



AVIV MINISTRY – for Victims of Addictions and Sexual Abuse
THE NEGEV MINISTRY – Evangelization and Church Planting

MINISTRY UPDATE: JULY - SEPTEMBER 2018

Renovations in Aviv Center – urgent need

Dear Praying Friends,

The inside of our outreach center in Tel Aviv, after all these years of use, has become quite shabby and unsightly, and one of our most active volunteer leaders, Shlomi, suggested some **major renovations**. Indeed, it was **simply impossible** to keep operating Aviv Center. When we rented it six years ago it was an old shop in an old building which had never really been renovated. We did some “cosmetic” repairs, but everything continued to decay until it was already unsuitable for the work we were doing. The **anti-sanitary condition of the kitchen**



made it especially problematic since we distribute about 1000 meals each month. Aside from this health consideration, we want Aviv Center to be in a good and pleasant state, as suits a place that **honors and belongs to the Lord**. We want people to enjoy the atmosphere and stay longer. If it is clean and looks more appealing, not only addicts, but also other passers-by will be willing to enter it more often. Shlomi testifies that during his “shifts” in Aviv Center (two evenings each week) many native Israelis and Arabs (mostly “costumers” of nearby brothels) come for a cup of coffee and a chat. These are **golden opportunities to share the Gospel**, since it is much easier to talk to someone who has come to your place by himself, than, for example, approach strangers on the street.



The renovations began last month and the center’s floor, kitchen, leaking roof, broken door, damaged electric cables and walls were repaired. We have gotten rid of the pests, cleaned the place, bought some necessary equipment, etc. Meanwhile we **keep distributing food and sharing the Gospel outside**, at the entrance to Aviv Center.



This project is not cheap, but we believe it is worth it. We want our volunteers to work in a **safe and comfortable environment**, and people from the outside to feel this is not just another soup kitchen. We want them to know we truly care for them and believe they deserve a pleasant atmosphere. In the renovated center we may also be able to hold **additional activities and services**, such as Bible studies or church/home groups on the second floor.

Please pray for these changes to bring good fruit, as well as **for additional funds to cover the renovation expenses**. It is indeed our most pressing financial need at the moment! We were very frugal in the repairs, but the work was more expensive than we initially thought. If God puts it on your heart **to participate in this project** financially, please get in touch with us.

New outreach in Beersheva

Two months ago we started a new outreach – in Beersheva, in its problematic and poor district. We took our flyers, some food and drink and went to a park in the area. Yep, “our guys” were there and we started talking to them. There are fewer addicts in this park than on the streets of Tel Aviv, of course, and they are not homeless. In Beersheva drug addicts still live with their families, so they are not at “the last stage” yet, as in Tel Aviv.

At first the addicts were suspicious and were not willing to talk to us, but now, two months later, they greet us with friendly attitude. **Some of them are quite open** and know something about Jesus. Please pray for them.

Beersheva rehab

Last time we wrote to you about the four new addicts who had come to our rehab. Sadly, they all left the center before completing the program. One of the reasons, of course, is the intensity of the withdrawals, even though many addicts do pass through them successfully. Indeed, it is difficult to do so without any medications, but we are not allowed to provide any, since we are not officially recognized and don't have a doctor on our staff (another prayers request!). Nevertheless all these people have heard the Gospel, lived in a Christian home and know where to find us if they decide to resume the program. In fact, we see that **even several days in the rehab are not in vain** for the addicts. When we met one of our former rehabilitants in Beersheva park I mentioned earlier, he gladly recognized us and spoke warmly of us to his buddies. He even said that he is thinking about returning to finish the program. Please pray for him.

Recently we understood one of the major reasons why rehabilitants leave rehab *after* they have gone through the withdrawals: they often have **different tasks and goals** than we do. In many cases, drug addicts turn to us for help not because of their main problem (addiction), but because of its consequences. For example, a person becomes homeless because of drugs. When he comes to us, we start solving his problem of addiction through spiritual means, but he, having entered our rehab, has already solved his problem of homelessness.

We pray that God would intervene in the lives of such rehabilitants, touch their hearts and **open their eyes to see their major problem**. Please support us in this spiritual battle for the souls of those who so desperately need God! Only He can truly rescue them from the dominion of darkness and bring them into the kingdom of his beloved Son!



Bible study in Beersheva rehab

Also please pray **for Alexei, our rehab's director**. Recently he has been under much stress. His job is by no means easy, and he takes each rehabilitant's journey very close to his heart. As a result, he has started losing sleep and has felt on the verge of burnout. That is why we decided to postpone acceptance of any *new* rehabilitants until the end of the year to let Alexei recover and regain his strength. (He will keep taking care of the old rehabilitants, of course.) Please pray for him. He is a precious friend and a diligent minister both in our rehab and in the church.

Thank you all very much for your prayers and support!
Yours in Him, Dou and Olga Bikas

