

*For me, KKL-JNF is not simply 'The Jewish National Fund' but rather 'The Jewish National Family'".
Elyasaf Miara – Artist and Musician, Moshav Shokeda*

KKL-JNF'S SUPPORT FOR SHOKEDA'S DISPLACED FAMILIES

It seemed like a regular summer holiday activity for the children of guests at the Neve Ilan Hotel. At 10 AM on a Friday morning, the hotel's spacious hall brimmed with the laughter and creativity of young children engrossed in various arts and crafts activities. Each group of kids gathered around dedicated tables, each exploring a unique skill. Some were discovering the art of crafting essential oils for aromatherapy, while others proudly exhibited their freshly made Shabbat candles and ceramic candlestick holders. Excitement filled the air as children lined up to have their faces adorned by a skilled makeup artist. At the far end of the room, a group of musicians added a melodic touch to the activities, paying homage to the approaching Sabbath.

However, this was no summer vacation event. It was November 3, and the participants were all residents of Shokeda in the West Galilee who had been evacuated from their homes some three weeks earlier at the beginning of the war that Hamas began on Saturday, October 7. Shani Fachima, who was present at the event with three of her children, recounted the frightening 36 hours they spent in the safety room of their house until the Israeli army came to their rescue. "We heard everything," she said, "the gunshots, the explosions, the yelling in Arabic, and we saw the smoke rising above the homes in Kibbutz Be'eri. We were terrified".



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Shokeda is a Moshav situated just a short two kilometers from Kibbutz Beeri, where Hamas terrorists massacred over 130 people

including women and children, and abducted others to Gaza. The Be'eri attack took place concurrently with a series of other massacres in communities and towns along the Gaza border. Over 1,400 people in Israel, mainly civilians, were massacred in their homes or at a music festival, and some 240 hostages from the ages of 9 months to an 85-year-old were abducted to Gaza. All this took place under a barrage of thousands of rockets fired at the Gaza envelope and the rest of Israel from the Gaza Strip .

"It is only due to the grace of God and sheer luck that we were spared," Shani added. "Just when two truckloads of terrorists were about to enter our moshav they fired at an IDF helicopter flying above and caused the aircraft to make an emergency landing in the adjacent Shokeda Forest. The helicopter carried elite IDF troops who swiftly neutralized all the terrorists before proceeding to help clean out Kibbutz Be'eri. We were evacuated from the area even before the fighting in Be'eri



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came to an end. Since then, we have found refuge here at the Neve Ilan Hotel where all our needs are taken care of. That being said. this is not home; we are displaced people torn from our lives".

Nevertheless, eight-year-old Gefen Pahima, Shani's daughter, said that she is having so much fun at the hotel that she wants to stay there and not go back to the Moshav .

The happening at the Neve Ilan Hotel was organized by KKL-JNF which is committed to addressing the physical and emotional needs of the hundreds of thousands of displaced residents of the Gaza envelope. Rabbi Gideon Shloush, Director of the KKL-JNF Department of Jewish Heritage, told the participants that KKL-JNF has been actively engaged in supporting Gaza envelope evacuees at over 50 sites across the country .

Mor Zeevi, a sixth grader, said that he was terrified while hiding in the safety room, particularly after his father's worrisome report of terrorists attempting to breach the village. "However, everything took a dramatic turn for the better once we were evacuated and arrived here," he

added, "especially thanks to activities like these. I would like to seize this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to KKL-JNF for everything they are doing for us".

40-year-old Shokeda artist and musician, Elyasaf Miara, the father of six children, found himself at a loss for words to adequately convey his appreciation for KKL-JNF. "My gratitude goes beyond KKL-JNF's past contributions to the land of



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Israel or the current assistance we are receiving," he explained. "It encompasses all of it. For me, KKL-JNF is not simply 'The Jewish National Fund' but rather 'The Jewish National Family'."