Jerusalem day rehabilitation staff with a client
As a friend of Yad Sarah, you understand the incredible impact Yad Sarah has on Israel’s population, stepping up for parents, sisters and brothers, children, and grandchildren.

In this issue of INSIDE Yad Sarah, we focus on these aspects of our work. We speak to Tzippy Cook, Director of Tourist Services, who assists our global family in accessing adaptable equipment when traveling to Israel. We learn about Yad Sarah home visits that offer company and comfort to the homebound. We take a glimpse into our equipment repair shop, which ensures that clients don’t have to worry about a squeaky wheelchair or the economic burden of fixing it. And we check in with some of our branch managers, who form the core of the Yad Sarah family, helping the people of Israel, from all walks of life, day and night across the country.

We know that continuing — and even increasing — Yad Sarah’s programs is essential for the health of Israel. Thank you for your help in our vital mission to provide the people of Israel peace of mind, warmth, and connection.

Thank you, most of all, for being part of our family.

Adele Goldberg
We sat down with director Tzippy Cook to learn more about helping Holy Land travelers.

**YS:** HI, TZIPPY! GREAT TO TALK TO YOU. TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF... WE DETECT AN ACCENT!

Yes, I’m from London originally, but I got married about a year ago and made aliyah. I was looking for a job, and my husband was working for Yad Sarah delivering hospital beds. They knew that he married an English-speaking woman, which is the most common language for tourists. I’m very much at home in Israel, too – my father is Israeli.

**YS:** UNDERSTANDING THE COUNTRY MUST BE VALUABLE FOR THESE SERVICES. WHAT IS YOUR DAY TO DAY LIKE?

I come in the morning and the first thing we do is read the emails. Since all the tourists are coming from different time zones, most of the correspondence comes in overnight. We break the emails down into different categories, answering questions about costs and availability. I also flag the emails in languages I don’t speak, like German or Spanish, for a volunteer to answer. Once we have the standard emails out of the way, we delve into specific requests for specialized equipment or issues regarding payment. Then, we process the orders and set up the equipment for delivery.

**YS:** SOUNDS COMPREHENSIVE! ANY INTERESTING STORIES SO FAR?

Recently, a man came in with his wife. She’d had a stroke and needed a scooter—she couldn’t get off the couch without it. They’d planned this dream trip to Israel but hadn’t reserved the equipment in advance. Still, Yad Sarah always rises to the occasion! I had a wedding that night in the area where they were staying, so I asked my husband to bring my wedding clothes to work so I could change there, and we’d drop off the scooter on the way to the wedding. It was the first time I met one of the tourists in person, so that was very meaningful. They decided on the spot to go out for the evening. The next day, they called to tell me that this was the first time in 25 years that they had been able to go out and enjoy evening activities!

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**YS:** THAT’S SO HEARTWARMING. BUT THERE MUST ALSO BE SOME CHALLENGES.

Sure. To me, one of the biggest challenges is just knowing how important these trips are to people. If Yad Sarah doesn’t outfit a hotel or apartment perfectly, it can affect a visitor’s entire trip. That’s why we take these services so seriously.

**YS:** TRUE – SO THE SERVICES ARE VERY TAILORED TO THE INDIVIDUAL. WHAT’S THE MOST UNUSUAL REQUEST YOU’VE EVER RECEIVED?

We don’t usually provide psychological support, but there was someone who needed psychiatric care, so we tapped into the resources and connections that Yad Sarah has, and found professionals who were able to help him keep up with his treatment routine.

**YS:** ARE PEOPLE SURPRISED AT WHAT IS AVAILABLE?

Yes! It’s very special to make dreams come true – dreams that people sometimes don’t even dare to have for themselves. Last year, a Bar Mitzvah tour of seven boys and their parents came to Israel. Many of them needed mobility support. We provided seven wheelchairs, three scooters and four walkers. We set them up with a tour guide and an accessible van for their two-week visit! 

To request Tourist Services, please go to FriendsOfYadSarah.org/Services-For-Tourists

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Yad Sarah’s services for the people of Israel are legendary – but less people know they extend to visitors, too! Any tourist to Israel is eligible for Yad Sarah’s Tourist Services, which provides low or no-cost mobility equipment, special transportation, and information about accessibility.
Yad Sarah's home visit program makes more than 65,000 visits per year, helping clients across Israel—young and old—feel included and uplifted despite volunteer herself years University—and Yad Sarah knows it. That's why Isabella Sinilnikov, who lives in Beer Sheba, injured her back and needed help with chores—and even more so, companionship that would keep her spirit alive. Isabella had provided these very services as a volunteer herself years before, and now Yad Sarah was there for her. A young volunteer named Shai came to visit Isabella during the week, to brighten her days by spending time together.

Whenever a problem comes up, Yad Sarah is my first call.

