

YOUTH IN KKL-JNF'S 'PLANTING TOGETHER' PROGRAM DISTRIBUTE 30,000 HOT MEALS TO SECURITY FORCES AND AID SOUTHERN RESIDENTS

In a combined effort between Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael-Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF) and the Merhavim association, youth from KKL-JNF's 'Planting Together' program have mobilized to distribute some 30,000 hot meals to IDF soldiers and security forces stationed across the country. Since the start of the war, the boys, aged 14-18, have been visiting army bases from Hermon in the north to Eilat in the south. In addition, they assist during animal therapy sessions for residents still in the Gaza Envelope, and with respite activities for the evacuees and the wounded in hospitals.

KKL-JNF's *Notim Yachad* ('Planting Together') is a program that gives at-risk youth that have dropped out of various frameworks or are on the verge of doing so, an opportunity to reintegrate into society and embark on a meaningful life path .

In this project, the youth receive experiential Zionist education, personal attention, occupational training, and basic life skills, as well as encouragement to contribute through meaningful military service in the Israel Defense Forces or national service.



KKL-JNF photo archive

Many youths have since benefitted from the program, which has helped them reintegrate into Israeli society in an optimal way. Our devoted Notim Yachad field counsellors conduct home visits and nighttime street patrols to locate and reach out to at-risk youth – some of whom have not in any kind of educational framework for years .

Today, everyone in the program has mobilized for the national effort; they are working non-stop to assist the Gaza Envelope residents and evacuees, the soldiers and the security forces .

Ifat Ovdia-Luski, Chairwoman of KKL-JNF: "Since the start of the fighting, the youth of the Notim Yachad program have been involved in the effort to aid the IDF soldiers and members of the security forces. In the spirit of volunteerism and love of the country, these wonderful youth accompany the Merhavim association from place to place throughout the country, handing out tens of thousands of hot meals to the soldiers and cheering them up".

Eli Castiel, field leader at the Merhavim association: "We are grateful for the privilege to do our part and help the security forces wherever they are. This blessed activity with KKL-JNF fills our youngsters with pride, the desire to integrate into society and the motivation to contribute to the success of the people of Israel."



photo by Merhavim association