



THE ROAD TO RECOVERY  
בדרך להחלמה  
الطريق الى الشفاء

## The Year 2016 in Review

### Our mission

Today, amid one of the most deeply-rooted political and cultural conflicts in the Middle East, *The Road to Recovery* (“RTR”) organization is bridging the divide with an initiative of hope, placing humanity before politics. Ours is a not-for-profit organization of volunteers who believe that peace among Israelis and Palestinians should come about through engagement and personal interaction. Motivated to render humanitarian services, our volunteers break down the barriers of conflict by engaging on a personal level, transporting Palestinian patients on round-trips from the West Bank and Gaza to hospitals throughout Israel for treatment, hospitalization and check-ups.

### Who we are and what we do

We are about 1,150 volunteers donating time and the use of our own vehicles on a regular basis to transport Palestinian patients and their family guardians between the government checkpoints and the Israeli hospitals. Our service is provided mainly for Palestinian children with severe ailments who require medical treatment or procedures that are unavailable in the West Bank or Gaza. For these children and their families, logistics and travel costs to Israeli hospitals are prohibitive, particularly for those patients requiring regular and recurring treatment.



Our nation-wide information, referral and collaboration network includes Palestinian field volunteers, hospitals, and fellow non-profit Israeli and Palestinian organizations. Our activity involves transportation of Palestinian patients to Israeli hospitals all over Israel.

In addition to transporting Palestinian patients, we also assist those among them having limited means in the acquisition of specialized outpatient medical equipment or medical treatment. We also organize special rehabilitation and retreat days for Palestinian patients and their families in Israeli recreational destinations.



We have received countless thanks and heart-warming gestures of gratitude from the patients and their families. Since our organization’s founding in 2006, we have brought about countless person-hours of interaction between Palestinians and Israelis, thereby forging special and personal bonds at unparalleled scale in the context of every-day life. Our Founder said it best: **for a few hours during every hospital trip, we make with our Palestinian neighbors our own “mini-peace.”** *The Road to Recovery* is as much about the recovery of mutual respect, trust, dialog and friendship among Israelis and Palestinians as it is about individual patients’ physical recovery.

# THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

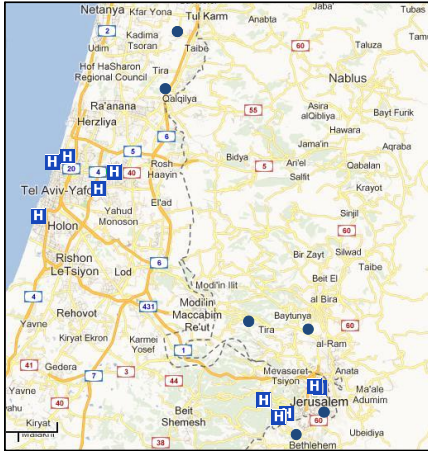
## Patient Transportation Services

Our volunteers serve Palestinians (mostly children) in need of hospital treatments in Israel. Thanks to our donors and benefactors, in 2016 we were able to reimburse our volunteers for most of their gasoline expenses, a fact that enabled more volunteers to join our ranks. In 2016 our ranks grew at a much higher rate than in previous years—from about 700 to 1,150 volunteer drivers. In 2016 alone, our volunteers drove about 13,000 patient-trips (in about 6,400 hospital trips) to 13 hospitals, covering a total of about 528,000 miles.



### Central


-  Hospital/clinic
-  CheckPoint

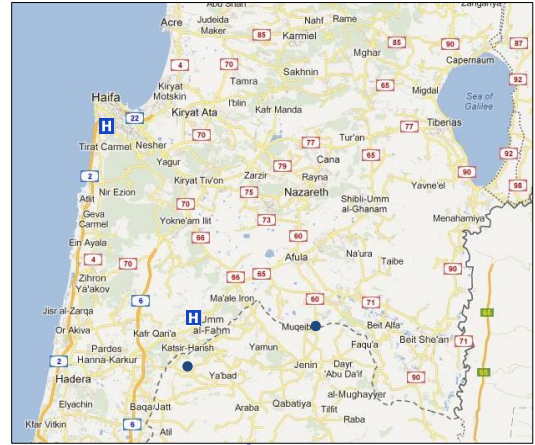
- From:** ●
- Beit Horon
  - Bethlehem
  - Eyal
  - Qalandiya
  - Shaar Efrayim
  - Zeitim
- To:** 
- Alyn
  - Al-Muqased
  - Assouta
  - Augusta Victoria
  - Beilinson/Schneider
  - Hadassah
  - Ichilov
  - St John Hospital
  - Shaarei Tzedek
  - Tel Hashomer
  - Wolfson




