



September 2022

Dear Friend of Israel,

September is here and the children have all gone back to school. In Israel, school holidays span the months of July and August so on September 1st, everyone goes back to school.

I remember well the first day of school. As a child, we usually got a new dress for the first day of school and we were all so excited to see our friends again. As a mother, I was always excited to send my children off to school on the first day – **for me it was a milestone occasion, a way of marking the fact that each child was one year older**, ready for greater challenges and moving forward towards adulthood.

Today, on the first of September, my grandchildren start school, daycare and pre-school. **I am not with them as they leave the house and head out to school, but I always get the pictures** – the freshly scrubbed children with their backpacks on their backs, smiling from ear to ear, eager to return to a structured environment, so missing during the long summer holiday.

But then I wonder how the parents of special-needs children feel as they send their children off to school. Can they, too, mark the day as a milestone or does each passing year remind them that as their other children move forward, learn to walk, talk, read, calculate mathematical equations, write essays, and get ready for matriculation exams, their special-needs child remains behind? Some will never learn to walk, speak or develop meaningful relationships. As these parents mark the passing of time, they begin to understand that even as they age, their special-needs children will always need their help. They will never really grow up.

Through CFOIC Heartland, you can help provide solutions for special-needs children of all ages – from infants to adulthood. At Gevaot and Heart of Benjamin, young adults benefit from sheltered employment opportunities and supervised adult housing. These young adults are surrounded by love. Gevaot is a community where special-needs individuals are part of the community and often their families live there as well.

So today, as we rejoice in the start of the new school year, **I want to ask you to take a minute and think about those parents of special-needs children, to pray for them, to wish them patience, peace of mind and the courage they need to face a difficult future.** And if you are able to help them, I hope you will contribute to the amazing programs in Gevaot and Heart of Benjamin. They are truly a ray of hope and encouragement for these families.

Sincerely,

Sondra Oster Baras
Director, Israel Office

P.S. I hope you enjoy reading the enclosed Nahala newsletter. You'll meet Christian Zionists like yourself and I'll introduce you to Israeli settlers. Together, Christians and Jews are fulfilling Bible prophecy on the Mountains of Israel.