

News from our team

Nadia Gnehm, George Kassieh and Losian Shaheen are learning the baker's trade in our wholemeal bakery. Together with Yousif Amer, the four team members ensure continuity in the production of delicious and healthy baked goods. They bake seventy loaves of bread every day, making a major contribution to our "emergency aid project". German bakers are still very welcome as volunteers to teach us more recipes and expand our capabilities. At the beginning of October, Erik Praetorius and his family came to us from Germany. We are delighted that Erik will be supporting our early intervention work and the educational work at LIFEGATE for three years as a curative educator. Mary Sa'ed is a new member of staff in LIFEGATE's project work. The young woman has a degree in accounting and is therefore also a help in our administration team for project accounting. Abeer Bannoura uses her life and work experience in LIFEGATE Garden to train young people. She guides the young people in their work in the guest rooms, is involved in tending the garden and growing vegetables and spices, as well as working in the dining room and kitchen. All "trainees" should be able to work in hotels and guesthouses after their training.

Three days later, our mortality is also defeated. Death, as the last enemy, is overcome in the resurrection of Jesus.

What is left for us to do now? Perhaps the hardest thing? Accepting the "gift of God" with a loud or quiet thank you and allowing ourselves to be transformed. There is nothing to earn or work for here. But we can join in God's desire to pass on the gift to the godless, those far from God, the disappointed, the maltreated and the hopeless, so that they too can turn back to God and to the life that is in Him. We may not save this world, but we save many people.

The Lord is risen! A happy and blessed Easter time

Yours Burghard Schunkert

Reflections

by Burghard Schunkert

"Do you think that I am pleased with the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his ways and live?"

Ezekiel 18, verse 23

The prophet Ezekiel speaks plainly to the people of Israel and puts his finger on their transgressions and the ingrained sins that bring many people a miserable life on earth and premature death. However, in this 18th chapter he also shows that every person - even in their own family - has the chance to distance themselves from the bad deeds of others and turn over a new leaf with God.

Nothing remains hidden from God. He calls us to repentance and always gives us a fair new chance. In Jesus, this plan of God is sealed once and for all at the Passover in Jerusalem. God's Son dies a cruel death on the cross as an innocent man and thus atones for all the guilt in this world. He suffers, fights for and brings about my and your "acquittal". At the same time, his death opens up direct access to the Father. The separation is abolished, the divide is bridged, the curtain to the Holy of Holies in the temple is torn from top to bottom.

LIFEGATE REHABILITATION

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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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Photo: LIFEGATE

Yousif from the group of children with severe and multiple disabilities doing playful exercises with Jaqueline

Dear friends!

Since October 7, we have been living in a state of emergency in this country. The affliction of the people around us, their fears and their hopelessness are our constant companions. The LIFEGATE team, the children, young people and their families are very grateful that, for a few hours during our daily support work, our minds are not weighed down by the world and its current problems.

The complexity of the conflict makes it very difficult to see any path to a peaceful conclusion. In a situation where there more questions than answers, most people have lost any faith in pursuing the path of peace. But at LIFEGATE, we persist in our faith and continue to pursue peace together with others. Israeli friends sell LIFEGATE products in Israel. From Israel we receive donations of aids for Palestinian disabled people. Israeli Messianic congregations give us good second-hand clothes to take to Palestinian families in need. Our Palestinian children continue to receive very good care in Israeli hospitals. In Israeli specialist stores we buy medical or orthopaedic materials that we cannot get in the West Bank. We are then often asked how things are on the Palestinian side, whether we feel safe and have everything we need to live and work.

We also listen and sympathize when people tell us about their sad experiences or plead for their abducted loved ones every day. We hear about people who have lost their homes and possessions and were only able to escape with their lives.

In December 2023 we began our aid project for people in need in our local area, and it is now entering a second phase in April. We want to widen the scope of our aid measures and reach more people in several places in the West Bank. We already provide hot meals together with healthy sourdough bread and help people with clothing donations, but beyond that we want to also include medical care, medication and therapeutic measures.

During these weeks, Muslims celebrate the fasting month of Ramadan and in Judaism it is the time between Purim and Passover. We Christians celebrate the Resurrection. During Easter, we particularly remember the message of the Savior of mankind, who gave his life so that we and all people can live. Jesus' resurrection means that death will not have the last word - and this is a great comfort to us at the many graves. With God's help, we will set further signs of hope in this country and teach the children and young people at LIFEGATE the path of love and reconciliation. We want to set an example in our lives of following the path of peace and be confident that it will bear fruit. For this we need your prayers and your support.

Jaad's first steps in life and encouraging developmental progress for several children in LIFEGATE's early intervention work

It is always a special joy in our physiotherapy department when children and young people manage to take their first steps independently. Until then it is often a long developmental process that begins with strengthening the young people's muscles, then they practise coordination and develop confidence in their own legs.