### North

-  Hospital/clinic
-  Check-Point

- From:** ●
- Jalame
  - Reihan
- To:** 
- Rambam
  - Umm-al-Fahm

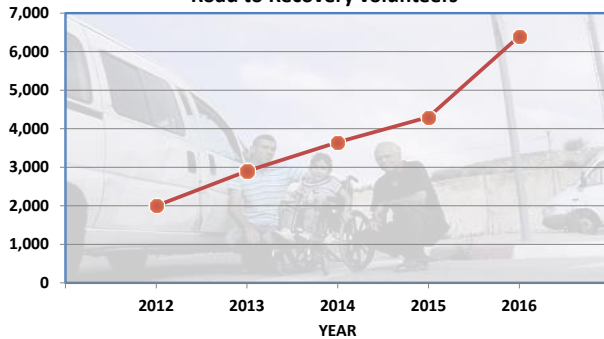


### South

- From:** ●
- Erez
- To:** 
- Central and north Israel



**Growth in the number of hospital trips driven by The Road to Recovery volunteers**



Our larger volunteer driver force and additional resources allowed us to meet a larger fraction of the growing demand for hospital trips. In 2016 we were able to meet nearly 100 percent of the demand for trips from the northern West Bank, while meeting nearly 90 percent of the demand for trips

from Gaza and south of Mount Hebron to hospitals in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. In 2014 we have started operating weekly chartered minibus trips, and in 2016 we maintained this minibus service at a frequency of four times per week thanks to ongoing donations via our project page on the Global Giving crowd-funding web site (see <http://j.mp/RTR-Donation>). As in 2015, we have continued in 2016 to transport three Palestinian infants and their escorts every two weeks from the Erez Crossing to the Shaarey Tzedek hospital for dialysis.

## Medical Assistance

In 2016, we continued to provide support for orthopedic medical equipment to **Mary Samar**, a 10-year-old girl from Yamon in the West Bank, whose lower body is paralyzed by Spina Bifida. In addition, our organization helped a family from the Palestinian village of **Idhna** to obtain bone-marrow for their 16-year-old son's bone-marrow transplant.

In the latter part of 2016, we have established the Medical Expense Underwriting Committee which receives applications for financial support from Palestinian patients to cover their medical equipment and medical service expenses. The Committee, headed by RTR volunteer **Dr. Ron Alfandari**, recommends disbursements of available funds based on meritorious causes and expert medical advice provided by RTR volunteer **Dr. Dana Seligman**.

## Recreational Patient Activities

In January, 2016, we arranged a week's stay for 35 Gaza Palestinian patients and their parents at the Jordan Village camp for children, where they rested and enjoyed fun activities. In May, we organized a "Joy & Health" day outing at the Sdot Yam Beach near Caesarea for 200 Palestinian patients and their families from the West Bank. A similar outing for a second group of 200 Palestinian patients and their families was organized in August, on this occasion, to the beach at Kibutz Ma'agan Michael. As in previous years, our volunteers received generous support for holding these recreational days from Arab youth organizations and from donors and benefactors in the Israeli Arab sector.

## Annual Meetings

In 2016, we had multiple regional volunteer meetings. The meeting for the central region was held at **Albert Amit**'s home in January; in July, RTR volunteers from the southern region met in Kibutz Hatzerim; and in September, another meeting for the central and northern regions was held in the community center of Kafr Qara. In these meetings, RTR volunteers participated in group discussions, got better acquainted with each other, and shared experiences transporting patients. In September, a special reception attended by many RTR volunteers was held in the home of our Palestinian coordinator **Naim El Baida**, on the occasion of his son's wedding. Naim was recognized as indispensable resource for our operation in the central region and the West Bank.

## Fundraising Events

[Global Giving crowd-funding website](#)



Since the inception of our Global Giving project in June 2015, as of the end of 2016, we have raised over \$34,600 from 145 donors to help fund our operations. Our [project website](#) is run year-round by RTR volunteer **Smadar Shiffman**, who updates its content and maintains communications with individual donors.

