



Jordan Miles/www.bridgesforpeace.com

Rebuilding the Lives that Went up in SMOKE

THEY WERE TOLD TO DROP EVERYTHING and meet at the entrance of the community—immediately. The sea of flames that had been raging in the forest surrounding Mevo Modi'im in central Israel was now lapping at the edges of the village. There was no time to pack a bag, grab important documents or gather favorite keepsakes and treasured pictures. Residents evacuated with the clothes on their backs, praying the blazes would be quenched so that they could return home. It was not to be. The fire burned up 40 homes and destroyed Mevo Modi'im. Now the charred shells of homes and cars stand as the only reminder of a once thriving life. However, in the midst of the devastation, the community praised God because not a single human life was lost. I was immediately reminded of Isaiah 43:2: *"When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you."*



At the end of May, Israel battled a series of devastating wildfires raging across the country. The heat was sweltering, as Israel was in the grips of a scorching heat wave. In a 41-hour timeframe, a staggering 1,023 fires ignited, translating to a new blaze sparking every two-and-a-half minutes. Firefighters and volunteers battled around the clock in temperatures soaring above 118°F (48°C) in some areas to bring the flames under control. Their tireless efforts bore fruit. Nearly two days after the first blaze ignited, authorities declared that the last fire had been quenched.

The battle against the blazes has been won, yet the damage inflicted is horrendous. Some 7,940 dunams (1,962 acres) of forests, orchards and fields were reduced to smoldering ashes. More than 3,500 Israelis were evacuated. Fifty homes were burned up in the sea of flames—40 in Mevo Modi'im alone. The fire stole more than furniture, cars, clothes and keepsakes. Treasured memories, a sense of security and the foundation of life as they knew it also vanished in smoke. Our friend Shruly told us that his 150-year-old *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.) scroll that survived the Holocaust was now ashes. A musician, Shruly also lost his studio, most of his musical instruments and irreplaceable handwritten musical scores. All that remains for those who lost everything in the fire is the heartbreaking reality of rebuilding what was destroyed.

They will not face this task alone. Bridges for Peace stands with them, providing comfort, compassion, the physical means and the helping hand they need so desperately. Mere hours after the blazes were quenched, we had the opportunity to visit Mevo Modi'im and walk with the residents through the charred remains of their lives. Never before in Israel's history has an entire town been utterly decimated. Apart from ruined homes, cars



A few days later we cooperated with Rabbi Tuly Weisz to organize a mall outing. We provided dinner, entrance to the play area for the children and a NIS 500 (US \$140) gift card each for 300 people.

The process to rebuild their lives will likely take two years. It is our desire to stand with them at each transition. Once they get into temporary homes (caravans), they will need furniture and appliances. Literally everything must be replaced.

Will you join us in this mission? Your generous gift to our Crisis Assistance Fund will bless an entire town with Christian love expressed in practical ways. Your gift of love will help Israeli families restore the lives, homes and security that went up in smoke.

Blessings from Israel,

Rebecca J. Brimmer
International President and CEO



Photos by: Jordan Miles/www.bridgesforpeace.com

and furniture, all the infrastructure, electric wiring and plumbing have burned up too. Even those whose homes survived the blaze cannot move back because of the destroyed infrastructure. Despite the devastation, the residents remain resolute, even singing praises to God among the blackened ruins.

When we asked the residents what they needed right now, they told us that they didn't have time to take their laptops before evacuating. We immediately contacted our computer supplier and ordered 50 computers. Two days later, we delivered them. Shoshanna was so happy she sang her thanks as she danced around the room saying, "You are angels!" Hannah's eyes were filled with tears as we hugged. She and her husband, Danny, escaped with their four young children and not much else.

BRIDGES FOR PEACE Your Israel Connection...

Crisis Assistance Fund

US \$50 US \$100 US \$200 US \$500 US \$1,000 US \$ _____ (other)

- GREATEST MINISTRY NEED** US \$ _____
- GREATEST ISRAELI NEED** US \$ _____
- RAMONA LEWIS MEMORIAL FUND** US \$ _____
- KARMIEL CENTER** US \$ _____
- FOOD PROJECT** US \$ _____
- ADOPTION PROGRAM** (one-year commitment)
_____ US \$65/month
- FEED A CHILD** (one-year commitment)
_____ US \$65/month
US \$ _____ One-time gift
- ADOPT AN ISRAELI TOWN** (one-year commitment)
_____ Minimum US \$150/month
- PROJECT RESCUE** _____ US \$400 (or any size gift)
- PROJECT TIKVAH (HOPE)** _____ US \$45 (or any size gift)
- SAVE AN ISRAELI LIFE** _____ US \$25
- IMMIGRANT WELCOME GIFTS** US \$ _____
- NEW IMMIGRANT FUND** US \$ _____
- CHEER BASKET** _____ US \$25
- SCHOOL STARTER KIT** _____ US \$7

- HOME REPAIR** US \$ _____
- VICTIMS OF TERROR** US \$ _____
- DENTAL/MEDICAL AID** US \$ _____
- CRISIS ASSISTANCE** US \$ _____
- ARAB FAMILY ASSISTANCE** US \$ _____
- EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM** US \$ _____
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Name _____
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I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A MONTHLY COMMITMENT TO _____ PROJECT
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- I will pray for Israel and the Jewish people.
- I also need your prayers and have attached my prayer request.
- I have placed Bridges for Peace in my will to bless future generations.
- Please send me information on your Bridges for Peace travel programs.
- Please send your publications to my friend(s), whose name(s) and address(es) are attached.