This was also the case with little Jaad, who developed quickly in the LIFEGATE early intervention work, much to our delight. The then two-year-old boy came to our early intervention work in August 2022. Jaad was diagnosed with early childhood brain damage (cerebral palsy). Cerebral palsy has led to considerable physical limitations for him, but no mental disabilities. Jaad is temporarily in a wheelchair and receives intensive occupational therapy, physiotherapy and hydrotherapy every week. With the help of our occupational therapists, Jaad has been able to significantly improve his eye-hand coordination. The daily intensive physiotherapy strengthened Jaad's leg muscles to such an extent that he was able to stand freely and stably. From there he went on to take his first steps with a walking aid. Weekly hydrotherapy supported this process and Jaad can now walk without a walking aid. Jaad, his family, and we, are very grateful for this wonderful development.



Four-year-old Jaad training his leg muscles in our physiotherapy department

Our "Snoezelen" room provides a multi sensory therapeutic environment with special lighting and sounds, and it is a place that the children really enjoy. Here in particular, we can observe how they develop slowly but steadily. The parents, especially the mothers, are relieved of their childcare duties for a few hours, can take a deep breath and devote themselves to their siblings and the household. They know their children are in good hands at LIFEGATE and rejoice with us over every small step in their development.

LIFEGATE activities for inclusion and outdoor work



Children with disabilities and children without disabilities playing happily together

For most people here in the West Bank, Friday - an Islamic holiday - is a day off work. LIFEGATE is a Christian institution, so Fridays are working days for us. We tolerate the fact that some parents leave their children at home on Fridays. Due to the free capacity, we open our support groups for children without disabilities on Fridays. The positive response from the children without disabilities, who enjoy the joint activities, means that more and more parents want to bring their children to LIFEGATE on Fridays. Our inclusion offer has been so well received that we have already had to limit the number of "guest children". Children with and without disabilities play together, lose any fear of contact and learn to look out for each other, help each other and share a piece of life.

In our collaboration with the US organization "Joni and Friends", we are working to establish good care programs for people with disabilities in Armenia. We are planning wheelchair campaigns in our country as well as in Egypt, Armenia and Jordan. It is planned that LIFEGATE therapists will be sent to these countries to help. We are delighted that we can now pass on the experience we have gained at LIFEGATE and that this will significantly broaden the horizons of our team.

Guests still welcome at the LIFEGATE Garden guest house

In March, a new training program began with three young people in our guest house. The young people are being introduced to and trained in room cleaning, work in the kitchen and dining room and gardening. We were delighted that the parish council of the Evangelical Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem had chosen our LIFEGATE Garden guest house as the venue for its annual retreat and that we were therefore able to welcome dear guests. A group of Palestinian young people meet weekly for a seminar, and a few individual guests also stay overnight with us. This all helps to support the running of LIFEGATE Garden. Even in these times, it is still possible to visit our country and our facility. Several airlines fly to the airport in Tel Aviv. In February and March, we were delighted to welcome many German friends who made "solidarity visits" to strengthen the people in the country. We are grateful for these signs of solidarity and support.



Stay by our side

The war in our country has hurt many people physically and emotionally. In Israel, at least twenty thousand people are said to be directly affected, in the Gaza Strip there are many more. The rifts of mistrust between Arab and Jewish-Israeli people can hardly be bridged in human terms. Every terrorist attack, every rocket, every attack by radical settlers or every Israeli retaliatory strike opens up wounds that have just begun to heal. We carry these injuries and wounds with the people we live with. That is why we often need "superhuman strength". We don't have it from ourselves, it has to be given to us daily and often in difficult situations. We ask for your prayers for this.

Our income in the guest house and in many service areas of LIFEGATE (with which we otherwise generate 40% of our budget) has been lost since October. So far we have been able to compensate for this with your donations. Thank you very much! We cannot yet report any easing of the situation. Like so many people in this country, we continue to walk in faith. Trusting in God, we are making full use of our gifts and know that God will bless them.

Your help counts ...!

Thanks to your help we were able to ...

- ...purchase therapy and learning games for early intervention and the special school (€ 10,000);
- ...finance the energy costs for the LIFEGATE building for six months (€ 20,000);
- ...finance support work in the medical and therapeutic areas in the first few months of the new year (€ 50,000).

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

- ... co-finance and secure the basic work of LIFEGATE (special kindergarten, special school and vocational training) in the coming months (€ 60,000 monthly running costs);
- ... finance the equipping of the new storage rooms with shelves and cupboards (€ 15,000);
- ... Carry out repair work in the LIFEGATE center: Water supply, greywater recycling and photovoltaic systems, flooring and lighting (€ 20,000).

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!