



«For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost» (Luke 19:10)

MINISTRY UPDATE: FEBRUARY 2024

Dear Ministry Partners,

This month we would like to share with you **the story of Andy*** from our **Rehab Center** in Beersheva.

Andy* grew up in a good and caring family in the Soviet Union. Since his youth he was involved in professional sports and at a young age started attending an evangelical church regularly with his family, although he did not become a true believer then.

Later he got married, and since his wife did not show much interest in spiritual issues, he eventually left the church. It is interesting that spiritually his wife influenced him negatively, but in another matter her influence was actually quite positive. Before his marriage, Andy*, like many people in the Soviet Union, was very fond of alcohol, but because of his wife he stopped drinking and did not touch alcohol at all.

When Andy* was 33 years old, he, his wife and their daughter immigrated to Israel and lived a good life here until his wife fell ill with cancer. The disease was discovered late and it was not possible to save her. Andy* could not cope with his loss and started drinking again, and drank very heavily. He drank nonstop for eight months, and then his sister helped him get into a Christian rehab center.

In the rehab, he became a believer, stayed there for a whole year, but then went to live independently and relapsed. Still, Andy* had one big advantage: he knew where to run for help, so when he realized his desperate situation, he returned to the same rehab. Sadly, two more relapses followed (Andy* is a very sensitive person, and each strong negative emotional experience throws him back to a quick remedy - alcohol...).

Andy* has been living in our rehabilitation center in Beer Sheva for almost a year already. This is his fourth attempt to leave his addiction for good, and so far everything goes very well, praise the Lord. He works as a security guard in a supermarket. When I visited him the other day, I noticed that right next to his post at the entrance to the supermarket there is a big section that holds various alcoholic drinks. I asked him if that was a temptation for him, but he just said: "What, this? As far as I am concerned, these are shelves with mineral water."

I also asked him what our rehab center meant to him. He replied that at first it was like a refuge for him, a shelter from the bondage of addiction, but now it is his home and family, and all this thanks to Wilhelm, whom Andy* sees not only as his mentor and friend, but also in many ways as a father figure.

Please pray for Andy*!



Other news and prayer requests

Women's Shelter

Recently we have taken **two new ladies** into our Shelter: **Inna*** and **Rina***. Inna* has already been to our Shelter and asked for help now because of a temporary complication in her situation, while Rina* is a new lady in her 50-ties, who has lived in an abusive relationship for many years and has just left her abuser. She is in a very complicated emotional and financial situation. Please pray for her – and for us to be able to help her the best way.



Art class in the Shelter

We also decided that we want to be helpful not only to those women who come to live in our Shelter, but also to other former or present victims of domestic abuse from Beersheva and its surroundings, so with the help of a professional volunteer we started **a weekly support group for women**, and it is going very well. Please pray for these meetings and everyone who is attending them.



Food distribution project in Ashkelon

Last month there was a meeting in Ashkelon, where awards and certificates of appreciation were distributed to the city volunteers. Eduard and his team were awarded with certificates from the mayor and vice mayor of Ashkelon, and also received gratitude from the former Minister of Defense Avigdor Lieberman for their war relief efforts during the first months of the war. We are very happy and praise the Lord that this ministry has become **a good testimony of God's love and care**

not only to the needy people of Ashkelon, but also to its authorities.

Traffic accident

This month, when the team from our Beersheva rehab Center was on its way to Tel Aviv to serve in Aviv Center, it got into a multi-car crash. We praise the Lord, that Wilhelm and all the rehabilitants who were with him are ok! The rehab's vehicle, however, was badly damaged and the insurance company is not willing to pay for the repairs, as they will cost more than the van's market value. So now we need to find another vehicle for the ministry, and though we will get some funds from the insurance company, we will have to gather much more to make the purchase. If the Lord puts it on your heart, please help us with this need.

Your prayer requests?

Dear brothers and sisters, you have been praying for us faithfully for many years, standing with us in challenging times, encouraging and carrying us in your hearts and thoughts, and we are endlessly grateful for that to each and every one of you! It has been on our hearts for some time already to ask you to start sharing your prayer needs and challenges with us, so that Aviv Ministry team could be supporting you in prayer too, just as you are supporting us. **Please feel free to share your prayer requests with us anytime!**

Thank you for all your care and prayers!

Yours in Him, Dou and Olga Bikas

