

Ministry update – July/August 2022

Sergei's story

One day a neighbor asked me if I wanted to sell the van he had seen in my parking lot. I explained that the van was not mine, but belonged to our rehabilitation center. When the neighbor heard about the latter, he got very interested and asked if we could get one of his employees, whom he valued very much, into our rehab program. This is how Sergei came to us.

Sergei was born in the Soviet Union, grew up without a father and lived with his mother in a neighborhood full of criminals and drug addicts. The mother worked a lot, so Sergei was brought up by the street that supplied very problematic role models. He started drinking and smoking very early, committed various petty crimes, and by the age of 14 had already become a drug addict.

Still, Sergei had another very interesting hobby. Father of one of his teenage friends was a believer. His son used to steal from him sheets of handwritten parts of the Bible and read them regularly with Sergei and other guys in a basement. Here you need to understand that it was back in those days when communists were still persecuting Christians, and Bibles were not available, so the believers copied them by hand. Sergei liked reading the Bible. Ever since he could remember, he had always believed in God. His faith, of course, was very primitive, but it was still faith.

At the age of 16, Sergei saw a vision, in which Jesus was calling him to Himself. Since then, as Sergei recalls, he began to gradually change, or, to be precise, something inside him did: outwardly, he still remained the same criminal and drug addict, but something in his heart started strongly opposing this way of life, he did not enjoy it anymore... When Sergei had turned 20, he began to periodically attend a church and one day he met a friend there, who once was a drug addict too, but then became a believer and a manager of a rehab center. Sergei asked if he could start a rehab program there and soon he fully dedicated his life to God. For the next ten years, he was very active in the ministry and participated in everything he could. All he wanted was to serve God. Sergei also really wanted to grow, so he finished a Bible Institute and participated in many other Christian programs and seminars.

Then, sadly, Sergei fell and returned to drugs, and kept struggling with this problem for the next 20 years, but without any long-term success. In this condition, Sergei came to our Rehab Center, and he has been living with us for 4 months already. Recently I have asked Sergei what our Rehab means to him. He replied: "It is my family". I also asked him what had changed since he came to us, and he said: "I have got the will to live again".

Let's pray together for Sergei!

News and prayer requests:

Tel Aviv

Last week we held a seminar for Aviv Center volunteers on the topic of first medical aid, since many addicts get festering wounds because of regular injections of drugs and often turn to us for help. We want our volunteers to be better equipped for their ministry, so we plan to hold more seminars on medical and other topics that can help them serve the Center's visitors more effectively.

Women's Shelter

The new lady, Rebecca*, stayed in our Shelter for three weeks, but it eventually became clear that her psychiatric problems were too big for us to handle, so she returned to the hostel she lived in before where she could keep getting close monitoring and medical treatment. Still, her room in the Shelter did not remain empty for long. About a week ago, around midnight, one of our volunteers called Tatyana, the Shelter's manager, and told her about a forty-something-year-old woman who was sleeping on a bench. Tatyana could not ignore this cry for help and took the lady to the Shelter right away. As she expected, Maya* turned out to be a heavy alcoholic. When I came to visit her in the morning, I saw that her hands were shaking badly and she looked like a typical homeless person who had been living on the street for quite a while. As a rule, we do not accept women who need rehabilitation (since we are a shelter and not a rehab), but she was already with us, so we decided to give her a chance (if she follows certain strict rules, of course). I talked to Maya* that morning and saw that she was very firm in her decision to stop being an alcoholic. She also told me a little about her ex-husband and how he abused her. No wonder she started drinking... Please remember Maya* in your prayers!

New Immigrants

Eduard keeps working with new immigrants, and more and more people hear about him and turn to him and his helpers for assistance. Recently he organized two seminars on the history of Israel (Biblical and modern), which were attended by more than a dozen new immigrants. They liked these meetings and got very interested in the topic. When Eduard tells the immigrants various facts about ancient Israel, many ask: "Where have you read about all these things?" Such questions give Eduard a great opportunity to hand them a Bible! Please pray for all the families he is in touch with.

Thank you for your care and prayers and may God bless you abundantly,

Dov and Olga Bikas and Aviv Ministry team



Praying for a visitor in Aviv Center



Teaching the volunteers the rules of first aid



Maya* and the volunteers at a worship night in the Shelter



Seminar for the immigrants