



הפרויקט הלאומי של עולי אתיופיה (חל"צ)

Ethiopian National Project

תחנת מידע ופיתוח אתיופיה

Ethiopian National Project:

Needs of the Ethiopian-Israeli Community in Tirat Hacarmel following the Carmel Fires

Young and old, Israeli-born and immigrant alike in the city of Tirat Hacarmel were uprooted by the devastating Carmel forest fires. But for the small community of some 1,000 Ethiopian-Israelis who call Tirat Hacarmel their home, the act of evacuation and fleeing their homes was especially difficult.

For these wildfires rekindled in the Ethiopian-Israeli community feelings of insecurity, uncertainty, and fear. For many of this community, flight was familiar: their last experience of flight was one in which they endured horrific hardships in order to reach Israel in the mid-1980's during Operation Moses. And today, since the vast majority of the Ethiopian-Israeli residents' homes are on the outermost ring of houses adjacent to the woods, the wildfires brought out a new feeling-- one of not knowing whether they would have a home to return to in Israel.

So when the call to evacuate was made and they sought safety, it was the teenagers who led their parents to a place they equate with safety, security and home. These teenagers brought their parents and siblings to the ENP Youth Outreach Center in Tirat Hacarmel. Entire families left their homes with just a suitcase, and made their way by foot to the ENP Center on the other side of town. Offers of hotels and alternate gathering places were overlooked- they wanted to gather at the ENP Youth Center. To be together. Forty Ethiopian-Israeli families spent the entire Sabbath in the safety of the Center.

ENP's Youth Outreach Center was launched in Tirat Hacarmel in 2007 following the outbreak of the second Lebanon War, with funding from the Israel Emergency Campaign. Living under the constant threat of missiles from the north, ENP launched its entire holistic package of programs for the Ethiopian-Israeli community in the city, including ENP Scholastic Assistance, Youth Outreach Center, Preparation for the Army, Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Leadership training.

But, with the cessation of Israel Emergency Funding and decreased funds to ENP, left with no choice, the Youth Outreach Center in Tirat Hacarmel was slated for closure in September 2010. ENP has managed, just barely, to prevent its formal closure, delaying the inevitable until its planned closure in January 2011. Now, after this experience, all have witnessed that ENP's Youth Outreach Center is a second home to the entire Ethiopian-Israeli community of Tirat Hacarmel. Closure of this Center would be yet another tragedy for this community.

After the fires broke out, ENP visited Tirat Hacarmel to learn of the needs of the community in response to this tragedy. And what ENP heard was a singular call: keep the ENP Youth Outreach Center open. Keep ENP programs operating. The youth are thriving because of the scholastic assistance. The Center is a second home to these teenagers.

ENP is seeking gifts to enable the continued operations of the ENP Youth Outreach Center that is slated to be closed on 1 January 2011. Funds will provide staff that will offer the guidance desperately needed by these children, as well as a rich array of programs. It will enable the replacement of outdated computers and the purchase of equipment that will occupy the youngsters and help them during their process of healing.