

המתנדב VOLUNTEER

Newsletter of Sar-El - Volunteers for Israel



KEREN DAHAN



MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

We are just a few days before Passover, known also as "z'man heruteinu," the season of our freedom. Here in Israel, we are returning to normal life with a great national vaccination program that is permitting the reopening of museums, schools, restaurants, gyms and more. Importantly, IDF bases are fully open to vaccinated volunteers from within Israel.

In the last month we immersed ourselves in the wonderful work of recruiting volunteers, and hundreds were enlisted for the mission of helping at IDF bases wherever needed.

Thanks to those who contributed on Purim, we were able to send hundreds of mishloach manot packages to our soldiers throughout the country, and in addition, we were excited to arrange a Purim feast for our Golani Soldiers -- you can see all the photos and videos on our social networks. 😊

We also had the opportunity of hosting Zoom events in English and French and it was a pleasure to see you there-- thanks for joining!! We are planning to have more events during the week of Yom Hashoa – more information will be published soon.

The main question that we are hearing from our volunteers around the world is when will they be able to get back onto the bases? For now, the borders are still closed for tourists and unfortunately, we don't know when they will reopen. As soon as the situation changes, we will, of course, update everyone on our website.

Finally, it is very important for us to stay in touch with you and if you have friends that are not getting our newsletter/information, please send their contact information to us so we can add them to our database.

I send best wishes to you and your families for a happy Passover and the hope that we will soon enjoy true freedom!

NEWS: Sar-El Israeli Volunteers Complete Special Project For The IDF



Last month, Sar-El received a special request to help the IDF with a high priority project. Every year, it is necessary to prepare and store up-to-date food ration packages for our soldiers in the field or on combat missions. In the absence of our many volunteers from abroad, we urgently turned to Sar-El volunteers based in Israel to step up, and quickly organize to help. This mission was a bit of a departure for Sar-El as our volunteers did not sleep on the IDF base but were transported daily from surrounding cities to the base where the work took place near Rishon LeTzion. Working alongside our soldiers, volunteers from the cities of Modiin, Tel Aviv, Raanana, Jerusalem, Ashdod and Netanya worked at an unbelievable pace and helped complete the packing. Within a two-week timeframe, almost 137,000 boxes were completed, each of which feeds 4 soldiers. We are very proud and grateful for the effort and given its great success, the IDF will likely call on us again for this type of special project support.

Yours,
Keren



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MEET A VOLUNTEER



Morry Priwler - Israel

SAR-EL and the IDF Break Age Barriers

On Sunday February 7, I packed my mask, alco-gel, an apple, hat and jacket into a bag on my way to join a group of SAR-EL volunteers. As a first timer, I did not know what to expect during 5 days at the IDF base near Rishon LeTzion.

Despite reservations, I decided to volunteer with SAR-EL as part of a 60s+ plus group from Modiin. I was finishing a course with the Israeli Retirement Center to become a coach for people before and after retirement, with the goal of helping them transition to an active and fulfilling life. The Center refers to it as Second Adulthood (Bagrut Shniah). The SAR-EL program was a great opportunity to meet with a group of active, older immigrants and learn first-hand about their Bagrut Shniah.

MEET A SOLDIER



Noa Landau

Hi

My name is Noa Landau and I'm 20 years old. I live in Mazkeret Batya and I joined the IDF in July 2019. A friend of my parents told me about Sar-El and that's when I decided I wanted to join this unit and fought for it until I got in. For me seeing the volunteers work in the IDF, giving out their time and energies to help us, that's what it's all about. This is what gives me the energies to serve. I get to know amazing people from all over the world with amazing stories and all they want to do is help us and support us.

One of the stories that marked me the most is a volunteer that told me she lost her only son a few years back, and she was heartbroken. She then heard about Sar-El and decided she had a lot of love to give but no one to

As I turned into the carpark, most of the 17 participants had already arrived. As we talked, I soon realized that this was an amazing group. Ranging in age from 61-85, I learned that each person had a wonderfully active lifestyle. We soon arrived at the base, got into a groove and started packing food boxes for combat soldiers. Very quickly, I was enjoying the camaraderie. Sometimes we chatted or helped each other out and switched tasks as needed. It also was very meaningful to feel that we were helping the IDF feed soldiers on the front lines.

The IDF has a program where soldiers contribute one day a year to special projects. Each day we were joined by a new group of 80-90 soldiers. Without fuss, younger and older participants quickly started working together. Where necessary we helped each other. Over the 5 days we packed over 150,000 individual portions. As we worked side by side, with masks and appropriate distancing, the soldiers expressed admiration for our willingness to help. All this was very significant. However, something else was happening that I did not anticipate.

My first inkling was at the end of the first day when one of the soldiers told us that "she had learned something special from the SAR-EL volunteers". However, she did not tell us what she had in mind. It took more comments from officers and soldiers to realize that a change in attitude toward older people was taking place. By working with our vibrant, reliable and efficient group, the younger soldiers recognized what older people are truly capable of doing. The officers even used us as examples to the groups of new soldiers on how to perform their jobs effectively-- a far cry from the images of over-the-hill, declining, frail, and elderly people so prevalent, especially in the COVID era.

In real time, I saw corroboration of the research that shows intergenerational activities break down age barriers and that teams of older and younger workers achieve high productivity. Maybe this experience points to an additional role for SAR-EL and the IDF in Israeli society by helping to break down age barriers.

Overall, the experience was very enjoyable and meaningful in more ways than I expected.

So thanks SAR-EL for everything - until next time!

give it to so she decided to give her love to Israel and come to Sar-El as often as she can.

Sar-El is not just important to our unit and to the army, it's also important to our volunteers. And they're important to us so much. We appreciate them so much.

I know there are less groups now. I know we don't know when the Corona is going to end, but I want to tell our volunteers that we think of you and we're waiting for you!

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ISRAEL CONNECTION 

This month: Israeli Food Favorite- Falafel



Everyone has a favorite food that they like to eat when they come to Israel, but there's little doubt that the falafel ranks as our number one street food. Found in abundance throughout the country, many would argue that it deserves to be ranked as our 'national dish'. Falafel has been a traditional Middle Eastern food for a couple of centuries. However, it is generally agreed that putting these highly nutritious, deep-fried chickpea balls into pita sandwiches that include an amazing array of additional vegetables, spices and sauces was an early Israeli innovation that turned the falafel into a national pastime. Throughout the Land of Israel, every Israeli has their favorite falafel food-stand and the options are endless.

To show you how much fun falafel can be, we thought we'd introduce you to a famous falafel stand from the lovely town of Afula in the Jezreel Valley. Falafel-making has almost become a sport there. Have a look at this short video to understand how:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bf26RG-RC44>



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