

A HEARTLAND *Story*

CFOIC Heartland - Making a Difference in the Lives of So Many



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Shabbat is a time of peace. No one expected that peace to be shattered.



By Meira Weber

The terrorists came on Shabbat night. Wind whispered through the quiet streets of Rechalim. The rustle of trees and the occasional hum of a passing car on the nearby highway were the only sounds in the small Samaritan community. The night of spiritual prayer and song, delicious food, family bonding, and cherished Shabbat rituals had come to a close, and the houses were dark, doors locked, gates latched. The children of Rechalim slept soundly, dreaming, as their parents tidied up and prepared for bed.

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The surveillance control room was the only lit window in the community that night. Gray screens flickered above cluttered desks and ever-vigilant guards sat watching, their eyes never straying from the security footage ticking by onscreen. All was quiet. The night was still. Safe, just as Shabbat should be.

But when two suspicious black blips appeared on the newly installed thermal imaging surveillance camera in the Rechalim security booth, the guards shoved aside their shock and sprang into action. Attackers? On Shabbat night? It was a wicked, despicable move, to strike a community at its most vulnerable time. The calm of Shabbat exploded with the shriek of walkie-talkies and bursts of frenzied static.

A van was dispatched immediately to investigate while the guards in the booth tracked the blips' movement with the camera, marking every move – because those blips were human and hostile, starkly black against the cold white of the Rechalim night, crawling rapidly towards the edge of the community. No one friendly needs to crawl through the brush and up a hillside in the middle of the night to reach a sleeping community, and this was no exception.

Radios screeched in the control booth as the security van sped along the service road towards the crouching terrorists. The guards in the booth shouted orders to the driver of the

▼ **Terrorists caught in the act by Rechalim's thermal imaging camera**



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▲ **The beautiful community of Rechalim**



▲ **The spot where Rechalim's security forces halted the attempted infiltration**

God frequently works through messengers, and thanks to you, CFOIC Heartland has been able to fill the role of God's life-saving messenger many times over



security van, staying in contact, demanding updates, their eyes glued to the screens as they watched the van fly ever closer to the crouching hostiles.

The security van squealed to a halt and the Chief of Staff himself burst from the van and fired a single warning shot into the air, scouring the immediate area for the hidden enemies. From the safety of the control booth, the sentries of Rechalim watched onscreen as the terrorists crabbed down the hill and fled back across the highway. Their black forms faded away onscreen, and a collective held breath was let out with relief, hearts still pounding with adrenaline. The peace and sanctity of Shabbat settled once more over the booth and the community. Safe again. Guarded. Secure. With God's help, those terrorists will never be seen in Rechalim again.

Shabbat ended with an emotional rush of gratitude to God, and also to us, CFOIC Heartland. You see, you helped to keep the community of Rechalim safe that Shabbat. For the radios that kept the guards in contact, and the thermal imaging camera that caught those terrorists – the camera that helped save countless lives that night – were all donated by you, and others like you, to CFOIC Heartland.



Since its establishment in 1991, Rechalim has grown from a single family in a tent to a community 600 strong. Mobile homes and trailers are being rapidly replaced by permanent family homes as the community grows and develops, and the residents hope to establish an industrial park soon and to allocate land for agricultural development. The community is growing, developing, changing – but security has always remained a top priority.

CFOIC Heartland has worked closely with the people of Rechalim for a number of years, and you have provided their special community with surveillance cameras, life-saving communications equipment and safety gear, and most recently, a thermal

imaging surveillance and security camera. This camera was the key to the protection of this community of pioneers from terrorists only a few weeks ago, and saved the lives of countless residents.

In another community, the terrorists' mission may have succeeded. We can never know. But what we do know is that you, the incredible donors of CFOIC Heartland, are directly responsible for helping to stop this attack. Your donation impacted the residents of Rechalim in an unforgettable way, and their gratitude to you is immeasurable.

When Vered Ben-Saadon, the owner of Rechalim's, Tura Winery, reached out to relay this incredible story to us, she said, "We have no words with which to thank you for the noble act of saving our lives." It's high praise, and only begins to scratch the surface of how thankful the people of Rechalim truly are to the donors of CFOIC Heartland. The residents of Rechalim have been overcome with emotion and appreciation since that Shabbat, and the following week they even held a thanksgiving feast after synagogue, to thank God for protecting them. As we know, God frequently works through messengers, and thanks to you, CFOIC Heartland has been able to fill the role of God's life-saving messenger many times over.

You, the wonderful donors of CFOIC Heartland, have protected – and will continue to protect – the pioneers of Judea and Samaria. You have sheltered them from enemies in their most vulnerable time as they work tirelessly to build and develop the Biblical Heartland. And you are responsible for bringing them one step closer to the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham: to resettle and revive the Jewish Homeland of Israel.

For more information or to send a donation, please contact:



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Christian Friends of Israeli Communities was established in 1995, in response to the Oslo Process, which ceded land to the Arabs in the heart of Biblical Israel. For more than two decades, CFOIC Heartland has stood steadfastly with those Jews who are at greatest risk in Israel – those whose very homes are threatened with destruction, those who face terrorism on a daily basis, those whose core values and daily lives are based on Biblical principles.