



Asael Shabo (In wheelchair), who lost his mother and three siblings in a terrorist attack, is presented with gifts by (from left) Aviva Litan, Anne Clemons, Aviva Tessler, and Jocelyn Krifcher, founders of 'Operation Embrace.' To their right are Boaz and Aviya Shabo. (Yael Tzur/Israel Sun)

Operation Embrace shows terror victims the power of love

By AMY STYER

Four women from Potomac, Maryland, are visiting hospital beds across the country to show victims of terrorism that Americans do care. The founding members of "Operation Embrace" - Anne Clemons, Jocelyn Krifcher, Aviva Litan, and Aviva Tessler — are currently on a 10-day trip bearing gifts and greetings to victims and their families.

After hearing the story of Boaz Shabo, who lost his wife, three children, and home to a terror attack on June 6, 2002, Operation Embrace contacted Shabo to see what they could bring him. He simply said that his remaining four children needed winter coats. School children from local Jewish day schools in Potomac raised money for the coats, which were delivered to the Shabo family on Tuesday.

On their first trip here in May, the four said they learned the value of consulting social workers as to

what exactly are the victims needs. On Monday, they visited social workers in Hadera. After a warm exchange, one social worker said, “ Now I know who to call if we have a terrorist attack here.”

About 30 minutes later a terrorist struck at the Kfar Saba mall, killing two and injuring 40 people. “Now we have new names to add to our list,” Krifcher said.

Operation Embrace was founded in November 2001 after a meeting with a young terror victim left Tessler shaken up. After returning to America, Tessler said, “I felt a gripping calling in my heart to do something to let these people know we care.” Between carpools and jobs, Tessler, Clemons, Krifcher, and Litan dreamed up a grass-roots organization that would involve Americans in the lives of victims of terror once the headlines faded and the struggle of daily life returned. Rather than contributing to an appeal, concerned Americans can write letters to and give gifts to specific faces. The four Women then self finance trips to Israel to personally deliver the gifts.

Meanwhile the Montreal Jewish community donated CAD 100,000 towards an ambulance and a motorcycle for the Zaka Southern Region. Funds are part of the CAD 15 million raised in the Montreal Israel Emergency Campaign and transferred for allocation through the UIA Federations Canada-Israel Office.

Marc Gold, Chairman of the Israel and Overseas Department for the Montreal Federation CJA, and Beersheba Mayor Ya’acov Temer participated in the dedication ceremony, held at the Beersheba Municipality.

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