

NA'AMAT answers the call in Israel

By Sharon Sutker McGowan

In the months since the Oct. 7 terrorist attack, NA'AMAT Israel has been playing a vital role aiding citizens displaced from their homes. In addition, by advocating for the release of hostages, educating the world about Hamas and calling out the silence of women's organizations in the face of sexual assault against women and girls, NA'AMAT is doing what it has always done — identifying critical needs and working to address them.

After the Hamas attack, when 120,000 families were evacuated from their communities, NA'AMAT stepped up, hosting 20 families from Ashkelon, Ofakim and nearby kibbutzim at the Ayanot Youth Village, while an additional 15 families from Ashkelon and Netivot were hosted at the Kanot Youth Village. The villages also housed 100 IDF reserve paratroopers until they were called to active duty.

Before the families came to Kanot and Ayanot, terrified children spent most of their time huddled in safe rooms or shelters, according to Shirli Shavit, director of NA'AMAT Israel's International Department. Once at the youth villages, they were able to relax



NA'AMAT Israel President Hagit Pe'er and Shirli Shavit, director of the International Department, distributed gift kits to female officers at an IDF Air Force base.

a bit, participating in games, activities and classes. Kanot put up large tents to hold classes because existing classrooms were too far from safe rooms.

Elsewhere, in Eilat, where 60,000 people were evacuated, NA'AMAT leaders organized activities for children and families. Regional chairperson Sima Namir, and Yehudit Uliel, regional chairperson from Sderot, also collected necessities such as clothing, toiletries and medical supplies, and partnered with social workers and psychologists to help address emotional needs.

In addition, more than 1,500 personal care kits, which included body lotion, shower oil and cosmetics, were distributed to women soldiers.

For the next several months, NA'AMAT USA will be raising funds to build supplemental shelters, both for the youth villages and for the many day-

care centers that need them to protect students and staff from rocket attacks. Each shelter can provide a safe space for up to 30 people, and costs \$50,000.

Raising their voices to call for the release of the hostages held by Hamas, NA'AMAT members in Israel and throughout the world have participated in rallies and protests, including a massive march in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 14. As of this writing, 137 hostages have been released, of the approximately 240 who were abducted on Oct. 7.

NA'AMAT Israel President Hagit Pe'er has taken the lead in demanding that UN Women (officially known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) denounce the brutal treatment of women by Hamas, including rape and sexual assault.

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Remember NA'AMAT in your will

By Susan Miller, VP, Fundraising

For nearly a century, NA'AMAT has been a trusted leader in providing essential services to women and families in Israel, and it continues to make a significant impact on the lives of thousands of people each year.

One of the best ways to ensure that NA'AMAT's important work continues for generations to come is to create a legacy gift. A legacy gift is a planned donation made through your estate planning documents, such as your will or trust. Legacy gifts can be made in a variety of ways, including cash, stocks, bonds, real estate and life insurance.

Here are just a few reasons to consider creating a legacy gift to NA'AMAT USA:

- It's a meaningful way to honor your values and support a cause that is important to you. By creating a legacy gift to NA'AMAT, you can ensure that your values of equality, justice and opportunity continue to be upheld long after you're gone.
- It's a way to make a lasting impact on the lives of women and families in Israel. Your legacy gift can help to ensure that the vital services we provide continue for future generations.
- It's a tax-efficient way to give. Legacy gifts are typically tax-deductible, which means that you can reduce your taxable estate while also supporting a cause that you care about.

If you're interested in creating a legacy gift to NA'AMAT USA, talk to your financial advisor about your estate planning goals and how a legacy gift to NA'AMAT can fit into your overall plan.

Here are some specific examples of legacy gifts that you can make to

NA'AMAT USA:

- **Bequest:** A bequest is a gift made through your will. You can bequeath a specific amount of money, a percentage of your estate, or even a specific asset, such as a piece of real estate or a stock portfolio.
- **Charitable gift annuity:** A charitable gift annuity is a contract between you and a charity, such as NA'AMAT USA. In exchange for a gift of cash or securities, the charity agrees to pay you a fixed annual income for the rest of your life.
- **Charitable trust:** A charitable trust is a legal entity that is created to manage and distribute assets to a charity or charities. You can create a charitable trust during your lifetime or through your estate plan.
- **Life insurance policy:** You can designate NA'AMAT USA as the beneficiary of your life insurance policy. This is a simple way to make a significant gift to NA'AMAT without having to give up any assets during your lifetime.

