

Dear Board Presidents, Community Campaign Chairs and Spring Campaign Captains,

As we followed the situation in Southern Israel escalate over Shabbat, we are all grateful for another day of quiet for our JNF family living in the Gaza envelope.

We wanted to provide additional background information and talking points regarding the situation in Gaza as you make your calls during Spring Campaign. Many regions will be holding an emergency Phone-a-thon this week to provide a briefing on the situation and what JNF-USA is doing to support the affected communities.

Please see the below fact sheet and attached funding opportunities, and let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,
Laura Salzer & Jim Riola
National Community Campaign Co-Chairs

GAZA BORDER CRISIS FACT SHEET

What is Jewish National Fund?

A registered 501(c) (3) organization and United Nations NGO, Jewish National Fund (JNF) began in 1901 as a dream and vision to reestablish a homeland in Israel for Jewish people everywhere. Jews the world over collected coins in iconic JNF Blue Boxes, purchasing land and planting trees until ultimately, their dream of a Jewish homeland was a reality. Today, JNF continues to give all generations a unique voice in building and ensuring the prosperity of the land of Israel through their generosity and partnership with the people of Israel.

What is the Gaza Envelope?

Located in southwestern Israel in the Negev Desert within 4 miles of the Gaza border, approximately 50,000 people comprise this region which includes the city of Sderot, the area of Halutza and other small towns that make up the Eshkol Regional Council and Sha'ar HaNegev Regional Council. The region shares some 37 miles of border with Gaza. The majority of residents in the area are farmers or work in the agricultural industry.

The Issue:

For more than 15 years, these communities, including the city of Sderot, have endured continual attacks from the bordering Gaza Strip. Children and adults alike suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Even during periods of relative quiet, when reports of rocket attacks don't make the headlines, they continue to occur.

Over the weekend of May 5, more than 700 rockets were launched form Gaza into Israel. Four Israelis died. Hundreds treated for injuries. A palpable sense of trauma permeates the area. The damage – physical and psychological – was extensive. It was a weekend of intense war.

What is JNF doing to assist?

For Jewish National Fund it's personal. These people are our family. Jewish National was there yesterday. We are there today. We will be there tomorrow.

To make a lasting difference in these communities, Jewish National Fund invests in the future of the residents by providing safe havens for children, such as the JNF Sderot Indoor Recreation Center and therapy and trauma resilience centers. JNF-USA is investing in housing and the development of quality of life infrastructure in the region where the population has grown by nearly 25-percent in the last decade. Bringing normalcy and routine to these areas after so many years of living under the threat of attack is critical to transforming the Gaza Envelope communities from centers of stress into thriving towns.

What is not being reported?

- Thousands of lives, those of women and children especially, have been put in danger causing many to seek safety in shelters.
- The resulting damage has had a tremendous impact on the mental health and livelihood on those who call the region home.
- The number of individuals experiencing and being treated for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has increased exponentially.

What is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, is diagnosed after a person experiences symptoms for at least one month following a traumatic event. The disorder is characterized by three main types of symptoms:

- Re-experiencing the trauma through intrusive distressing recollections of the event, flashbacks, and nightmares.
- Avoidance of places, people, and activities that are reminders of the trauma, and emotional numbness.
- Increased arousal such as difficulty sleeping and concentrating, feeling jumpy, and being easily irritated and angered.

The National Institute of Mental Health reports that the course of the illness varies. Some people recover within 6 months, while others have symptoms that last much longer. In some people, the condition becomes chronic.

JNF-USA Funding Opportunities

JNF is fundraising for relief efforts to support the communities affected by this terrorism for the following needs:

- 3 trauma resilience centers, to provide behavioral and animal assisted therapy. In Israel, resilience centers are referred to by that name as the individuals using these clinics are described as "resilient."
- 20 new bomb shelters
- Paint existing bomb shelters to make them more child friendly
- Ongoing operations for the JNF Sderot Indoor Recreation Center
- New firetrucks and fire extinguisher wagons
- Life-saving equipment
- Therapy visits including animal assisted therapy special activities for children of the region
- Programming for area youth and children

What is the JNF Sderot Indoor Recreation Center?

Because children must always be within 15 seconds of a bomb shelter, to make a lasting difference in the community of Sderot, which is less than 1 mile from the Gaza border, Jewish

National Fund built a 21,000 square foot secure indoor playground and community center, Israel's largest such facility. Since its grand opening in 2009, the JNF Sderot Indoor Recreation Center has brought a welcome sense of normalcy to the region, providing young people with a fun place to simply be kids, and parents with the peace of mind that their children are playing in a safe environment. The \$5 million facility was constructed in an old textile warehouse and retrofitted with 300 tons of steel. Play areas double as bomb shelters, ensuring that all occupants can quickly reach safety in the event of a "Code Red" rocket alert. Visited daily by hundreds of children of all ages, the center's attractions include an indoor soccer arena, volleyball court, rock climbing wall, snack area, jungle gym, music room, computer room, and bounce house. It hosts regular performances and is used for special events and camps as well. In 2017, Jewish National Fund dedicated a nearby outdoor playground, outfitted with bomb shelters throughout to keep children safe in case of emergency. This playground enables the children to safely spend time outside as well.

What is a Resilience Center?

For many Israelis, the day-to-day impact of the conflict on the border with Gaza is minimal. For the residents of the Eshkol and Sha'ar HaNegev Regions, however, the war does not end—the region is under constant emergency routine. To ease the stress caused by PTSD, Jewish National Fund invests in trauma resilience centers to provide emotional therapy to children and adults alike. Therapy includes traditional one-on-one sessions, group therapy, and family counseling, as well as art, drama, pet, and movement therapy.

The Eshkol Resilience Center also has its own rocket-protected therapy rooms that serve as shelters, so clients don't need to run for cover in the event of an attack. These centers are crucial to the healing of a generation of Israelis that thinks the threat of war is a norm in life.

Why animal therapy?

The ongoing state of emergency has led to an entire population, adults and children alike, suffering from the effects of trauma, including bedwetting, clinging to parents, excessive weeping, night terrors, hypervigilance, insomnia, anxiety, and more. The need for emotional support is overwhelming. The Animal Assisted Therapy Center is a critical component of support, offering a solution for residents of all ages in Sderot and the surrounding area to give them confidence and strength under stressful circumstances. Animal-assisted therapy is a significant tool in helping children and adults express and relinquish difficult emotions, enhance self-esteem and confidence, mobilize coping resources, and develop faith in themselves. It is also effective for treating situations of trauma, crisis, and stress. Through contact with animals, the ability to build relationships and trust is restored. This kind of therapy also engages those who refuse professional psychological help — they do not feel that they are in "therapy"— and allows them to relax and let go in a non-threatening setting.

Firefighting needs:

Of particular importance in this region is fire and rescue equipment to protect the land and people from fires that start from missile attacks and, more recently, fires caused by flaming kites sent from across the border. As the fundraising arm of the Israel Firefighters in the United States, Jewish National Fund continues to provide invaluable resources to protect local communities under any circumstance, from fire stations, to fire trucks, to fire equipment.