Isabella’s condition worsened until she could no longer walk unassisted, Shai worked to help Isabella get crutches and a wheelchair, on loan for free from Yad Sarah. Ida, an old friend of Isabella’s from her volunteer days, also arranged for Isabella to receive pro bono help from Yad Sarah’s legal services division, Yad Riva, when she suspected she was targeted by a phone scam.

“Whenever a problem comes up, Yad Sarah is my first call,” Isabella says. “They’re my only family.”

In many ways, Yad Sarah is ahead of the curve on this issue, understanding that the comfort and care of a home visit when you’re ill or isolated can have a dramatic effect on your health. Researchers have found that loneliness produces stress hormones that increase inflammation, heart disease, dementia and death rates. And people who are alone are less likely to go to the doctor, take medicine, exercise, or eat a healthy diet.

Yad Sarah volunteers kept this in mind when they met Tovah, who came to borrow equipment after a heart attack. Yad Sarah volunteers were concerned about her emotional well-being, so they arranged for her to be a part of the Life Stories Project—also a form of home visits—and record her life stories with a carefully selected and specially trained Yad Sarah volunteer.

And she is so grateful. “Each week that I pushed myself to remember, I relived so many different periods of my life,” she says. “I realized that I lived for something—not nothing. It changed my mood. It changed my life.”

Another life changed was that of Pinchas, a 76-year-old widower, whose children have special needs. Experiencing severe loneliness, Pinchas was matched with Uri, 66, who began volunteering after he retired from the Ministry of Defense.

“For him, I am a little like the ‘father of the house,’ who helps him with everything about the household, goes to the doctors with him, talks about the news of the week, and makes sure he gets out of the house and breathes air,” Uri says. “He feels comfortable sharing with me his thoughts and hardships and over the years, we have become friends.”

Even though the program requires only an hourly visit a week, Uri visit Pinchas much more often, and lit candles with him on each night of Chanukah. And when Uri’s mother passed away, Pinchas comforted him over his loss.

That reciprocation is part of other volunteers’ experience, too.

Sabina, an immigrant from Argentina, was widowed at a young age. She worked at Ben Gurion University as a librarian for 20 years and upon retirement, one of her colleagues recommended that she start volunteering for Yad Sarah. Her son signed her up to do home visits nearly 10 years ago.

Now 84 years old, Sabina’s volunteering with Yad Sarah led her to a connection with a woman who had also worked at Ben Gurion University before losing her sight. They instantly clicked when they met the first time and have seen each other once a week for the last 10 years.

“Even though I am the volunteer helper, I learn so much from her,” Sabina says. “She is a very intelligent woman, full of optimism, and shows me how life goes on as you age. We lift each other up, and talk a lot about politics, about culture, the shows we both went to and about life itself.”

Sabrina says volunteering helps her stay connected, and that her friends and children also volunteer.

“Working in this program fills me up and makes me feel better about everything,” she says. “Yad Sarah is such a beautiful, large organization that I do a small part for, but that small part combines with everyone else’s small part to help Israel. We are part of something larger than ourselves.”

That ethos—where everyone pitches in a little to make a big difference—is how Yad Sarah makes an incredible impact in the day-to-day lives of hundreds of thousands of people. It’s why Yad Sarah is a family for all of Israel.
Some wheelchair repairs are simple — like tightening the bolts that keep wheels aligned.

Elliot Nemetski fixed cars and trucks in his Brooklyn auto repair shop for more than 40 years before moving to Israel six years ago. Now, the father of three and grandfather of eight volunteers each week to fix wheelchairs, walkers, and other medical equipment for Yad Sarah.

“When I first started, my Hebrew was terrible — but I speak ‘mechanic,’” he says. “Volunteers teach each other what we don’t know about repairs and help each other out. I’m younger than most of the people here — some guys are in their 80s and 90s — so if they can’t bend over, I’ll help them. If I don’t know something, they help me.”

It’s stories like these that excite donors about Yad Sarah’s equipment repair services. As Freda Rosenfeld, a lactation consultant in Brooklyn, says, “I directed funds from my aunt’s estate to underwrite tool purchases needed by different repair shops around the country. My aunt, a child of the Depression, hated things being wasted. So, this seemed like the perfect fit — helping those in need while also stretching out the life the medical equipment.”

Yechezkel Herman, a 92-year-old Holocaust survivor, feels that these services extend the life of the volunteers, too! He volunteers at Yad Sarah’s equipment repair center in Jerusalem every day. “I tell everyone, don’t stay at home,” he says. “When you give to others, you get so much in return.”

For decades, Yechezkel worked at a stationery store in the center of Jerusalem. After he retired, he tried taking classes aimed at engaging seniors, but didn’t find his niche until he started to volunteer in the equipment maintenance workshop at Yad Sarah.