[Mimoona crowd-funding website](#)



In early 2016, we have established a project site on Mimoona, the Israeli crowd-funding website. Within the challenge period, we have exceeded our project goal of raising 150,000 NIS and raised



more than 158,000 NIS (about \$42,700) from 667 donors. This effort demonstrated a quintessential aspect of crowd-funding for a worthy cause—a large base of charitable donors, each contributing a modest amount to help meet an appreciable funding goal. RTR volunteer **Niva Navon** managed this campaign and was instrumental in its success.

### Musical benefit events

In July, 2016, volunteers from the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of **Zubin Mehta**, a world-renowned conductor of classical music, held a benefit concert at the Elma Arts Complex in Zikhron Ya'akov, south of Haifa (see left photo below). The venue was generously donated by **Lily Elstein**; the musical producer and Master of Ceremonies for the evening was **Roni Porat**, accompanied by introductions offered by **Mira Awad**. All musicians and performers have donated their performance and time, while proceeds from ticket sales were donated to RTR. In addition, maestro Mehta had recorded promotional videos for RTR to support our recruiting efforts. He also found time to engage a seven-year-old Palestinian girl recovering from leukemia, **Hamsa**, giving her a flavor of the musical conducting profession (see right photo below) and accompanying her on an RTR hospital trip to her final clinical checkup.



In March, 2016, the musical composer and performer **Idit Zin**, an RTR volunteer, organized a musical benefit event featuring her musical creations. The artist **Amir Lev** appeared as a special guest and proceeds from this event were donated to RTR.

### Tax status events

As a not-for-profit organization acting in the public interest, we received in October the long-awaited eligibility certification pursuant to Section 46 of the Israeli Income Tax Regulations. Our organization's new tax status will enable our donors to get Israeli tax credit for qualified donations, which should help expand our donor base. We have also established an affiliation with the **New Israel Fund** ("NIF"), which now provides a commission-free conduit for charitable contributions to RTR from donors residing outside of Israel. Because the NIF is recognized under the tax laws of the United States and the United Kingdom as tax-exempt, and because RTR is now accredited as an NIF affiliate, contributions to RTR through the NIF are deemed tax-exempt in these two countries.

## **Operations and Organizational Improvements**

2016 marks the second year that our Organizational Efficiency Forum initiated by **Amir Adar** made a substantial difference in the growing scope of our operations. The Forum comprises special-purpose teams:

- *Special-Events* headed by **Alona Abt** and **Albert Amit**, organized the beach recreational events for patients and their families (described above) and the orientation meetings of new RTR volunteer recruits;

- *Fundraising* led by **Eli Sahar** and **Alona Abt**, initiated the MIMOONA crowd-funding project;
- *Social Media* directed by **Amir Cohen-Dreman**, supported and maintained our Facebook page;
- *Communication & Public Relation* overseen by **Rafi Seelig**, managed RTR outreach to Israeli and World media including a main news item on Israel's Channel 2 TV, internet article in *Mosaic*, article in the Kibutz Dvir newsletter, and an article in *The Australian Jewish News*. A documentary movie titled "Saving Nur" by **Nili Tal** aired on Israeli TV Channel 1. It describes how a Palestinian girl with a life-threatening medical condition was assisted by RTR volunteers. The documentary was also screened at the Cinematheque theaters in Israel on International Peace Day, September 21, 2016.
- *Applications* initiated by **Amir Adar** and **Dan Noam**, began developing specifications for a computer-based trip optimization system to be used for RTR trip scheduling, routing and assignments by the end of 2017. The system is in the advanced design phase and is expected to improve substantially the efficiency, coordination, and utilization of our volunteer resources.
- *Branding & Graphic Design* spearheaded by **Ayelet Sadé** and **Tovi Peled**, designed the new RTR logo, and developed other branding and graphic designs for RTR stationary, postcards, and business cards. Thanks to the initiative of our volunteer **Nathan Berkovitch**, RTR tee shirts were also produced with our logo in front, as shown in the photo.



## Supporting Activities

This year we have conducted RTR introduction and membership drive meetings in the village of **Lehavim** and in the following Kibutzims: **Mizra**, **Gezsr**, and **Dvir**. We also manned a booth at the **Menashe Forest Festival** to promote our cause.

In the United States of America, we continue to hold a booth set up by RTR volunteer **Smadar Shiffman** at the annual Israel Independence Day festival in Palo Alto, California. The traffic we received in May 2016 helped spread the word and increase donations.

