

Friend Ships December 2017 Activities Report

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Dear Friends:

We hope you had a wonderful Christmas and are blessed this New Year of 2018. Thank you for all of your amazing help. We thought this month you may enjoy reading a Christian Broadcasting Network story about the Friend Ships medical camp that was published just before Christmas. It will air on "The 700 Club" mid-January and the video is available to watch online at this link:

<https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/israel/2017/december/israelis-christians-work-together-to-bring-medical-attention-love-to-syrians>.

Again, our sincerest thanks for all you do!

Don and Sondra Tipton and the Friend Ships Teams



Israelis, Christians Work Together to Bring Medical Attention, Love to Syrians

12-22-2017 Julie Stahl

At the Christmas season, we talk a lot about giving. One Christian ministry is partnering with Israel to provide food, medical help and other assistance year round to Syrians caught in the ravages of civil war. It's called Camp Ichay – a Christian medical clinic operating inside the Israeli border under the protection of the Israel Defense Forces. It provides urgent medical care to Syrians caught in the middle of a six-year civil war.

About 80,000 Syrians, many of whom need medical help, live in this area. They arrive by truck at the border where they come through a gate to be checked for security. After that they enter Camp Ichay where they receive medical attention and love. "From the time they come through the gate they become the most important person in the world, and we don't speak the language so we have to speak the language of love," Don Tipton told CBN News.

Don and Sondra Tipton started Friend Ships, a Christian aid organization working with Israel's Good Neighbor Project to help the Syrians. "It's amazing to watch the transformation in these people when they're not under the oppression of war," Don explained. In their first two months, they've treated some 2,000 people. "And we're putting in WiFi and ... telemedicine and when that comes in we'll be able to treat three times as many because it will speed up the process," he said. "Usually it's things like infections and we had somebody with hepatitis today. They have rashes. So we do a lot of things [that] if they're not treated they'll become serious. There are also war injuries and things that people came in with and we can treat their infections and things and we diagnose people that we're not able to treat and refer them to various outlets for further possibilities," his wife, Sondra, said.

While incubators, birthing beds and X-Ray machines are on the way, that's not their biggest need. "And right now we're in desperate need of people to play with the children and doctors and nurses. That's because Camp Ichay goes way beyond medical needs," Don said. The facility is a huge tent "city." At the entrance there's a big room full of non-medical supplies that people might want or need. "This is what we call our distribution tent," Sondra explained. "So every day when the patients leave they get this bag full of goodies – that includes toys and clothes and we have an area that they can shop for clothes that they like, they can just select what they like." "This is the children's room," Don said. "These kids, they've been in a war since they were born. They haven't had anything. They're so happy in here. This is our trampoline and young people just love it. The adults go nuts. And then behind you we have snow cones. We have an ice cream machine coming."

To the Tipton's surprise, they found a great willingness in Israel to help the Syrians. "We were trying to find a way through Lebanon or Jordan to get goods into them and it was a dead end. So we started working with our friends here in Israel," said Sondra. "We had no idea that we would run into such a loving friend in Israel that they would have the same vision for helping these people as we did as Christians. So we have Jews helping Christians to help the Muslims," Don said.

After nightfall, CBN News accompanied the IDF on another mission along the Syrian border. CBN News suited up in body armor and helmet and drove to an unspecified location. There – right next to the Syrian border – Israel's Good Neighbor project delivers tons of humanitarian aid to needy Syrians nearly every night.

"Today we are putting 10 tons of flour for the Syrian people," an IDF officer explained. "You can see the tractor that's taking all the flour from the big truck...We're doing it each day, seven days a week." Major "A" oversees the entire Good Neighbor Project on the border. CBN hid his identity for his protection. "We deliver a lot of food, a lot of things for children from toys to cleaning things. All the basic food things," he explained. "We are delivering the things near to the fence and they are coming and taking them."

Fighting has killed almost half a million people and left countless others wounded and homeless. Yet Syria maintains its stance against Israel. So why help? "This is the right thing to do and this is what the Israel country does and that's it," the major said. "I love to do it. This is the best thing that happen to me in this duty." Major "A" says about 250,000 Syrians live in the area that benefits from these deliveries. Does he think they'll remember the kindness when the war is over? "I really don't know, but I can hope that yes. That we, that they remember," he said. And just as the Israeli support surprised the Tiptons, the major has been surprised by the Christian help.

"They are lovely people," he said. "This is the first time I see that a human being can be so generous and so brave and so warm and can give a lot of love and they are great. Today in the clinic you saw Christians that make things happen with the Israelis, with the Jews for the Muslims."