

Lifegate in September 2023

...off to the hut...

we are probably the only country in the world where many people build a hut in the beginning of autumn, on the balcony, on the street and inside the restaurant and take all their meals in this hut and even sleep in it. The Feast of Tabernacles is one of the feasts in the Bible where it is especially the symbolism, the rites and the traditions that speak to the people.



For 40 years after the Exodus from Egypt, the people of Israel wandered without permanent dwellings until they were able to occupy the "Promised Land" and settle down. Through the canopy of palm branches of the Tabernacle, one can see the stars at night. "We are wanderers through the worlds, having no abiding place on this earth"!

The harvest has been gathered in with its many and various fruits and we thank God for His blessing, that He wonderfully provided us humans with. The symbolic fruits that hang in the huts serve as a reminder of this blessing.

God gave Moses the 10 Commandments on Mount Sinai, which to this day give our world at least a degree of order. On this feast one rejoices in God's word and its good instructions. The water from the Gihon spring outside Jerusalem's city wall was ceremoniously brought to the temple to be poured into the large vessels. Here Jesus spoke the words, "He who believes in me, as the Scripture says, from his body will flow rivers of living water." John 7:38.

This feast, according to the prophet Zechariah (chapter 14), will be celebrated by all nations one day when Jesus visibly returns to our earth on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

We are happy to be invited again this year with our young people to join in the celebration of the Feast in Tabgha, on the banks of the Sea of Galilee, together with people with disabilities from Israel. Thanks be to God!

Start into the "Lifegate" life

The early intervention work at Lifegate has for years been the first access for many children with different disabilities to a comprehensive and holistic support. At the age of three we start the work in small support groups in which two educators, supported by our team of therapists, start practical procedures in everyday life (toilet training, mobility, hygiene, eating and drinking, putting on and taking off clothes, etc.), as well as cognitive support. 17 new children were enrolled in the 2023-2024 funding year, 8 diagnosed with Downs Syndrome, 5 with Celebral Palsy, 3 Autistic and one child with specific motor problems.... 37 children now receive daily support in 5 groups. .

In our Lifegate kitchen we want to offer healthy and tasty meals as an alternative to the sweets and "fast food" that are a constant concern for us, and we are eager to get the parents on our side when it comes to nutrition.



We meet other children during outings to play parks. Fear of contact is reduced and children share the joy as way of preparing them for a life together in the future.



„Snakes and Ladders“

Some of us know this dice game from earlier times: the ladders lead further up and the snakes throw you back and on all fields you have to solve a task. Whoever reaches the top first is the winner of the game. At Lifegate we like to play it in the special school here with the eight year old children. The children learn to play together, take care of each other, form communities and learn to work as a team. In teams, the children solve tasks together, make decisions, and develop strategy. We incorporate hands-on and cognitive tasks; children with mobility impairments should also have a fair chance to participate. The game and tasks can be adapted to any age level and the children's capabilities. "Learning through play" - school can be a lot of fun!



13 new special needs children joined us after the summer vacations and are settling in well at the special school.

Angela Köster, who supported us in this area as a foreign specialist for three years, ended her work in September. She will stay in the country with her husband until the end of the year and then return to Germany. We thank her very much for her dedication.

"We'll get that baked (a German synonym for „sorted“), washed and cooked".

Carsten Baumert a baker from Germany helped us for three months to raise the Lifegate bakery to a higher standard. He trained two young ladies in the trade, who are now themselves able to bake eight types of bread, rolls and croissants. An established clientele gratefully accepts our sourdough bread and the first stores in Beit Jala/Bethlehem are also showing interest. **We are very happy about this positive development and would like to welcome more German bakers who can contribute their experience and specialties!**



Carsten on the left with delicious pretzels at the " Oktoberfest " in Taybeh with Inas and Yussif.

A German team with Wilfried Schroth helps out with a "big order", thank you!



The Lifegate laundry serves 10 guest houses and hotels in Bethlehem at the moment and is well utilized. 3200 KG of laundry was washed, dried and ironed by us in September and the used water was collected, biologically cleaned and returned to the building for toilet flushing and garden irrigation. Interns and trainees help enthusiastically in the laundry.



In Natalia Maraka's competent hands now lie the fortunes in the Lifegate kitchen and she is training seven young people to become cooks and kitchen assistants. Natalia, who comes from Ukraine, also

speaks a little German and loves the music of Ramstein in addition to Arabic cuisine, which she has mastered perfectly. Our team and the visitor groups are full of praise for the delicious food and given the well-known adage that "love goes through the stomach", she has already won over many hearts!



The good shepherd

At the entrance to the Lifegate building, where there is a ramp for wheelchair users, a small flock of sheep has gathered with the "Good Shepherd" and reminds us of the guardian who gives us strength for our work in the Lifegate Center. In warm yellow, blue and brown colors many Lifegate friends, under the direction of our Dutch co-worker Frank Deiters, have created a beautiful mosaic that now adorns this wall. Frank, who did a lot of crafts and repairs in the center and guesthouse, will now leave us for one year, and plans to come back with a new visa and continue to support our work. We thank him from the bottom of our hearts for all the marks his presence has left behind and know and pray that the "Good Shepherd" will continue to be with him this year.



"Over the Jordan"

A team of five Lifegate employees went to Jordan for a few days to support American friends of the Joni and Friends organization in handing out wheelchairs to people with disabilities. In two Jordanian cities, local Christian churches had made their rooms available free of charge and, together with local organizations, they invited people in need of wheelchairs to come. Children, women, middle-aged men and elderly people responded. Many people who had fled Syria were among them, some with permanent injuries from years of civil war. In four to five working teams, each wheelchair was individually adapted to the people concerned. The cooperation and complementation of different specialties in the teams was excellent and friendships were quickly formed. Many people who came to us with sad faces, some petrified by hardship and hopelessness, left with a smile and great gratitude. We were also able to pass on something of our hope as Christians and speak about Joni Erikson and her fate, and to pass on her book with her life story in Arabic. We passed on the love we have been given in deed and word and trust that this hope will have a contagious effect and reach into people's everyday lives. We don't want this to be a one-off distribution of aids, and have started discussions with local organizations to establish stations for the aid supply in Jordan, which will operate throughout the year. It might then provide a base for adding holistic support for children and young people with disabilities.

We were and are ambassadors who want others to participate in, and benefit from, what we have experienced in Lifegate and we also want to be agents in the neighboring countries so that something new can develop there for people with disabilities. With kind regards your Burghard Schunkert

