

THE **המתנדב** VOLUNTEER

Newsletter of Sar-El - Volunteers for Israel



MESSAGE FROM KEREN DAHAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

The name of the month of Tevet comes from the Hebrew word "tov", meaning "good". Although it is true that during this month, we remember Asarah B'Tevet, the day that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem with the aim of conquering it, at the same time, many good things happened in this month and we always have to remember that along with the bad there is also good – here in Israel we are now starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. We already have more than a million people vaccinated against the coronavirus and we are continuing vigorously.

During Hanukkah we launched a fundraising campaign on social media networks- thank you to everyone who supported, donated, and helped Sar-El continue its important work in supporting IDF bases.

A lot of work is still ahead of us and I'm certain that together with you all we will succeed!

We are starting to launch a series of Sar-El events on-line and every few weeks will be hosting interesting personalities for a fascinating conversation, each time in a different language – please stay updated on our website.

Through this difficult period, we continue our important work on the bases with the help of Israeli immigrants- new and old, and MASA program participants who are contributing their time and doing wonderful and admirable work.

Stay safe, healthy and connected 😊

Yours,
Keren

A REQUEST

During the extended period of the coronavirus, Sar-El has been engaging in an operational review and is seeking to take advantage of this period of reduced operations to implement improvements to our systems and procedures.

We would love to hear from you if you have comments, suggestions, recommendations for improving the Sar-El experience for our volunteers.

Our goal is to do all we can to provide the best logistical support we can to the IDF.

Please let us know your thoughts by sending an email to:
info@sar-el.org

MEET A VOLUNTEER



ROGER KEEN

My name is Roger Keen and I'm very happy to have been asked to contribute a short article for the Sar-EI Newsletter. I was born at the end of the Second World War, grew up in London, England, moved to Canada in late 1965 and made Aliyah in December 2017.

My first Sar-EI experience was for three weeks in February and March 2005 at a logistics base in the North of the country. My wife and I were with an international English-speaking group from the U.K., Finland, Norway, Argentina and the U.S. We had a wonderful and rewarding time on the base, helping in the warehouses, the paint shop and the kitchen. During that time we even got to meet and listen to a lecture given by retired General Aharon Davidi(z"l), the founder of the program.

In the intervening years between then and now, I made several visits to Israel. However, as is often the case, life always seemed to interfere with my plans to repeat my Sar-EI weeks. Then my wife and I made Aliyah. Suddenly I was living in Israel, retired and with nothing holding me back from volunteering. So volunteer I did, for a week at a base in the Tel Aviv area. Here again, I met some wonderful people, did some very rewarding work and felt that I got as much or more out of the experience than I gave to the I.D.F.

My next Sar-EI week was with volunteers mainly from Modiin, where I live, and from Jerusalem. As usual, all of us had a fantastic time painting, ordering the stock in the supply warehouses and generally making ourselves useful where we could. Our group subsequently volunteered for a couple more Sar-EI weeks; each time was as rewarding as the first. Initially, our madrichot were a little confused to see this group of retirees, all of whom knew one another and were quite feisty, coming to do some work, but they rose to the challenge we presented them.

Then Covid-19 appeared. All my good intentions of Sar-EI volunteering at least a couple of times a year had to be put on hold while the pandemic made its way across Israel and the world. Thankfully, by mid-January, I hope to have had my second Covid-19 injection; a few weeks after that I'll be looking forward to my next assignment (albeit with an abundance of caution; the pandemic is not over yet).

MEET A SOLDIER



GAL CHEN

Hi, my name is Gal Chen. I'm 20 years old and was born and raised in Haifa. I drafted to the IDF in July 2019 to serve as a madrichat Sar-EI.

When I was 16, I took part in a delegation to Argentina where I learned Spanish and came to the realization that I'm very attracted to working with Jewish communities around the world. I spent my high school years participating in more delegations through my school and the scouts, something that improved my English and taught me a lot. When I discovered Sar-EI, I felt like it was a job prepared especially for me, and as soon as I entered the unit, this feeling became even stronger.

With every day of my army service, I keep learning more about myself, Israel, the IDF and the amazing people who volunteer from around the world. Many people ask me why anyone would want to come and volunteer in the army. I always respond "It lights the spark in their eyes and in their heart. If you haven't seen it, you won't be able to understand". There's a certain magic about working with volunteers: the first time, the 100th time, with Olim Chadashim and more.

Dear volunteers: thank you for the privilege of being a part of your volunteering journey, for coming to every base with great excitement, and for challenging me to organize better activities, learn more and just to be better.

Sending my love and hoping you're all safe! Gal

Let's hope for better times in the not-too-distant future!!

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ISRAEL CONNECTION



This month: Biblical Sha'arayim



If you have an interest in heroic King David and the period of ancient Israel's history that dates back 3000 years, we would like to tell you about one of the most unique places to visit in all of the Land of Israel. It is known as Khirbet Qeiyafa and is located about 30 km southwest of Jerusalem, near Beit Shemesh, on a hill overlooking the Elah Valley. In this beautiful valley is the place where a young David slew Goliath. This strategically located Israelite fortress city was on the main road from Philistia and the Coastal Plain leading to Jerusalem and Hebron in the hill country.

Uncovered in 2007, several years of excavations revealed a walled city covering 6 acres. The Arabic name Khirbet Qeiyafa means "the place with a wide view". Interestingly, a number of archaeologists have associated this site with the biblical city of Sha'arayim, Hebrew for "two gates" (Joshua 15:36; 1 Samuel 17:52; 1 Chronicles 4:31) because it is the only city excavated from the period that has a second gate. Pottery with ancient Hebrew script, the lack of any graven images or idols, and the absence of bones of unkosher animals speaks to the belief that this was a Judean city. The archaeologists have renamed the site the Elah Fortress (מבצר האלה). The town plan is also characteristic of the Kingdom of Judah, containing a long wall surrounding the city, fortifications, a large administrative building and doubled walls abutted by houses. It provides strong evidence that the early Kingdom of Judah was bigger and more advanced than previously believed. Many scholars have believed that King David's kingdom represented a simple agrarian society, with sparse population and no fortified cities. Evidence found in this place refutes all of that and points to an organized kingdom with a governmental structure that engaged in

international trade.

Here is a link to an interesting brief video with beautiful views of the site:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBqbDhgXtLM>



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