

Helping Injured  
Survivors of Terror  
In Israel



7731 Tuckerman Lane  
PMB #163  
Potomac, Maryland 20854

Spring 2008

Operation Embrace has Distributed over 130K to Victims of Kassam Rocket Attacks

## Sderot Needs Our Help!

This past year alone, 783 rockets hit Sderot. Since 2001, 483 individuals have been wounded.



Rachel, 85, injured by a Kassam rocket



Yonit Eisdorfer and Aviva Tessler surround Iris Twito, mother of two boys ages 8 and 19 who were severely injured by a Kassam attack. OE provided immediate assistance and is continuing to help the family.



Liyor, age 5, was injured by a Kassam. OE provides monthly financial assistance, as well as temporary lodging for Liyor and her family.

### Highlights of OE Activities in 2007-2008:

- Greater Washington DC welcomed **Israeli survivors** of terror, Avi Tabib, Oren and Tzur Kozik at the **5th Annual Operation Embrace Dinner**. It was a huge success!
- **Avi Tabib**, injured at **Mike's Place** in Tel Aviv also spoke to students at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School and at the University of MD.
- **Blues by the Beach**, a documentary about the suicide bombing at Mike's Place, premiered at the JCC of Greater Washington.
- OE facilitated visit to Sderot by an **American Muslim Group**.
- OE hosted fundraisers in **Englewood**, New Jersey and **Ra'anana**, Israel
- **Tzur Kozik**, helped by OE after being injured in a drive by shooting, **celebrated his Bar Mitzvah**.
- 400 Sderot victims attended an OE sponsored **Chanukah celebration**.
- Ra'anana volunteers continue to visit the injured in Sderot.
- OE sponsored a dinner for Sderot victims at **Kibbutz Dorot**.
- **Haifa: Foxman PTSD** program at Rambam Hospital continues to draw large crowds.
- **Zfat: Drama therapy PTSD** group assisted victims of the North who continue to suffer from post traumatic stress syndrome.
- **University of Maryland** students visited terror victims in Jerusalem.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah donations continue to make a difference in the lives of Israeli Victims of terror attacks.
- OE **Mishloach Manot** project will deliver **hundreds** of Purim Baskets to survivors of terror attacks and their families.



Rabbi J. Tessler (left) with a family whose home was destroyed by a Kassam. OE provided financial assistance to replace basic belongings that were destroyed.



Ayelet Brooks, a volunteer from Ra'anana, face paints a little girl from Sderot during the OE Chanukah celebration for those suffering with trauma.

## A Message from the Co-Chairs of the 2007 OE Dinner



As co-chairs, we would first like to thank everyone who helped make this year's dinner at Woodmont Country Club such an incredible success! It was our first time chairing the event and it was an honor to work with such a dedicated and hard working committee. This year, OE had its first silent auction which was very exciting. Auction items included **two motorcycles** and a stunning **Chihuly** glass sculpture. The most inspiring part of the evening was listening to our Israeli heroes, **Oren Kozik**, **Avi Tabib**, and hearing **Tzur's** pure, angelic song. A special thanks to the donors who were extremely generous, as well as **Aviva Tessler** for her endless devotion to the survivors of terror. OE is an outstanding cause and we are proud to be part of its efforts. We look forward to helping make next year's event even more successful!

*Michael and Marni Riffken, Lee and Marlene Alexander, co-chairs of OE Dinner*

## Operation Embrace 2006 Financial Review

In 2007, Operation Embrace (OE) raised approximately \$310,000. We are proud to report that we have touched the lives of over one thousand people this year by direct financial assistance to the injured and their families. We provided over \$140,000 in direct funds for goods and services to survivors of terror and their families. In addition, grants were provided in the amount of \$85,000 to continue funding Post Traumatic Stress Treatment Centers for victims of terror in five locations throughout Israel. Operation Embrace will continue our work and provide assistance to communities under siege and to the injured and their families. We want to thank our donors for their generosity that allows us to do this important work.

### Operation Embrace Facilitates Important Visit to Sderot by American Muslim Group



Dr Hamid with Lior, survivor of terror

One of my dreams in life has been to meet with Israeli victims of terror, give them a big hug, and tell them that I love them. In Sderot, my dream became a reality. Although the citizens of Sderot are under daily

rocket attacks by Hamas Jihadists, they remain hopeful, full of compassion and solidarity. They welcomed me-as a Muslim- with a smile and open arms. The eyes of the victims of terror were telling me a story of love, suffering, and hope. I only wished I could contribute to bringing true peace and love to their lives.

Because of Operation Embrace, I was able to participate in this uniquely moving experience. I applaud this great organization for arranging such a great meeting.

G-d bless the entire nation of Israel.

Dr. Tawfik Hamid  
Author of *The Development of a Jihadists Mind*

*The group visit was sponsored by the American Jewish Committee*

### Foxman PTSD Program at Rambam Hospital

Our recent visit to Israel included a number of the usual tourist sights. But the activities my husband and I participated in on behalf of Operation Embrace were clearly the major highlights of our trip.



