



From our President

▶ I hope you're well. The unrest in Gaza and violence in Israel, the tragedy at Mt. Meron and COVID-19 wreaked havoc, creating a few crazy months in Israel. While these happenings created new challenges, we are thankful that ELEM's staff and volunteers continued their steadfast work to provide comfort and support for our distressed youth. Please read how our help changed the lives of many for the better.

We hope you had a great Independence Day. While enjoying yourself bear in mind how ELEM's work has given many youth opportunities to grow and become independent.

Stay safe,



Lenore Ruben
President




Ray of Hope Gala 2021

▶ It's coming up to that time of the year again!

Dust off your virtual party shoes and get ready, because our staff and volunteers are hard at work planning our virtual 2021 Ray of Hope Gala which will take place on October 20, 2021.

Some very exciting announcements will be shared soon on our social media platforms.

Follow us on social media to learn more -

 @elemUSA
  @ELEMUSA1
  @elem_usa



News from Israel

Unrest in Israel Devastates Youth and Staff

▶ The recent violence in the Holy Land left our staff devastated, scared and worn out. It's too early to tell what could be the long term effects, but there may be significant negative consequences on our programs and how youth interact with each other.

The situation in Akko, a mixed city usually celebrated for co-existence and tolerance, was especially painful. Our staff from the Akko Lighthouse Center (Migdalar) found themselves on the streets at night during the riots, trying to care for our youth. They noted that the situation felt out of control. They tried to locate our youth and escort them back home, and found themselves helping the police who were trying to calm the rioting citizens. Businesses and stores owned by Jews were burned down in the Old City. Our staff kept encouraging people to return home, while still looking for the youth, some of whom were rioting, too. "This isn't normal. We're heartbroken," they said.

ELEM Supports Youth at Mt. Meron Tragedy

- ▶ Lag B'Omer, normally a joyous holiday, took place on April 20. The annual celebration on Mt. Meron turned into a disaster that left 45 people dead and over 100 injured. Most of the deceased and injured were young, the youngest being only nine years old.

While last year COVID-19 put a damper on the festivities, normally Mt. Meron sees nearly 500,000 celebrants for the Lag B'Omer bonfires and celebrations. The celebrations resumed with full crowds in 2021. This massive festival comes with many dangers for Israeli youth. It can turn into a rave where drugs are distributed and youth are unsupervised. To provide support, ELEM's Outreach Vans are there. Staff and volunteers aid youth who might suffer from dehydration, alcohol and drug poisoning and exploitation.

We are grateful to report that all our staff and volunteers who were at the event are fine and were not injured during this disaster. However, our colleagues in Israel shared that this was a traumatic event for them and they will have to deal with the emotional repercussions for a long time. As a family, we will be here to assist them.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

- ▶ April was sexual awareness month. This past year, due to isolation caused by COVID-19, we witnessed a significant increase in sexual violence. Isolating at home was not always safe. There were difficult cases in Israel, including the gang rape of a 16-year-old girl in Eilat and the arrest of a twelve-year-old boy in Tel Aviv for attempted rape.

Sadly, more and more of these cases are coming to light. ELEM is working hard to educate youth and try to prevent these types of incidents. We are at the forefront of treating the victims of sexual assault, while also creating a safe space, a home, for those who most need it. Learn more about these devastating occurrences and how you can help stop them from [Keren Naor](#), a manager at ELEM's Sexual Violence Field.

Israeli TV show "Blackspace" Debuts on Netflix / Stars and ELEM Youth Discuss Mental Illness

- ▶ In late May, the Israeli TV show "Blackspace" began airing on Netflix. When it first aired in Israel in December 2020, it was accompanied by an aftershow campaign to raise awareness about youth in distress and mental illness. The campaign, "You're Not Alone," featured discussions between cast members and alumni from ELEM's programs.



Watch these conversations with [Ola](#), [Yoni](#), [Sergey](#), [Yaron](#) and [Petya](#).

During the six weeks when the show aired in Israel:

- 8,000 inquiries were made to ELEM Digital, our online platform.
- The number of inquiries made through the ELEM chat was doubled.
- 70 percent of the inquiries were made by young women.
- The most prominent issues that came up through the inquiries which were made during the height of the pandemic included loneliness, emptiness, lack of social interactions, escalation in depression and anxiety, increase in sexual violence, increase in online violence and more.



ELEM Youth Say It Loud and Clear!

Proud of Pride!

June was pride month. ELEM staff and volunteers worked nonstop with LGBTQ+ youth in need.

"When I was 16 I realized that I am trans, and when I was 18 I came out. At first, gradually, to friends from school who were like family, and eventually, to my actual family. It was a tough thing for them to accept and they didn't support me. As a matter of fact, to this day it's hard for them, but we're going through a process together, as a family."

I came to ELEM five years ago and they've been like a family to me ever since. They helped me find myself, my path. They helped me heal my relationship with my mom and learn to share a home with her. ELEM was always there for me."

Check our Pride Month [stories](#) to learn more about the differences we've made in the lives of many.

ELEM Alumnus Protects Israel as a Firefighter

Muhamad Kaid Abasi is an alumnus of our Lighthouse/Migdalar Center in Acre. A few months ago, he started volunteering as a firefighter as part of his National Service.



"When it's time to act, I stand fearless in front of the fire," he said. "I do what I do for the safety of the people, and I feel proud and humbled to do so. During the recent holiday of Lag B'Omer, I was out there, extinguishing fires and making sure people were celebrating responsibly, and that there's no danger of fires spreading."

[Read more.](#)



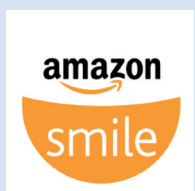
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Do you work for a matchmaker?



Many companies can double or even triple your gift to ELEM. Find out by clicking [here](#), or contacting [Alana Cooper](#), Director of Development, for more information.

Give A Gift



If you would like to make a gift to support ELEM you can visit [ELEM.ORG](#), or mail a check to:
ELEM/Youth in Distress in Israel, 121 West 36th Street, Suite 329
New York, NY 10018



Join “Friends of ELEM”



We know you love seeing our great work helping Israel's distressed youth. We would be honored if you became a “Friend of ELEM,” by becoming a yearly donor of \$1,000 or more. Friends receive “in the know” information, exclusive direct information from Israel, participation in quarterly Zoom calls with Israel and more.

Get Involved



Consider making a donation. No amount is too small. Our children greatly appreciate anything you can give. If you want to volunteer in the USA or if you're visiting Israel and want to see us in action, contact us at info@elem.org. Get your child involved in a mitzvah project or create a fund to honor someone special.

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