No matter what type of legacy gift you choose, your donation will help to ensure that NA'AMAT USA's important work continues for generations to come. For more information on how to create a legacy gift to NA'AMAT USA, please email development@naamat.org or call (818) 431-2200.

We must continue to speak up

By Randye Sable and Susan Neubauer, Advocacy Chairs

Saturday, Oct. 7, 2023, is a date that will be seared in the mind of every Jew for the horrors brought upon our Israeli brothers and sisters. Initially, the media focused on the brutal murders of 1,200 Israelis, the injuries to thou-

sands of citizens, the taking of 240 hostages into Gaza, and, to a lesser extent, the unthinkable acts of sexual violence against female soldiers, civilians and children.

As the war between Israel and Hamas expanded into weeks and then months, news reports have covered the exchange of Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners and the dismantling of Hamas by the IDF in Gaza. Nowhere did the mainstream media, UN Women or women's groups around the world condemn Hamas' sexual assaults on Israeli women and children. Where were the feminist groups and nonprofit organizations dedicated to human rights and protection of women and children — why didn't they speak up?

Kol ha-Kavod to the women who demonstrated outside the UN and to Jewish women in America who spoke up through organizations such as NA'AMAT USA, NCJW and Hadasah.

UN Women finally owned up to its responsibility by issuing a statement on Dec. 1. The statement spoke to the "conflict related sexual violence and gender-based crimes" of Oct. 7.

Today rabah to the brave Israelis who came to the UN on Monday, Dec. 4, for a special session addressing the war crime of sexual-based violence inflicted on Israeli women and children, civilians and soldiers. Thank you to our executive director, Susan Seely, for being present at the UN that day representing NA'AMAT USA.

Each of us must continue to speak up. Contact your congressman and senators. When warranted, thank them for their steadfast support for Israel. Post positive and informative items on social media about Israel. Show your concern for family and friends there.

Last, but not least, continue to contribute to NA'AMAT's Israel Emergency Fund at www.naamat.org. The ongoing needs are great.

Message from the President



By Jan Gurvitch

As we look back on the past year, our hearts are filled with sadness and grief as we reflect on the tragic events of Oct. 7. Reeling from that day of unimaginable horrors, Israel had to gear up for a fight that could determine her very survival. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quickly declared war and more than 360,000 reservists were called up to defend our beloved Israel and facilitate the return of hostages to their families.

On Oct. 8, NA'AMAT USA responded with one heart and one voice. Under the capable leadership of our executive director, Susan Seely, we established an emergency fund and raised more than \$343,000. Our areas, clubs, councils and donors held fundraisers to help pay for the emergency social services provided by NA'AMAT Israel. From challah bakes to "Botox and Bagels," initiated by a dermatologist in Orange County, California, we brought our communities together in unity and with great purpose.

The Tuesday after Thanksgiving, Giving Tuesday, provided another opportunity to raise funds. Money raised from this campaign was designated for our domestic violence program. In addition to our national campaign, many members created their own fundraisers on Facebook. Sadly, incidents of domestic violence have been on the rise during these dark hours when families are living under enormous stress, including the loss of family members, friends and homes.

Since the war began in Israel there has been an exponential increase in incidents of antisemitism in the United States. Many college campuses no longer appear to be safe places for Jewish students. Students in one school had to

seek sanctuary in a locked library to separate themselves from angry and threatening demonstrators. Synagogues were also vandalized and hateful symbols and messages have been spray painted on their doors. In Albany, New York, an individual was arrested after shooting a gun near a synagogue.

Pro-Hamas supporters are denying what happened on Oct. 7. In a recent article in the Forward, Deborah Lipstadt, who serves as the Biden administration's envoy for combating international antisemitism, was quoted saying, "The reach, the speed of the rewriting of history — or of current, contemporary events, is awesome in the worst kind of way.... If history can be rewritten so quickly nothing is safe."

