

What our Volunteer Drivers Say About “On the Road to Recovery”

Albert Amit
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Just imagine that you are a young couple living on the periphery in Israel and that you have three little children. A couple of years ago, you found out that one of your children has a cancerous illness which necessitates intensive treatments in a hospital far from where you live, which requires you to get to the hospital several times a week. In addition, the husband has been out of work for a long time, and you don't have much money to spare, especially not for travelling expenses.

This opening undoubtedly has caused some discomfort. And the description is even more serious if referring to a young family from a Palestinian village situated a long distance from Nablus.

On the morning of the treatment day, the family - usually the mother, father and the child - will get ready for the trip to the hospital in Israel. Getting organized for a journey filled with hardships begins extremely early in the morning because the family has to travel through a route filled with obstacles from the village to the nearest city, and from there to one of the crossings, where they will have to wait together with hundreds of Palestinian men waiting to cross over in order to work in Israel. The crossing itself, even if people are considerate of the mother and sick child, is not simple; it requires maximum patience and, especially, reliance on the mercy of the inspectors for a speedy and smooth crossing into Israel.

At the Israeli side of the crossing, some of those families meet with a surprise, in the form of a volunteer of the organization “**The Road to Recovery**”, initiated seven years ago by **Yuval Roth**, the aim of which is to drive the Palestinian families to hospitals in Israel for treatment.

“**The Road to Recovery**” is an excellent example of effective giving combined with an opportunity to improve personal relationships between Israelis and the Palestinian populations of Gaza and the West Bank. The organization runs on a relatively low budget, and efficiently helps smooth the way for Palestinian children to get to the Israeli hospitals. A fairly small group of volunteers routinely show up every morning and afternoon to drive the children and their families to and from the hospitals.

The scene that generally takes place between the Palestinian family and the Israeli driver comprises a microcosm of opportunity to build a network of relationships based upon mutual respect, compassion and giving. Even if the Israeli driver does not speak Arabic perfectly, this small gesture and the interaction taking place in the course of the drive also works wonders.

Imagine a Palestinian family returning home in the village toward evening, telling about the trials of the day and also telling about the other Jews whom they met on their way to

and from hospital – people who are humane, pleasant, tolerant, and not at all like what they were believed to be. It's here that the seed of giving is planted by this organization and by others like it. The act of giving in a small, essential way to families in need can spread such a great message to so many of our neighbors on the other side of the fence, and thus contribute a little more to the strengthening of the humane connection between our two peoples – without declarations, confrontations or outworn politics.

We can only hope that enterprises such as this one will grow and increase autonomously to bring hearts closer and to help the Palestinian population in a variety of ways. Because of ever-increasing appeals for help, our organization needs additional volunteers.

If you are interested in joining, please look at our [Facebook](#) page or [website](#), or phone **Yuval** at **050-9480111**.

Albert Amit (albert@yuv.co.il)

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