

Steven Berns Reflections

Israel Solidarity Mission - 11/27/2023 to 12/1/2023

As I watched the events of October 7th happen and the immediate impact on Israel and its citizens, I was focused on what I could do to help. Given that over 300,000 reservists were being called up, I was thinking about who would care for the kids, elderly, and other needs that I would be able to provide support for. What I did not realize was how important it was going to be to merely “show up” in Israel. When Federation told me that a trip was coming together quickly, I immediately said yes. I did not need to know the itinerary or where I was staying - just focused on how I could be of service.

Through the efforts of many people in the MetroWest community, we were able to bring approximately 15 huge duffel bags filled with needed supplies for the IDF, children, and the 200,000 Israelis that were displaced from the North and South due to the rockets from Hamas and Hezbollah.

Each of our days' experiences were meaningful - being present with the displaced families, hugging anyone and everyone who needed or just wanted a hug, and giving cards to IDF soldiers prepared by students from our MetroWest community.

We also attended the Bar Mitzvah of a young boy whose displaced family had relocated to Jerusalem after October 7th. It was a spontaneous decision for us to attend when we heard that many of the family and friends of the Bar Mitzvah would be unable to attend. Without us attending, there would not have been a minyan. Even now as I write this note and think of how happy the family was, it swells my heart with joy.

As we all know, giving to others is so much more fulfilling than receiving. Being a part of this mission to Israel was one of the most special experiences of my life.

Am Yisrael Chai!