

## Yeladim – Fair Chance for Children – COVID 19

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***Israel is currently battling an unprecedented health and economic crisis, which is affecting all strata of the population. The challenges are evident in each and every sector and community. Below are two emergency programs we would like to run in the immediate future on the basis of our ongoing routine activities.***

### **The projects**

1. Emergency Response for at-Risk Young Adults with no Family Support who have aged out of their Residential Placements.

a. The need

Among young adults at-risk who have exceeded the age for statutory support programs, there are hundreds with no family support. Only some of them have, over the years, managed to achieve stability and independence; money were not as fortunate. During times of peace, we offer our services to the latter; these services are of acute importance during this crisis.

The needs of this population are diverse and complex at this time. Firstly, there is a real economic need. These young people have no economic safety net such as a family that can help – they are alone in the world. In normal times, their socioeconomic situation is poor; in times of crisis that has created a massive wave of unpaid leave, and job dismissals, their situation is even more distressing. It is important to note that most of them are anyway employed in temporary jobs, and so losing them is devastating. Some of them reach a point of not being able to pay for the very basic expenses of food, medication and a roof over their head. Thus, they may need housing solutions, financial assistance, food package, subsidies and other immediate solutions. Some of these young adults are not even aware of their rights and how to realize them, and they need help with this as well.

Another significant need is emotional. The COVID-19 crisis is arousing severe stress and anxiety among the entire Israeli public. Having no support network, these youngsters' emotional stability is more susceptible to crisis. An emotional overload may paralyze them to the point of not being able to take any constructive steps towards coping with the situation. Given the current state of affairs, they also won't be able to benefit from the services of mental health therapists. These young adults need personal accompaniment as well as professional emotional-psychological support via technological platforms, given the restrictions imposed by the Ministry of Health. These young adults often feel alone even in regular times, and this feeling is very much more acute in special circumstances such as the current COVID-19 crisis.

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#### b. The response

During this emergency period, we would like to offer these young people an integrative and comprehensive set of services that will provide them with responses to every challenge. First of all, we will seek to locate relevant young adults who display risk behaviors. Following that, we will map out their needs and create a set of services to meet these needs. Finally, we will act to make solutions accessible, while making sure that the young individual benefits from them in the best possible manner.

The above setup will include a broad range of solutions. In terms of finance, we will offer study and living stipends, food packages and shopping vouchers as well as money for rent. In terms of emotional support, we will seek to enable online meetings among the young adults themselves in order to alleviate the sense of isolation, as well as online meetings with relevant healthcare professionals. We will provide them with accompaniment in order to help them manage their daily lives during the crisis and the subsequent recovery period.

#### c. Budget

<b>Expenditures</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>\$</b>
Helping young people at risk with study stipends to minimize dropout due to financial difficulties	115,035
Professional accompaniment team, counselor and assistant (social workers and therapists)	70,540
Help with food, rent and basic equipment	38,853
Emotional treatment by qualified external therapists, including psychiatric evaluation as needed.	17,011
<b>Total</b>	<b>241,439</b>
<b>Income</b>	
<b>Source</b>	<b>\$</b>
Private donors	114,338
The National Insurance Institute (requested)	27,887
To be raised	99,214
<b>Total</b>	<b>241,439</b>

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## 2. Emergency response for children in the Legal Guardianship program

### a. The need

*Yeladim Besikuy* has been appointed by the court as guardian for the body and property of minors who have no family support as there is no responsible parent who can attend to their various needs and ensure their normal development.

The task of our Guardianship Program is to try to provide each minor with opportunities similar to those available to children growing up in normative homes, help them to extract themselves from this harsh life cycle and give them a chance to grow up and become independent adults contributing to the community. Through close ties, a warm embrace, a steady hand on the shoulder or a kind word, an initial basis for a relationship is formed in order to respond to whatever they need to become stronger. At the same time, the program offers a multidimensional response covering various needs a minor may have, including financial and legal, led by lawyers and administrative coordinators who help maximize and protect the children's rights and manage their money and property.

It is important to note that unlike other entities appointed as guardians by the state, *Yeladim Besikuy* is the only one that does not charge the children any fee for its guardianship services, and most of its activities are based entirely on donations. Moreover, *Yeladim Besikuy* has set up special trusts for various expenditures that improve the quality of the children's lives, such as after school enrichment clubs, dental care not included in the health basket, and specific things that the children's state allowance does not cover.

The guardianship staff is currently coping with questions like what it means to be such a child at a time of panic and uncertainty? How does a child who has no family support when everyone else is filling their houses with food and basic necessities and a primordial fear of shortages heightens the sense of loneliness and lack of another adult to calm one down and be there for you? What are the "basic products" needed in such a case and how can the guardian provide the children with them? How can we reduce the sense of aloneness and anxiety and care for the other who might embrace them and hold them tightly at a time when we are forbidden to meet and embrace each other? How do we reduce the risk of a traumatic repeat of the experience of being abandoned? This is a testing period in which the figure that looks after them must not fade and vanish.

### b. The response

In this time of upheaval and uncertainty, the continuing presence of a beneficent figure is more important than ever – in other words the guardianship staff, who initiate WhatsApp and Zoom conversations, and monitor what is going on with the children and their families.

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The guardians try to remain a calming, supportive factor catering to needs and maintaining optimism. Most of the children have remained in their residential group homes but some have decided not to go back and to stay with their families despite the deprivations and emptiness. Knowing the limited emotional capabilities of the parents/relatives to support these children in normal times, the guardians try to offer support to the parent as well as help with partial financing of household expenses at a time when many of these parents are finding it harder to earn a living. For example, four children decide to remain with their mother, who suffers from slight mental retardation because they do not want to leave her and each go to his or her residential group home. Learning is taking place online, but there is no computer in the house; the guardian buys one laptop, makes sure there is a Wi-Fi connection and sees to deliveries from the supermarket. Another impoverished mother, who does not write in Hebrew, is sent on unpaid leave and feels lost, and the guardian helps her fill in the online forms so she can receive unemployment benefits.

And what about the isolation and loneliness of those who are no longer wards, who, on the one hand no longer have a roof over their head in the residential group home, and on the other, are not yet strong enough to live independently and take care of themselves? The guardian is often the only close professional they have left, and thanks to this strong connection that has lasted for years, in these difficult times, they turn to them for help. For example, one young woman broke up with her boyfriend, moved in with a friend of the family and called up hungry. The mother of another young man was fired from her job and has no food at home. The guardians try to soften the blow, to connect them to an NPO that distributes food, orders pizza and says a kind word. This is the essence of guardianship – to continue the permanency, to create a continuum of safety within the disjointed narrative.

#### c. Budget

Because of the pandemic, we have suffered a dramatic decline in income for the project. We need emergency help for our activities according to the following budget:

Expenditure	
Item	\$
Social workers' salaries	297,185
Operational costs	153,381
Operations' coordinator's salary	50,232
Legal assistance coordinator's salary	79,294

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Program director's salary	76,967
<b>Total</b>	<b>657,059</b>
<b>Income</b>	
<b>Source</b>	<b>\$</b>
The Ministry of Justice	149,198
Dr. Fischer Ltd.	41,831
Ashtrum	27,887
The Belldegrun Family Foundation	20,000
Balance from previous year	14,582
Ms. Yael Moritz	11,155
To be raised	392,406
<b>Total</b>	<b>657,059</b>

3. The request

We will be most appreciative and any support we can receive from you to run these programs.

Sincerely,

Adi Nir  
CMO

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