We were incredibly impressed by the monthly post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) program that OE helps sponsor at Rambam Hospital in Haifa. A ventriloquist with life-size puppets was the facilitator for the evening. There were about 40 attendees of all different religious backgrounds who had suffered from a terror attack - either directly or indirectly (some were relatives of the injured/killed victim). We spoke with a number of participants at the end of the meeting. Many stated that these OE programs, run by the dedicated social workers at Rambam, are the most significant and helpful aspect of their slow road to recovery.

It seems like it is always "someone else" who is a victim of these many incidents. We need to step out of our everyday routines - to be able to put faces on these victims and show our support. Every person can make a difference. There is no one that can take your place.



*Foxman Family at the OE Dinner*

**Rochelle Wiener**  
OE Volunteer

OE Board of Directors: Pennie Abramson, Anne Clemons, Yonit Eisdorfer, John Farahi, Martin Jacobs, Jill Klein, Jocelyn Krifcher, Rochelle Wiener

Executive Director: Aviva Tessler

## OE Celebrates Chanukah in Sderot and so much more...



The Chanukah celebration sponsored by Operation Embrace, Bituach Leumi and the city of Sderot was a resounding success. Children and Parents of all ages were able to take part in a fun filled event celebrating the joy of Chanukah. The evening was held at a beautiful event center on the outskirts of Sderot with decorated grounds and delicious food. While the children were amused by dancing clowns, magic tricks, and children's music, the adults enjoyed a live concert featuring Etti Ankri, a famous Israeli folk singer. The crowd was moved by the power of Etti's magical voice and her great empathy for the people of Sderot. Operation Embrace was responsible for suspending sadness in these families' lives and filling them with joy. This evening revived the families of Sderot, helping them celebrate life and the holidays, even if only for a couple of hours.

- Judy Kaye, OE Volunteer, Ra'anana Israel

Children from Sderot celebrate Chanukah



Aviva Tessler with representatives from Bituach Leumi and the Municipality of Sderot at the celebration .

"It's amazing how people won't travel to Israel because of the rockets, yet Geut, who I met in Sderot, would never leave because of the rockets."

*Reuben Gladstone, 14, on a recent visit with a survivor of terror*



Rabbi and Aviva Tessler and Reuben Gladstone visit with Geut, (center) who was injured when a Kassam rocket fell directly on her home



OE volunteers in Sderot



Kassam rockets collected after attacks

This past year OE has focused much of its energy on the victims of Sderot. Hamas has increased the number of Kassam rockets launched. This past Febuary, 355 rockets and mortar shells were fired at the city and its surrounding area. The people of Sderot suffer not only from physical injuries but even more so from psychological trauma. They have become accustomed to hearing red alerts daily, after which they have 15 seconds to find the nearest bomb shelter. Citizens of Sderot live in constant fear that at any moment their

families and homes might be attacked. They sleep together in close quarters or as close to bomb shelters as possible. Children do not play in the streets; parents are afraid to leave their children alone, even to go next door for a minute. The Israeli Center for Victims of Terror reported that close to 30% of adults and children in Sderot suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder due to cumulative stress of ongoing bombardment of rockets. With the help of social workers, **Operation Embrace** provides immediate assistance to victims of Kassam attacks, as well as maintains long term relationships with them.

"I think the people of Sderot must really appreciate Operation Embrace volunteers who come to support them. There is nothing like knowing that someone from the outside cares about you."

*Gabi, 11th grade OE Israeli Volunteer*



OE volunteer, Tamar Brooks, (center) brings gifts to Liyor and family. Liyor was blinded in a Sderot Kassam attack. OE provides monthly financial assistance to Liyor and his family.

### Together we can make a difference...

To make a donation by mail:

Operation Embrace  
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For more information or

to make a donation on-line, you can visit our website at: [www.operationembrace.org](http://www.operationembrace.org)  
or contact us at: [operationembrace@gmail.com](mailto:operationembrace@gmail.com)

## Mazel Tov Tzur!

After two years of rehabilitation, Tzur, who survived a drive-by shooting, danced with endless energy at his Bar Mitzvah. Hundreds of community members and friends danced with him. With the help of his sisters, Tzur performed his rendition of "MaOz Tzur," a song of faith and prayer with a haunting, beseeching melody. The rest of us learned their song and sang with them. The room was filled with an overwhelming love and admiration for Tzur. Those of us who have met this young boy and his family have gained a tremendous amount from knowing them. His Bar Mitzvah celebration demonstrated the enriching value of maintaining contact with individuals and communities in need of support. The special relationship my mother and I formed with Tzur was made possible only because of Operation Embrace. May Operation Embrace continue to help us to *embrace* families and communities in Israel, and in so doing, deeply enrich our own communities.

Lauren Mervis



Lauren, Tzur and Marcelle Mervis

## OE Around the World



Englewood, NJ Fundraiser



Ra'anana, Israel Fundraiser



Sderot, Israel

Wiener Family visits Koby (center), an injured victim of a Kassam attack



**LET'S MAKE SURE EVERYBODY SMILES!**

**THIS PURIM, send MISHLOACH MANOT (a gift basket) to a victim of terror in ISRAEL!**

\$50 a basket

All items in baskets will be purchased from vendors in Sderot, as well as packaged by the people of Sderot. This is a great opportunity to show Sderot our support!

For more information email Lisa Caplan at [lisa.caplan@comcast.net](mailto:lisa.caplan@comcast.net)



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