

## EFFECTS OF THE WAR ON GRANDPARENTS – REACHING OUT & ENGAGING

THE JERUSALEM POST

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DECEMBER 27, 2024

PARENTS AND siblings of hostages and soldiers who were seriously wounded or fell in battle over the past 14 months are constantly heard on the radio, but grandparents are heard far less frequently even though they suffer great emotional pain. It's a terrible thing to bury one's children, but even more so to bury one's grandchildren.

Upon realizing what bereaved grandparents and grandparents of wounded soldiers are experiencing, Yad Sarah, one of Israel's leading healthcare and social services NGOs, sprung into action. It has launched an innovative initiative, in collaboration with the Jerusalem Municipality and the state lottery Mifal Hapayis – which supports many community projects – to address the often overlooked emotional needs of grandparents of soldiers wounded during the war.

The initiative highlights grandparents' vital and underappreciated role in supporting their families through their challenges.

Dozens of grandparents attended the new program's inaugural event on Tuesday at Beit Yad Sarah in Jerusalem. The initiative aims to provide grandparents a space to share, empower themselves, and gain practical tools to cope with their grandchildren's rehabilitation process.

Speakers included Yad Sarah's CEO, Moshe Cohen, and Gil Rivush, the Jerusalem's Municipality's deputy director-general and head of the Community Services Division. Dina Dror, a social worker from the Elah Center, guided group discussions. There was also a performance by artist Navot Ben Barak.

Since the outbreak of the war, Yad Sarah has been committed to supporting the families of Israel's approximately 13,500 injured soldiers. The organization has helped thousands through its Soldier Rehabilitation Division, which brings together the full range of the NGO's services, from at-home equipment loans to accessible transportation and lodging for families of the wounded at Yad Sarah facilities near primary care hospitals.

"The Jerusalem community is one big family, leading in social innovation, and this new initiative is a prime example," said Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Lion. "It expresses deep appreciation for grandparents, who play a significant role in the fabric of Israeli family life. I welcome the collaboration with Yad Sarah and Mifal HaPayis and am confident that this initiative will provide support, comfort, and hope to them."

Yad Sarah founder Rabbi Uri Lupolianski, who is a former mayor of the city, stated: "This heartwarming collaboration offers recognition and support to grandparents, the backbone of the Israeli family.

"Many of them have volunteered at Yad Sarah for years, giving of themselves to others, and now we have the privilege to provide them with assistance and support in their challenging time. Our moral imperative is to care for those who care for others."