NA'AMAT has stood strongly in support of American and Israeli Jewish communities. We have gathered in our local synagogues, rallied in Washington, D.C. and joined with partners to "Shed a Light" on the dangerous voices of hate. In November, we participated in a virtual program with Peter Levi, ADL's Regional Director of Orange County/Long Beach, to discuss antisemitism on college campuses and what Jewish Americans can do to combat it. Together with allies such as the ADL, Hillel and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, we are working to address the disturbing rise in antisemitism on campuses and in our communities. The ADL has created a resource to share with college students: Campus Antisemitism Legal Line (CALL), at <https://www.legal-protection.org>.

These are challenging and historic times. Your support and your solidarity with the American and Israel communities has been unshakable. Your willingness to give and then give again is inspirational. On behalf of our national board and staff, I thank you for all that you do. We are truly one people with one heart — *lev echad. Am Yisrael Chai.*

Welcome Kim Marks

Kim Marks, an experienced project manager in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors, has joined NA'AMAT USA as Development Associate. Marks is working to increase donor engagement, expand awareness of NA'AMAT USA, and coordinate with our Israel team to help donors and members learn more about the impact of their giving.

Most recently Marks worked at the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Mercer in Princeton, New Jersey. As a volunteer, she co-chaired

Jewish American Heritage Month in Mercer County and served on the Jewish Community Relations Council.

"I am inspired by the passion of NA'AMAT's members and donors and am grateful for the opportunity to work for NA'AMAT USA, which has been dedicated to improving lives in Israel for 100 years," Marks said.

She received her BA from Northwestern University, and a master's in Social Sciences from the University of Chicago. She and her husband have three sons.



Kim Marks

‘Am Echad – Lev Echad’ / ‘One People – One Heart’

By Selma Roffman, *Vice President*

On the morning of Oct. 7, our lives were forever shaken. While many of us were attending Shabbat/Shemini Atzeret service, families in kibbutzim in the Negev (southern Israel) were under heavy attack. Just as some of us remember where we were when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated or when the Yom Kippur War began, this date now is added to those historical days we Jews will and must sadly remember.

We have been glued to the media to learn daily about the horrors unfolding – not only in Israel, but also around the world where antisemitism has proliferated, particularly on college campuses. The tension that enveloped our lives has been overwhelming and rising.

As NA'AMAT members, this was a clarion call to action. Our hearts were aching, but we responded by declaring in words and in deeds that we “Stand with Israel and the Jewish People.” Immediately, we established an Emergency Fund, sending the proceeds directly to Israel to help support those ravaged by the war.

Here in the U.S., you might have noticed blue ribbons that started to appear. NA'AMAT chapters across the country organized meetings to make blue ribbons to distribute to family and friends showing our allegiance to Israel. They symbolize support and solidarity for the safe return of the hostages taken by Hamas terrorists. Wearing a ribbon publicly demonstrates to Israelis that they are not alone and that good people across the globe are with them and their families during a dark time.

Members displayed posters of hostages in our communities and organized rallies. The largest pro-Israel event in U.S. history was held under tight security with nearly 300,000 in attendance on the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 14. Proudly, NA'AMAT raised posters of support and responded to Israel President Isaac Herzog and other leaders as they declared “Never again is now!” Buses and flights to D.C. were organized by local Jewish federations, schools and community centers.



NA'AMAT USA members rallied for Israel on Nov. 14 in Washington, D.C.



We came together as “one big family – one big mishpaha all standing together to march for the babies, the boys and girls, women and men viciously held hostage by Hamas,” Herzog said. Members of Congress and the Senate addressed the crowd, urging us to stand together and crush anti-Jewish hate. At the rally, we were truly “One People with One Heart”!

Equally important was the galvanizing of members to send messages to their sen-

ators, representatives and governors in solidarity with Israel. We want our pro-Israel voices to be heard by elected officials.

Oct. 7, 2023, has united us. Despite our profound shock, sadness and anger, we must remain resilient and resolve to continue showing support by volunteering, posting messages on social media and making donations. Raise your voices as we did on the Washington Metro and sing proudly “Am Yisrael Chai!”