“Yad Sarah keeps me connected to the community. If I had stayed at home, I would have deteriorated,” Yechezkel says. “All the other volunteers at the workshop feel the same way as I do. They want to give back to their community.”

Elliot shares this sentiment. He says the satisfaction of a good day’s work while volunteering at Yad Sarah helps him lead a full life several years into his retirement. In addition to spending time with his wife, children, and grandchildren, he’s spending time using his expertise to make Israel a better place.

“It brings me joy to finish a wheelchair, spin the...
There is a tremendous sense of satisfaction in doing this work to change lives.

The volunteers feel connected to the people who use the equipment. Elliot has met IDF soldiers, people with disabilities, and even children who use the wheelchairs he repairs and rebuilds. When he sees people using the equipment, it drives home just how important his work is: making sure breaks work properly, that rubber on tires stays supple, and that handles are comfortable.

“I will never look at a wheelchair the same way again.” Elliot says. “My wife points out Yad Sarah wheelchairs whenever we see one and asks if I fixed it. I have no idea if I worked on that particular item, but I love that Yad Sarah helps people get out of the house and go all over the place because they have access to a good wheelchair.”

The equipment repair branches are also key in helping Yad Sarah keep costs low and impact high. Volunteers don’t just fix repair items, but rebuild them, or in some cases, build them from scratch.

One young girl came into Yad Sarah wearing bright shorts and missing one leg. She received a prosthesis that let her go to school, help her mom around the house, and play in her yard without worrying, all thanks to Yad Sarah.

Another time, the center built a one-of-a-kind treadmill with arm support for a two-year-old, boy, Assaf, who was a patient at Alyn Hospital. Shimon’s team worked closely with Assaf’s doctors to assemble this unique piece of equipment. The difference was remarkable: According to Assaf’s medical team, it was this device that saved Assaf more surgeries—and made it possible for him to walk instead of having to use a wheelchair.

About these solutions, Shimon says, “When your head is open and there is a good will, the sky is the limit!” But most of all, the close connection between Yad Sarah’s clients and its volunteers drives home just how much the organization functions as a family.

“I start working on something when someone is waiting outside and I stay to finish the job,” Yechezkel says. “I don’t make them come back two days later—that’s part of our volunteering. We always know that each item we repair or build is going to help a real person, someone who needs help right away.”

Yaron volunteers to help at Yad Sarah four days a week, greeting every client that walks in the door with a warm smile. “Anyone who comes in here is obviously in a tough spot, so we always want to make sure people feel very welcome,” he says. “I listen to them, understand them, offer empathy, and connect them with services and equipment when we can provide it. What could be better?”
About two years ago, I retired from branch management. I helped establish and manage the day-to-day operations of the largest logistics center in the country. We have more than 400 volunteers and a lot of equipment and services to offer.

About two years ago, I retired from branch management to simply become a regular volunteer who helps lend medical supplies, which is a lot of what Yad Sarah does. The beauty of Yad Sarah’s work is that it helps members of our whole community, regardless of income level, age, or citizenship – we even help visiting tourists! Even the richest person in the city can find help here. If you urgently need crutches or a wheelchair and can’t wait until tomorrow, Yad Sarah can help. And, we save a lot of money for the country.

One challenge we face is finding specific equipment requested. But we always do. Recently, a volunteer wanted to help people with alternative care but did not have a treatment bed. We managed to get a suitable bed that is still in the branch and is used by those who need treatment.

With us, volunteering at home has always been a part of life itself, and today volunteering at Yad Sarah is a way of life for me.

My relationship with this incredible organization started in 1988 after my sister was hospitalized and needed an oxygen balloon. When I arrived at the Beit She’an branch for the balloon loan, the branch manager suggested I start volunteering. I started volunteering a few hours a week and slowly it started to take on a significant part of my life. Eventually, it became my second home and other volunteers became my family.

After becoming the branch manager, I was responsible for the entire field of lending oxygen generators – devices designed for people who need extra oxygen in their blood. I took care of installing other life-saving appliances such as distress buttons and special outposts in the showers. Eventually, I served as a Northern District operations coordinator.

We saw that there was a lot of demand from the community in the north, so we expanded the branch from being open twice a week to four times a week. The tourists who come also need equipment that isn’t always easily obtainable. Yad Sarah helps them.

Even though I’m often interacting with people during times of crisis and distress, it is a privilege to volunteer for an organization that saves lives. This past year, a five-year-old girl’s oxygen generator broke down. The family called us for a new device at the same time they called the ambulance to come. I got there while the ambulance was outside and, because we got there so fast, the girl didn’t have to be hospitalized.

I loved being a branch manager. Even though I’m now retired, being helpful to my community is a part of me.

