glass beads on a string and thread objects. Once a week, our physical therapist Suhad Sahouri works with Bushra. The physical therapy is to build up her leg muscles to enable the little girl to have balance and stability while walking. Bushra enjoyed learning to ride a tricycle at LIFEGATE - her leg muscles are also being further strengthened. In the early childhood center, she responds to the teachers' instructions, plays and communicates with the other children. Bushra made great progress in solving different tasks by herself. With a little help, she learned to dress and undress herself and to use the toilet independently. Through intensive attention and improved communication, Bushra became increasingly balanced and tolerant.

It is often the experiences of the first months and years in early intervention that open a path to a more hopeful future for children and their parents.

Holistic support for trainees at LIFEGATE

Some young people are supported at LIFEGATE from early childhood education to vocational training. Others come to LIFEGATE only as teenagers. It is not too late for them either, as we can see with Ahmad's support program.

In August 2021, Ahmad started his apprenticeship in the LIFEGATE textile department after having been a student in the LIFEGATE special school before. Ahmad was born with Down syndrome 19 years ago. His family runs a large sewing workshop in his hometown, El Aroob camp north of Hebron, where they make sportswear and pillows. Ahmad's disability severely affects his relationships with family members. He is not accepted by them as he is. One of our main tasks is to help Ahmad's family accept his impairment and recognize the gifts we believe he has been given by our Creator. Ahmad was introduced to the safe use of sewing machines, including the operation of a special overlock machine, in the LIFEGATE textile department. The holistic approach to support at LIFEGATE is tailored to this young man's special needs. Ahmad receives weekly physiotherapy to strengthen his physical condition (especially for working on the sewing machine). He is learning to read and write in Arabic, as well as arithmetic and general education. With the other young people in our training workshop he enjoys our social program and takes responsibility for his training place and the cleanliness of the workshop. The contact with the young people and our team helped the young man to open up and become more sociable. We wish Ahmad a suitable job in his parents' textile business in the future and are working together with the family towards this goal.

"Oily Stories"

From the prophets, kings of Israel were anointed with olive oil to their office. The Good Samaritan eased the pain of the injured man by pouring olive oil on his wounds. The cuisine around the Mediterranean is known to be particularly healthy because of the fresh vegetables and salads combined with olive oil. The delicious LIFEGATE Olive Oil from Samaria is in stock at the LIFEGATE warehouse in Tauberbischofsheim, Germany, in 0.5 liter, 2 liter and 5 liter containers. Please send your orders to LIFEGATE Workshop & Bazaar Articles (LIFEGATE Werkstatt- & Basarartikel, Albert-Einstein-Straße 25g, D-97941 Tauberbischofsheim, Germany, phone +49-(0)9341-8463720, cell phone +49-(0)151-5502 7777, E-mail werkstattverkauf@lifegate-reha.de).

Your help counts ...!

Thanks to your help we were able to ...

- ...start the training of three local young people in the bakery trade (€ 30,000 for one year);
- ...co-finance the early intervention work, the special school and vocational training for the first three months on a pro-rata basis (€ 150,000);
- ...build another greenhouse from waste materials, such as plastic bottles and wooden pallets (€ 5,000).

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

- ...make possible the work area with severely and multiply handicapped children (€ 20,000 semi-annually);
- ...finance the therapeutic and medical work at LIFEGATE (€ 20,000 monthly);
- ...build boundary walls of the new neighboring property for the play and adventure landscape (€ 25,000).

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!