NA'AMAT answers call

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Along with other organizations, NA'AMAT circulated a petition started by a grassroots global organization, which stated that “hundreds of Israeli women were brutally burned, beheaded, raped, killed, and kidnapped. [UN Women] did not address or mention any of them. ... UN Women is turning a blind eye to Hamas’ vicious war crimes by remaining silent.”

After almost two months of silence, on Dec. 1 UN Women condemned sexual violence committed by Hamas terrorists against Israeli women and girls. Pe’er credited continual pressure from NA'AMAT and other groups for the eventual condemnation, but said it was “too little, too late.”

Three days later, Executive Director Susan Seely represented NA'AMAT USA at a special session at the United Nations organized by the Permanent Mission of Israel to address violence against Israeli women during the Oct. 7 attack.

Israeli women also are the victims of a spike in domestic violence and abuse as a result of the war. The number of calls to NA'AMAT’s counseling hotline for women in crisis has nearly tripled, from an average of 70 per month to 200 per month since the war began.



To keep communication lines open and foster unity, NA'AMAT’s International Department has been working overtime to reach out to its sister organizations throughout the world, sending updates and videos illustrating the challenging situation on the ground, as well as videos that educate, offer support and uplift.

One moving video featured two soloists from the Israeli Opera of Tel Aviv-Yafo, who recorded “Bring Him Home” from Les Miserables in honor of World Opera Day on Oct. 25.

They interspersed the English lyrics with new verses in Hebrew as photos and videos of infants and children taken hostage by Hamas were displayed. “He is young; He’s afraid; Let him rest; Heaven blessed; Bring him home; Bring him home; Bring them home.”

To contribute to the NA'AMAT Israel Emergency Fund, go to <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/2023EmergencyFund>. Or you can send a check to: NA'AMAT USA Emergency Fund, 6505 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 635, Los Angeles, CA 90048.



Students at the Kanot Youth Village helped raise awareness about the hostages held by Hamas through several activities. They marched, presented the Israeli flag (at left) and created a display that spells out “together we shall win” in Hebrew (above).

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**Please see the attached information about legacy giving.
To learn more about NA'AMAT, see www.naamat.org.**

Scholarships aid Habonim participants

As progressive Zionist movements working for social justice, NA'AMAT USA and Habonim Dror have been partners since the earliest days of both organizations. That relationship was recently solidified with the creation of a NA'AMAT USA scholarship program to support young people participating in Habonim's eight-month Workshop in Israel, a gap-year program that is in its 73rd consecutive year.

Last fall, NA'AMAT awarded three \$3,000 scholarships to Habonim members who needed financial aid to attend Workshop, which costs approximately \$19,000 per student. In addition to participating in educational and service activities throughout the country, scholarship recipients visit at least two

NA'AMAT facilities such as day care centers and youth villages. They have committed to serving as "ambassadors" when they return to the U.S., speaking to peers on college campuses and at a NA'AMAT USA event.

Applicants were asked to explain what topics they are interested in learning about and the type of volunteer work they want to engage in. They also were asked about which NA'AMAT program inspires them the most.

One recipient wrote, "While I am interested in all of NA'AMAT's projects, the one that deeply resonates with me is the dedication to providing educational opportunities for women in Israel. I truly believe that supporting women through

higher education is a pivotal step towards breaking down gender barriers as well as empowering women to contribute their knowledge and values to their own communities and society as a whole."

Up to \$14,000 is available for scholarships each year, representing 4% of a \$350,000 endowment fund established with some of the proceeds from the recent sale of a building co-owned by NA'AMAT USA in Los Angeles.

National office moves

The NA'AMAT national office has moved to a smaller space in the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles building. Since the office staff now works remotely much of the time, we have been able to save thousands of dollars on rent and utilities; rent is about one-quarter of what it was previously. By sharing space with the Federation and as a tenant in a building filled with other nonprofit Jewish organizations, we also will have more opportunities for networking and regional collaborations. If you are in the area, please come visit us!

The new address is: 6505 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 635, Los Angeles, CA 90048. Telephone remains 818-431-2200.



Show your pride with the official NA'AMAT USA t-shirt! Quantities are limited so order yours today at <http://tinyurl.com/4y2du99b>.