We’ve been married for quite some time and, until five months ago, we lived in Eilat. Before we retired, Aviva was a secretary and Dov was a carpenter. Aviva broke her ankle 20 years ago and Yad Sarah helped her get rehabilitation equipment. After that, we became regular volunteers at the Eilat branch.

After volunteering for a year, the two of us began running the branch and expanded its open times from three days a week to every day. We became completely dedicated to the work and charity that Yad Sarah offers. We each used our professional skills to help the branch.

After about a year we started running, the branch went from being open three days a week to every day and we were pulled into the work and giving the help that Yad Sarah offers. Each of us helped in a field we were good at or engaged with in personal life. Aviva oversaw the branch’s finances and Dov oversaw the equipment. He studied these devices in great depth to train other volunteers and those borrowing it, who need to know how to use it!

Because Eilat is a very touristy city, there are many emergencies. Once, a group of people with disabilities came to visit and one of the visitors broke the electric lever that helped him to get out of bed. We immediately made sure to replace his equipment. Another time, a tourist broke her leg. Just a few months ago, we helped a tourist who needed a hospital bed at a hotel. He made sure to coordinate with us so that we could deliver the equipment as soon as he got to the hotel. This doesn’t even cover the times we save people’s lives.

For us, Yad Sarah is an amazing organization that serves our community’s needs in a variety of ways for a diverse cross section of people, whether it’s someone who needs a wheelchair, someone in need of home hospitalization, or a new mother who needs a breast pump. Yad Sarah always keeps equipment on hand at our more than 100 branches across the country, which doesn’t even include the “mini-branches” – people who donate a room or warehouse to help our organization.

Five months ago, we moved from Eilat to settle in Bnei Netzarim. Of course, we continue to volunteer at this branch near our new home in the periphery. We love volunteering together. It’s a powerful way to spend time with each other and it’s an activity that is part of our relationship with each other as a married couple. There’s nothing like volunteering for Yad Sarah.
Yad Sarah, Israel’s largest volunteer-staffed organization, provides a vital array of compassionate health and home services for people of all ages. Yad Sarah’s free services are delivered by more than 7,000 volunteers in more than 100 branches.

The people of Israel — and people with special needs traveling to Israel — rely on Yad Sarah to help them remain independent, healthy and at home.

OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES INCLUDE:

Medical Equipment Lending Centers
An inventory of more than 360,000 items to be loaned out at no cost to the borrowers.

Guidance and Exhibition Centers
Displaying equipment and daily living tools available to help people live independently.

Day Rehabilitation Centers
Physical and occupational therapy; computer, art, drama and gardening therapy; meals and social events for young and old recovering from strokes, surgery, illness, and injury.

Mobile Geriatric Dental Clinic
A full range of specialized care for the homebound and frail elderly.

Yad Riva Legal Aid
Legal services, legal counseling, legal representation and social assistance for the elderly provided by volunteer lawyers.

Emergency Alarm Center
Peace of mind for the elderly and homebound, 24 hours a day, with two-way transmitters connected to Yad Sarah’s national computerized system.

Outreach to the Homebound
Visits and projects to activate hands and minds and raise morale of people isolated at home.

Play Center and Toy Library
Providing a safe and supportive environment for children with special needs to learn and develop through play.

Transportation Services
Wheelchair-accessible rides to work, school, medical appointments, and social occasions.
Despite low interest rates, you can still receive high, fixed-rate lifetime income - and leave a legacy for Israel.

Providing for Yad Sarah is providing for Israel. Improving the lives of more than 600,000 people in Israel every year, Yad Sarah represents what is best about Israel and its people.

A Yad Sarah Gift Annuity pays a high, fixed-rate, lifetime income for one or two individuals. May we calculate the annuity rate, tax deduction and tax-free income portion for you? For many individuals, a gift annuity is an especially valuable retirement planning vehicle.

A sample of Yad Sarah’s high gift annuity rates

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*A final calculation of the tax-free portion will be made for the month of the gift, based on IRS rules.

A gift that is cherished forever: Providing for Israel after your lifetime

Leaving a bequest in your will or trust for Yad Sarah provides much-needed funds for the important work of Yad Sarah in Israel. You might also consider including Friends of Yad Sarah as a beneficiary of your IRA or of your life insurance policy. Your after-lifetime gift may be designated for Yad Sarah programs in Israel that are dear to you, or entrusted to Yad Sarah for use where most needed to assist in helping Israel’s most vulnerable people.

Let us show you how

We can provide you and your advisors with language for your will or trust. We can help you set up a fund to benefit Yad Sarah in Israel. We can show you how to memorialize your gift.

To be a Yad Sarah partner

Please contact Adele Goldberg, the Executive Director of Friends of Yad Sarah, at 1-866-YAD-SARAH or by email at adele@friendsofyadsarah.org.

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