



## United Hatzalah of Israel

### *Highlights of the week in Israel*

13 August 2008

*Dear Friends and Supporters,*

This week the United Hatzalah family got together for a well-earned break. Medic Boaz Gotel shared with me a moving story of commitment in action. I share it with you below.

We round off the letter with a public service initiative that we undertook to prevent accidents and injuries during hikes and other outings.

Have a great week,

Sincerely,

**Eli Beer**

Chief coordinator

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## United Hatzalah Family Fun

11.08.08

This week volunteers from around the country came together for the much anticipated United Hatzalah Family Fun and Appreciation Day at the Kibbutz Chafetz Chaim water park. Over 4500 men, women and children participated. Many people mentioned to me that this event recharges their batteries for the entire year. Families reveled in the wonderful atmosphere where they enjoyed the dividends of the sacrifices to family life that volunteering often incurs. 7 year-old Joshua summed it up when he told his father «I hope you stay in Hatzalah forever».

Aside from the food, fun and festivities many volunteers were given special recognition for exemplary service.

One of the most moving presentations certainly was when medic 598 Shmuel Ivgi came to the bandstand to receive his award. Eager hands reached out when he struggled to rise from his wheelchair, to stand tall among his friends and colleagues.

Shmuel remarked that this is truly a family event and that his recuperation from his near-fatal car crash was due, in a large part, to the support and encouragement from the United Hatzalah family.





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## With all your heart...

All our volunteers are familiar with calls like this <<< ...adult male, unconscious, heart condition?". When Boaz Gotel of Netanya received this call he raced to the scene and reported that the patient had no pulse and was not breathing. Boaz immediately began CPR and had a bystander prepare his AED (Automatic External Defibrillator). After a cycle of CPR, Boaz cleared the area around the patient and administered what would be the first of many shocks.

As additional volunteers came to the scene Boaz directed them to take over chest compressions so he could take a breather. Boaz surveyed the patient and the, all too familiar, anxious circle of family hovering in the background. It was then that he strengthened his resolve to fight this one until the end.

CPR continued non-stop except for the moments when shocks were being administered and evaluated. As the MICU (Mobile Intensive Care Unit) arrived Boaz briefed them and urged all to redouble their efforts to obtain a favorable outcome. The paramedics began to administer powerful drugs, the doctor reviewed the unencouraging EKG strip. Compressions>drugs>shock>, evaluation... they all knew the routine. They also knew the protocol that dictates when to let go. As that moment came and went Boaz hurriedly conferred with the doctor and urged extra efforts.

The joint team was emboldened by Boaz's commitment and continued with their efforts. Shocks at maximum voltage were administered as the collection of expended drug vials grew. "We got a pulse!" one of the volunteers virtually shouted. Tears of excitement and hope replaced the worried tears of the family as the patient was rapidly wheeled to the MICU. The unit roared off, lights and sirens. No one was going to let him slip away. Boaz wiped away his sweat (and maybe a tear), gathered his gear and headed to his ambucycle.



The next day Boaz went to the hospital where he hesitantly asked the nurse at the duty station about the patient. She walked him to a bed where a middle-aged man lay, surrounded by his smiling family. The man reached out with his free arm and beckoned Boaz closer, Boaz leaned in and received the warmest of hugs. The family looked on, this time with tears of thanks and of joy.

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## Tragedy Prevention

With prevention being the best treatment for avoidable accidents United Hatzalah embarked on an ambitious campaign to educate campers and hikers of the usual summertime risks.

United Hatzalah partnered with other entities to staff public service stations in the north and in the south at the major junctions in popular hiking areas.



One of the volunteers reported that when he inquired whether the family of five had enough water for their 3 hour rigorous mid-day hike, the father pulled out a started 1.5 liter bottle of water. The family made a rapid about-face to re-supply when they were explained the mortal danger they faced being so ill-equipped.

Many hikers credit these stations for the more responsible approach they have for their hike preparations. One teen quipped "hiking without enough water is very un-cool".

The volunteers put in many hours of classroom theory, hands-on training for the safe and appropriate use of the various vehicles and equipment used by the fire department and finally a full "demo burn".

An abandoned 4 story structure was located and filled with tires, mattresses and wood and subsequently set alight. The teams had to plan and execute an attack on the fire, locate any victims (training dummies), evacuate and then treat them.

The various regional officials who observed the exercises were very impressed with the level of expertise the teams exhibited. We expect this to be a pilot program that will be adopted in other regions as well.



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**Thank you to all who have given us the opportunity to continue our work.  
We hope you will continue to support us in the future.**

**United Hatzalah** is the largest emergency rescue volunteer organization in Israel which, working hand in hand with MDA has the endorsement of the leading Rabbis in Israel.

**United Hatzalah** has branches in almost every city in Israel from the Golan Heights in the north to Eilat in the south.