In February, **Nachshon Gal** represented RTR in a publicity tour organized by **Confronti**, an Italian magazine focused on reconciliation in conflict regions. Later in the year, Confronti representatives visited Israel and spent two days with us and worked to strengthen the ties between our respective organizations.

This was the fourth year during which our volunteer **Eyal Ofek** provided free Arabic language courses to RTR members. This year, the courses transitioned to an online format. These courses, both at the beginners and advanced levels, help participants improve communications with our patient-passengers and their families.

## Special Thanks and Acknowledgement

We are grateful to our regular anchor kibbutzim, **Nir Oz**, **Magen**, **Hatzerim**, **Ein Shemer**, **Gan Shmuel**, **Mishmar HaEmek**, **Ma'agan Michael**, **Yisre'el**, **Tzuba**, and **Be'eri**. These kibbutzim regularly support the expenses of their members who volunteer to transport patients every week.

We also wish to thank and acknowledge the invaluable cooperation of the following organizations: **El Shafaa el Rahma** for loaning medical equipment; **Salametcom** of Abu Gosh for their in-hospital patient support; **Jamal Knaani** for maintaining communications with donors in the Arab sector; and to the women of **Machsom Watch** for their dedicated support and availability to help patient families.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our regional coordinators who make our mission possible: **Shlomit Gal** (Northern region); **Efrat & David Shear** and their successors **Miriam & Shlomo Shaish** (Central region); **Amalia Weisel** for her long and dedicated service and liaison with the Erez Crossing Command, and her successor **Yael Noy** and counterpart return-trip coordinator **Michal Borenstein** (Southern region); our Palestinian coordinators **Naim El Baida** (Central region) and the **Basmat el Amal** organization (Gaza).

We thank the **Intel Corporation**, which our volunteers **Assaf Le Guennec** and **Hemi Brann** have graciously enlisted to make matching contributions to RTR for each hour spent by a company employee in volunteering for RTR transportation services.

This year we have many professionals in the music and entertainment industry to thank for their time and effort contributions at our July benefit concert described above. We humbly thank maestro **Zubin Mehta** for his conducting performance and for serving as our good-will “ambassador” in the media; the musicians from the **Israel Philharmonic Orchestra**; **Baruch Stern** who initiated the project; other volunteers who helped make the event and related videos possible including: **Yaacov Avnet**, **Shelly Davis**, **Naomi Enoch**, **Ella Hefez**, **Orit Lifshitz**, **Idit Nachumi**, **Esty Ben-Aharon**, and the professionals at the **Herzliya Studios** with editing by **Ori Roth**.

We fondly acknowledge and thank all our donors: our volunteers that fund all the expenses associated with transporting patients, and several private donors wishing to remain anonymous. We also thank the following organizations for their significant donations: **The Friends of Israel from Germany** (via **Danny Walter**); the **Tolkien Fund** from England (via **Miriam Karchi**); the Australian **Rozana Fund** introduced by **Ron Finkel**; the **Shoken Fund** through the connections of **Lily Stern**; and contributions by the **Legacy Heritage Fund**, the **Rotary Club of Nazareth**, the **Jewish Federation of St. Louis**, and the **De Sio Fund**, all through the resourceful connections of our volunteer **Nachshon Gal**.

Special thanks are due to services rendered charitably by our volunteers **Ohad Richmond, Esq.** for legal services, accountant **Ofer Davidowitz** for accounting services, **Amir Cohen–Dreman** for media and social-network management, **Kulu Orr** for maintaining our web site and managing our email communications, **Jonathan Eytan** for helping obtain insurance for our volunteers, and **Rotem Gur** for her general assistance. We wish to thank our volunteers who spent tireless hours in translating our material into: Arabic – **Eyal Ofek**, **Liran Ossi**, **Lauren Eghbaria**, **Wagi Sidawi**; English – **Batya Fonda**; French – **Dan Weinblum**; German – **Adam Ron**, **Maurice Tszorf**.

We are also grateful for the communication and fundraising work done in the United States of America on our behalf by **Smadar Shiffman**, **Revital Katznelson**, and **Ron Katznelson**.

Finally, we wish to thank our founder **Yuval Roth** for his hard work, leadership, dedication and inspiration. We also thank his wife **Yael Roth–Barkai** for her tireless efforts in national coordination, communications and in helping bringing us all together.