



BLUEPRINT NEGEV: GAZA ENVELOPE

Strengthening communities on the border



Gaza
Envelope

*“99% of the
time life here is
heaven; 1% of the
time it is hell.”*

*-Jehan Berman,
Gaza Envelope Resident*

Gaza
Envelope
Task Force

► Overview

AS PART OF its *Blueprint Negev* initiative to improve the quality of life for all Israelis, Jewish National Fund continuously focuses on improving the livability of the Gaza Envelope communities, located less than four miles from the border with Gaza. These communities include the city of Sderot and other towns that make up the Eshkol Regional Council and Sha’ar HaNegev Regional Council. For more than 15 years, residents living here have endured continual attacks from the bordering Gaza Strip. Children and adults alike suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Even during periods of relative quiet, when reports of rocket attacks don’t make the headlines, they continue to occur.

► Investment Strategy

Jewish National Fund invests in the future by providing safe havens for children, such as the JNF Sderot Indoor Recreation Center and therapy and trauma resilience centers. Bringing normalcy and

routine to these areas after so many years of living under the threat of attack is critical to transforming the Gaza Envelope communities from centers of stress into thriving towns.

► Key Facts

Located within 4 miles of the Gaza border

50,000 residents in the region

► Key Results

20,000 kids use the Sderot Indoor Recreation Center annually

Over 2,000 people helped each year at area trauma resilience centers

► Playing Without Fear

Because children must always be within 15 seconds of a bomb shelter, an afternoon in the park can turn into a potentially dangerous activity, sometimes forcing children to spend their time indoors. To make a lasting difference in the community of Sderot, which is less than 1 mile from the Gaza border, Jewish National Fund built a 21,000 square foot secure indoor playground and community center, the only facility of its kind in Israel. Since its grand opening in 2009, the JNF Sderot Indoor Recreation Center has brought a welcome sense of normalcy to the region, providing young people with a fun place to simply be kids, and parents with the peace of mind that their children are playing in a safe environment. The \$5 million facility was constructed in an old textile warehouse and retrofitted with 300 tons of steel. Play areas double as bomb shelters, ensuring that all occupants can quickly reach safety in the event of a “Code Red” rocket alert.

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Visited daily by hundreds of children of all ages, the center's attractions include an indoor soccer arena, volleyball court, rock climbing wall, snack area, jungle gym, music room, computer room, and bounce house. It hosts regular performances, and is used for special events and camps as well.

In order to enable children to spend time outside, in 2017, Jewish National Fund dedicated an outdoor playground, outfitted with bomb shelters throughout to keep children safe in case of emergency. The playground includes climbing equipment, jungle gyms, swings, and more to encourage imaginative and active play.

► Campaign Goal

Sderot Indoor Recreation Center Operations
\$300,000 per year

► Animal Assisted Therapy Center

The ongoing state of emergency has led to an entire population suffering from the effects of trauma, including bedwetting, clinging to parents, excessive weeping, night terrors, hypervigilance, insomnia, anxiety, and more. The need for emotional support is overwhelming.

The Animal Assisted Therapy Center is a critical component of support, offering a solution for residents of all ages in Sderot and the surrounding area to give them confidence and strength under stressful circumstances. Animal-assisted therapy is a significant tool in helping children and adults express and

relinquish difficult emotions, enhance self-esteem and confidence, mobilize coping resources, and develop faith in themselves. It is also effective for treating symptoms of trauma, crisis, and stress.

Through contact with animals, the ability to build relationships and trust is restored. This kind of therapy also engages those who refuse professional psychological help - they do not feel that they are in "therapy" - and allows them to relax and let go in a comforting setting.

► Campaign Goal

Animal Assisted Therapy Center \$685,000

► Campaign Opportunities

Therapy Rooms (3) \$100,000

Animal Pens \$50,000 each

► Trauma Resilience Centers

For many Israelis, the day-to-day impact of the conflict on the border with Gaza is minimal. For the residents of the Eshkol and Sha'ar HaNegev Regions, however, the war does not end—the region is

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under constant emergency routine. To ease the stress caused by PTSD, Jewish National Fund invests in trauma resilience centers to provide emotional therapy. Therapy includes traditional one-on-one sessions, group therapy, and family counseling, as well as art, drama, pet, and movement therapy. The Eshkol Resilience Center also has its own rocket-protected therapy rooms that serve as shelters, so clients don't need to run for cover in the event of an attack. These centers are crucial to the healing of a generation of Israelis that believes the threat of war is a constant way of life.

► Campaign Goal

Name Resilience Centers	\$500,000
Name Therapy Rooms	\$250,000
Central Dedicatory Wall	\$25,000

► Fire and Rescue Services

Of particular importance in this region is fire and rescue equipment to protect the land and people from fires that start from missile attacks and, more recently, fires caused by flaming kites sent from across the border. Jewish National Fund continues to provide invaluable resources to local communities including fire stations, trucks, and equipment.

► Campaign Opportunities

Fire Trucks	\$125,000 (per truck)
Fire Extinguisher Wagons	\$50,000 each

► Youth Services

Through a transformative program, Jewish National Fund works with youth in grades 5 to 12 to create meaningful bonds with the land while building interpersonal and leadership skills. Through hiking and camping trips, participants connect with nature and emerge as concerned and responsible citizens who volunteer for their country and society. Over 100 local kids participate in this program.

► Campaign Opportunities

Youth Services	\$50,000 (per year)
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► Building Community

Employment, culture, and education are essential elements to enhancing life in the Gaza border communities and bringing new residents to the area. Jewish National Fund partners with mission-based communities that provide local programming through family centers, leadership groups, special events, urban renewal projects, education initiatives, and more. Members of these communities revitalize and repopulate the region, with the goal of transforming communities into desirable places to live.

► Campaign Opportunity

\$25,000 per community



"JNF is our true partner. They are here today and everyday. Not just in times of crisis but helping us fulfill our vision of populating this part of the Negev."

- Michal Uziyahu, Director of Community Centers



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