

Getting Older in Gush Etzion

The Gush Etzion (Etzion Bloc) region, was home to a number of Jewish communities before Israel's War of Independence. However, in 1948, the communities were destroyed, their inhabitants massacred or taken prisoner, and the area was occupied by Jordan until 1967. Pioneers and children of the original residents returned to resettle the region right after the Six-Day War in 1967. Now there are more than twenty communities in Gush Etzion, spanning approximately 4,000 square miles in the Judean Hills, a few kilometers from Jerusalem.

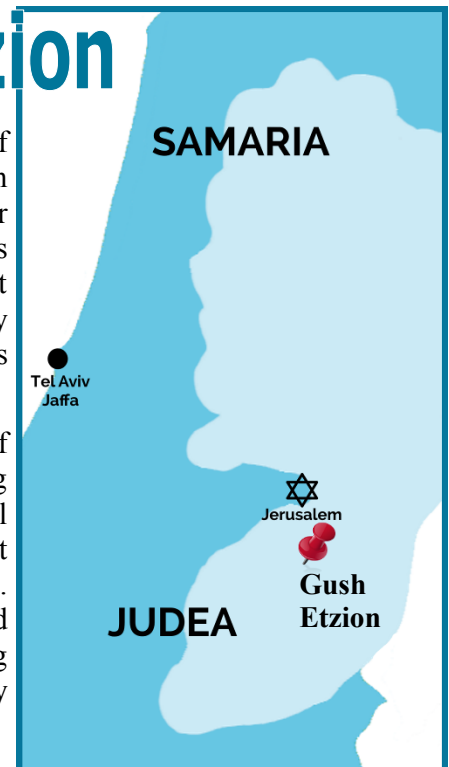
Of the 25,000 residents, some 1,800 are senior citizens. Many of them are healthy and able to live out their golden years with fulfilling activity, surrounded by family and friends. The Gush Etzion Regional Council established a Senior Citizen Center which offers exercise, art lessons, Bible classes and a sense of community and companionship. Social Services also maintains a program called "The Supported Community" which reaches out to the elderly in their homes, helping with medical emergencies and even house repairs and purchases of costly medication.

Approximately 115 needy seniors are being taken care of by Social Services and 90 of these elderly people have particularly critical needs. Some of them are completely alone and a number of them are Holocaust survivors. National Insurance provides enough to support them as long as they remain healthy, but as soon as medical problems crop up, they become crippled by need. The Council knows that these seniors were once vibrant, contributing members of society. Now you have the opportunity to reach out and help. With your help we can provide these needy senior citizens with the funds they need to cover medical expenses, and transportation for medical treatments. You can help us provide basic food staples to those in extreme need as well.

A major problem is dental care and hearing aids. While health insurance covers a portion of these costs, seniors living on a minimum National Insurance allotment cannot afford to pay the balance. There are those in need of extensive treatment, whose teeth are in such bad shape that they cannot eat and are embarrassed to be seen in public, and others who simply cannot afford dentures. A hearing-impaired senior without hearing aids is totally cut off from his or her surroundings. A senior who cannot afford dentures or other costly dental treatments may be too embarrassed to leave their home.

Another major challenge is the cold winter months. Temperatures are particularly low during the winter in the Gush Etzion region and heating is crucial—a matter of survival—for seniors. They are susceptible to disease and are at risk for complications from even a simple cold. Heating prices have risen and it is not unusual to meet a senior citizen who does not heat his home because he simply can't afford to pay the utility bill. In the past, CFOIC Heartland's generous donors stepped in and provided needy senior citizens with vital assistance in paying their hefty heating bills. This year we would like to continue providing this assistance, helping seniors heat their homes during the frigid winter months. In addition, CFOIC Heartland has been asked to help with home repairs for the needy elderly. These houses, like their owners, have "aged" and need all kinds of repairs. This is especially crucial during the winter and summer months, when seniors seek shelter from the extreme temperatures outdoors.

Last year, CFOIC Heartland helped establish a center for those senior citizens suffering from dementia. While the center is up and running, there are ongoing expenses that need to be covered. Over the years, CFOIC Heartland donors have been particularly sensitive in responding to the needs of the elderly. These people, many of whom helped establish the modern State of Israel, are no longer independent and need assistance. You have been there for them in the past and I hope you will continue to provide for their needs today. With your help we can continue to support this cherished part of the population, so that they will not have to suffer through their golden years.



- ☆ Today's Senior Citizens in Israel have given so much to their country. Through their hard work and determination, the country has grown and blossomed into the miracle we see today.
- ☆ There are seniors in need of extensive dental treatment, while others require assistance for medically-related expenses. Still others suffer from dementia and require specialized care.
- ☆ When finances are tight the elderly tend to cut expenses by neglecting their homes, and turning off the heat. They may not even have the funds they need to buy basic food. You can ease their pain and provide them with what they need.



The senior citizens of Gush Etzion want to live out their golden years in dignity and comfort. They have given so much to build Israel and now you have an opportunity to give something back to them. Will you help these amazing seniors with dental care, hearing aids, home repairs and heating costs? Will you provide a safe environment for seniors with dementia?

Project Budget

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Center for seniors with dementia..... | \$11,500 |
| Heating and home repairs..... | 7,000 |
| Dental care and hearing aids..... | 4,300 |
| Food staples and transportation | 5,000 |
| TOTAL FUNDS REQUIRED:..... | \$27,800 |

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