



United Hatzalah of Israel

Highlights of the week in Israel

14 May 2009

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We are finally recovering from the hectic activities surrounding the Lag BaOmer festivities. Our thoughts and wishes of consolation are with all the victims of the terrible car crash. Kudos to the regional coordinators for all their work in establishing and managing the United Hatzalah free loan fund.

Have a safe weekend.

Sincerely,

Eli Beer

Chief coordinator

Lag BaOmer Joy



This year's Lag BaOmer celebration was the largest on record. Over a 2-day span approximately half a million people visited this humble hilltop in Meron. This represents 10% of the Jewish population of the entire State of Israel.

Accordingly almost 200 United Hatzalah medics ascended to Meron as well. There they treated 76 people who fainted, 53 wounds/burns/bruises, 15 with serious medical considerations (cardio/pulmonary emergencies, hypoglycemia, convulsions), and 17 people complaining of generalized illness/weakness.

Enjoy the photos below - Hope to see you there next year.





Lag BaOmer Tragedy

When United Hatzalah medic Asher Bergman left the celebrations in Meron he was still in a festive mood. A short while into his travels he came across a frightening but all too common scene, 2 cars involved in a head-on collision along a narrow road. Bergman exited his vehicle and raced to the first vehicle fearing the worst.

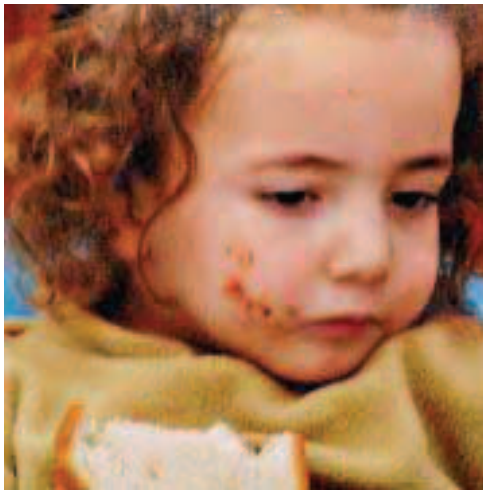
Except from being a bit shaken up the driver was fine. A survey of the second vehicle indicated the same, except for a few scratches and bruises. Bergman re-entered his vehicle and continued along the way.

Not 15 minutes later he received an alert on his pager regarding a serious bus-car accident a little farther ahead on the road. Once again, Bergman activated his lights and sirens and raced to the scene. Nothing could have prepared him for the sight of death and destruction that lay before him.

The bloodied driver had been extricated by passersby. The bodies of 2 children and 2 other adults had been so violently thrown around that it was painfully clear to even the layman that there were no lifesaving efforts to be attempted.

A volunteer medic that had been on the bus had found the 4 year old boy gasping for breath and looked to Bergman for help. Bergman knew that the only hope for the toddler was an immediate medevac to Rambam Medical Center Trauma Unit.





The reassuring whirr of chopper blades filled the air as a large military helicopter hovered into view. The driver and his mortally wounded son were soon on their way.

United Hatzalah Medic Asher Bergman told me that in his 14 years as a Hatzalah volunteer he had seen hundreds of car accidents and none had been as horrific as this one.

In the end, the toddler was unable to survive bringing the total of those killed to 3 children and 2 adults. In a moment of distraction a day of joy and celebration turned into a day of sadness and mourning.

Financial Lifesavers

United Hatzalah medics have added a new dimension to the word united. Realizing that the current financial crisis is not about a nameless, faceless global mass of people but rather it is a story of individuals struggling to survive in these uncertain times. They also realized that some of those people are likely to be their peers in United Hatzalah.

A few dedicated regional coordinators decided to help United Hatzalah medics by establishing the time-honored tradition of a free-loan fund. During the current initial stage of the fund members in good standing can register with the fund and if approved can receive a 5000 NIS loan.

Repayment is spread out over 10 months thereby assisting the recipient in avoiding cash-flow stress. Since its inception over 100,000 NIS has been loaned and is already recycling in the system.

Until now funding has been primarily from United Hatzalah members making small monthly donations/deposits to the fund or larger deposits in either fixed or open-ended lengths of time. We would like to expand the scope of the fund and thereby the size of the loans available. Please be in touch with Daniel Katzenstein who will be able to provide you with any information you may require.



**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.