

Community news

Answering emergency call from MDA in Israel



By
REBECCA KUROPATWA

With the ongoing heightened hostility in Israel, Canadian Magen David Adom (CMDA) chapters received an emergency call from Magen David Adom (MDA) Israel about the immediate need for 50 first responder scooters.

These scooters allow an MDA paramedic to get to the scene of an accident/terrorist attack that much faster, speeding up response time and, most importantly, saving lives.

When that emergency call was received here, in Winnipeg, the local chapter of CMDA opted to temporarily suspend the current ambulance drive and answer this urgent call by sending one of the needed scooters. Each of these specialized scooters cost \$30,000.

"We decided to commemorate John Thiessen, a great Christian supporter of our chapter's activities who passed away in 2014, with this scooter," said Ami Bakerman, Winnipeg chapter founding board member.

And, with the majority of the funds for the scooter coming from Jewish Foundation of Manitoba (JFM) donors, the chapter wanted to ensure they too were recognized. So, the inscription on the scooter will read, "Donated by Jewish Foundation of Manitoba Donors In Memory of John Thiessen, May He Rest in Peace, Winnipeg, Canada, 2016."

According to Rob Berkowits, JFM director of development and gift planning, "MDA is a true humanitarian organization. I was extremely pleased when [Winnipeg CMDA chapter members] John Plantz and Ami Bakerman approached me recently about establishing an organizational endowment fund at the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba.

"CMDA already has many Foundation donors, but the establishment of the fund will make it even easier to support CMDA's mission and I believe it will inspire people to leave a legacy of support."

Berkowits met Thiessen via their mutual friend, Plantz, during his time as director at the Jewish National Fund (JNF).

"John Thiessen was a kind, soft spoken, and generous person, committed to supporting many Jewish agencies and organizations," recalled Berkowits. "He was a true friend to Israel and the local Jewish community.

"I share John's strong belief and support of the fine work delivered by CMDA. I have always been drawn to the fact that MDA provides treatment to any individual who needs help, regardless of ethnicity, race, political, or religious affiliation.

"CMDA's decision to honour John's memory by commemorating the purchase of this medical scooter is a wonderful way of perpetuating his commitment to Israel and the Jewish people."

Thiessen's decision to introduce his Christian community to the importance of supporting Jewish organizations, like JNF, Israel Bonds, and CMDA/MDA stemmed from his belief that Jews are God's chosen people.

"I think my dad's passion for the Jewish people came from his love for the Lord and His Word," said Brenda Ronald (43), Thiessen's youngest child. "The Jews are God's chosen people and God has a special purpose for them. Dad loved, respected, and honoured them for that, and he wanted others to do the same. That love has trickled down to us - his children - and, although we aren't actively involved like he was, we do support churches and organizations that help Jewish people."

Thiessen worked very hard collecting funds for CMDA ambulances, and both of his daughters and their families feel it is a great tribute to him and their late mother/Thiessen's wife, Janice, to have his name inscribed in this way, saving lives in Israel.

Back when current CMDA chapter member Daniel Glikman was 16-years-old, he joined a Youth Zionist Movement. Later, while in university, Glikman joined the Jewish Human Rights Movement before making his way to Winnipeg from Buenos Aires, Argentina 12 years ago, with his wife, Adriana.

"After arriving here, I wanted to do something concrete, specific, to help Israel," said Glikman. "I didn't feel comfortable just calling myself 'pro-Israel.' I needed to do something that reflects my beliefs. CMDA Winnipeg has provided me with that opportunity since I joined four years ago.

"I found, at CMDA Winnipeg, committed and friendly people



ROB BERKOWITS
Jewish Foundation
Director of
Development and
Gift Planning



CMDA supporter CAROL MILES with CMDA Winnipeg founding member AMI BAKERMAN

working as a group. And that, while each member has their own profession and background, from lawyers, to accountants, contractors, managers, and some who are retired, we all come together to support MDA and its efforts in saving lives in Israel and beyond."

The Winnipeg chapter is always looking for more people wanting to get involved and help in any way. More scooters and ambulances are still needed, and they are great ways to commemorate loved ones.

"We need to spread out our message - to help the People of Israel, especially in times of great need," said Glikman. "And, what better way to do this than providing emergency medical assistance through MDA?"

CMDA Winnipeg will be holding its annual telethon at the end of August 2016 for anyone wishing to help answer MDA's emergency call by donating and/ by allocating JFM funds, or leaving a legacy of support to the People of Israel.

For more information, visit www.cmdai.org or by calling/texting CMDA Winnipeg founding chapter member, Ami Bakerman, at (204)-771-7326.



The late JANICE THIESSEN and the late Rev. JOHN THIESSEN, both strong supporters of CMDA, on one of their trips to Israel



Presents

ROTEM MALACH

Central Emissary of the Department for Diaspora
Activities at the World Zionist Organization

Thursday, May 19, 2016 | 7:00 PM
123 Matheson Avenue

Topic: **WALKING A TIGHTROPE**

The Israeli Supreme Court Involvement in defending and shaping the Jewish and Democratic Identity of the State of Israel.

Program: Showing of the Israeli Documentary Film *"The Judge"*
followed by a discussion led by Rotem Malach

About the Film:

"The Judge" is the only interview ever given by Aharon Barak, former Chief Justice of the Israeli Supreme Court. The film is interspersed with footage from the events on which he ruled - pivotal for Israeli society. The film was made by his son-in law, Ram Landes, an Israeli journalist.

About the Speaker:

- Founder and Board Member of LSD, *Let's Start Davening*, an alternative grass roots community in Berlin, Germany.
- Author of "The Democratic Citizen", a civics textbook used in Israeli schools.
- Pioneer and mentor at "Teach for Israel", an educational project whose goal is to encourage talented youth and to have them integrated as teachers in the Israeli school system.

Light refreshments to follow

For planning purposes please call the office at 204.589.6305 or email info@etzchayim.ca

All are welcome



ROTEM MALACH

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