



Sept 2020

Dear Friend of Israel,

As I write this letter, we are still not sure exactly what this new school year will look like. School is scheduled to begin on September 1st and the plan is to open the schools in some combination of virtual and physical formats. The youngest grades will be in school, the middle grades and older grades will spend some time in school and some time with on-line teaching, the virtual teaching increasing the older the children are. This past school year was similar but it was all put together last minute, responding to the crisis as it unfolded. This coming year, with a few months to plan, **the hope is that it will be better planned and more effective.**

But it will be some time before we know if our children were really able to learn as they should have during this difficult time. There are always the children who can learn in any environment. And there are always the children who have difficulty in any environment. But it is by no means clear how the rest of the children will function. And what about their parents? Children who are 10 years old cannot be left at home alone and certainly cannot be relied upon to hook up and participate in their online studies if their parents are not home. **And if their parents are home, that means they are either not working at all or working part-time from home in between monitoring their children's school progress.**

In the meantime, we are scrambling to see how we and you, can help. **With too many parents of young children being forced to stay home and others having lost their jobs, the financial situation of so many families is still critical.** In addition, community enrichment programs will become that much more critical as an adjunct to conventional education. **The local library, for example can become an amazing center for informal education,** as children can explore so much through independent reading and exploration.

I am sure that you are facing similar challenges in your own communities and I can appreciate the need to turn inward and help locally. **If you are able to help the people of Israel who need your help the most, we would be so grateful. May G-d bless you and keep you healthy!**

Sincerely,

Sondra Oster Baras
Director, Israel Office

P.S. Please consider making a donation to help families in need during the upcoming holiday of Sukkot. With the uncertainties we faced this summer, the fall holidays are going to be especially difficult for many families. This month, we are turning to you especially to help needy families in Samaria and the library in Elazar. Whatever you can do to help will be so greatly appreciated. Thank you for your dedication to pray and bless so many in the Biblical Heartland.