

October 2015

Conversation with Rena Ben Gal

Jewish Agency representatives met Rena in her modest apartment in Pisgat Ze'ev – where she and her 5 children live just a few minutes away from the candy shop outside of which her 13-year-old son, Nadav, was stabbed and critically wounded during a terrorist attack on October 12.

On the day of the attack, Nadav left the house with his brother and rode the short distance to the candy store on his bicycle. As he exited the store, two Palestinians teenagers attacked him with knives, stabbing him and leaving Nadav gravely injured.

The storekeeper — a friend of the family — chased after the terrorists, who had already stabbed a 24-year-old man. Nadav's younger brother, aged 12, witnessed the entire attack and luckily wasn't hurt physically.

The Jewish Agency representatives met Rena two days after the attack. Her ex-husband was at the hospital by Nadav's side — Nadav is still on support and with many surgeries ahead of him. She was at home trying to keep some kind of routine for her other children, sending them to school for the first time since the attack and preparing lunch for them. Tasks, she said, she does every day but today seem even more important.

Used to being the one helping others, Rena said she is unaccustomed to receiving help, such as the emergency grant she received from **The Fund for the Victims of Terror**. But she realizes that she needs help now. Rena said she is deeply thankful for the grant. As a divorced woman caring for five children, she has many financial burdens — she doesn't even own a car, saying she can't afford it. Other issues have arisen, such as her children being afraid of leaving the house to walk to their schools, so she is making arrangements for friends and neighbors to escort them back and forth.

With the grant she hopes to cover some of hers and Nadav's urgent needs as well as give her other children some much needed pampering and attention. "A mother needs to be strong for her children, if I am okay, they will be okay," she explained. Rena asked to say "thank you" to donors of The Fund — thank you that there are people who care. She also wished that The Fund's staff won't have any more work such as this to carry out.

As for Nadav, Rena said she is trying to maintain an optimistic attitude, noting that Nadav is a fighter and she believes that his health will improve. The medical care Nadav has received has been the finest, she said. The surgeon who initially operated on him for nine hours to save his life was flown in by helicopter and reached the hospital at the same time as the ambulance.

When Jerusalem mayor Nir Barkat visited her at the hospital, he asked her, she recounted, "What do you need?"

Her answer?

"I need you to make this stop! No more suffering for mothers and children."

Later, sitting by Nadav's bed in the ICU she whispered to him that she will get him the suit he always wanted and throw him a big party for his Bar Mitzvah, which is set to take place in two months.

** Important Note: Everyone mentioned is a real person. We have used aliases to give the family some measure of privacy during these trying times.



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