We’re in a constant battle to match our enemies’ determination to take lives with our innovations to save them. MDA is more important than ever, because we use every resource at our disposal to find new ways to shorten critical response times, ensuring more Israelis survive their attackers.

Our state-of-the-art command-and-control center, the Mamlam, continues to coordinate, dispatch, and track every emergency response vehicle in Israel — whether MDA ambulances or any other private EMS company’s resources. And thanks to our partners in America, we’ve been able to demonstrate our proprietary dispatch and tracking technology to communities all over the U.S. in the hope that Americans can benefit from our technological innovations too. The interest from U.S. cities in exploring our technology is exciting.

The My MDA app has revolutionized how patients interact with our emergency dispatchers and first-responders. Our Life Guardian Program enlists — and deploys to emergencies — tens of thousands of everyday Israelis to help administer basic CPR. And the new Marcus National Blood Services Center will be the world’s first subterranean blood-processing and storage facility. These are just some of the innovations that compliment the world-class training our EMTs and paramedics receive before they ever set foot out in the field.

Your support makes it all happen. We are partners in saving lives, and your generosity is the cornerstone of every lifesaving act we are honored to perform.

Toda rabah,

ELI BIN
Director-General, MDA

People support MDA for many reasons: to stay connected to Israel, to recognize MDA’s heroic first-responders, or a means of keeping family traditions of philanthropy thriving. In most cases, it’s a combination of all three.

Whatever brings you to MDA, you’re part of community — indeed, a family that extends across oceans — that’s bound by a deep commitment to saving lives.

Since the current Wave of Terror began in September 2015, 62 innocent people have been killed in terrorist attacks and nearly 900 wounded. MDA’s world-class paramedics respond to every attack. And they’re first on the scene of daily medical emergencies like car accidents, or sudden illness.

Think about how much worse the numbers would be if MDA didn’t arrive instantly to save these innocent people. This recent wave of terror is hard to stop, but we can make a difference by helping MDA in its effort to keep people alive — often under seemingly long odds.

So, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your unwavering support of MDA’s lifesaving work. Families in Israel are intact today because of your support. We hope we can continue counting on our fellow Americans to not just dream about saving lives, but also act on this truly sacred mission.

MARK D. LEBOW
National Chairman, AFMDA

DAVID M. FRANKEL
CEO, AFMDA
Since the Wave of Terror began in September 2015, 62 innocent people have been killed in terrorist attacks, and 898 wounded. There have been 190 stabbing attacks and 139 attempted stabbings; 171 shooting attacks; and 61 vehicular rammings.

As long as there are Israelis in need, wherever they are, MDA and its world renown first responders will be there to save them. Here are some of the most recent incidents:

• In December 2017, a security guard, Asher Elmaliach, was stabbed in the heart during a terror attack at Jerusalem’s central bus station. A team of MDA first responders, including Senior EMT Rivka Or (read her story on page 9) rushed to the scene, treated Asher, and quickly evacuated him to Shaare Zedek Medical Center. Asher survived the attack.

• MDA emergency responders, with the assistance of the IDF medical force, successfully treated and transported a 34-year-old man who was stabbed in the hand in February 2018.

Donations to AFMDA’s 70 for 70 Campaign can be made at www.afmda.org/donate.

SPONSOR A PARAMEDIC
They’re heroes in Israel. But not without you. For $4,000, you can equip an MDA paramedic or EMT for a year with critical tools to save lives.

MDA AMBULANCES AND MOBILE INTENSIVE CARE UNITS
Every year, MDA needs 100 new ambulances to replenish its fleet. Without them, Israelis are at risk.

MEDICYCLES
MDA’s revolutionary, three-wheeled Medicycles offer paramedics the ability to navigate hard-to-reach patients. More than 500 are in use today, but more are needed — especially in heavily congested urban centers. A medicycle may be sponsored with a gift of $36,000.

To learn more about these items or any other funding opportunities, contact your regional AFMDA office (see page 19) or AFMDA Chief Development Officer Catherine Reed at CReed@afmda.org or 866.632.2763.

MDA STORIES FROM ISRAEL

Commemorate the 70th Anniversary of Israel by Helping Provide 70 New Ambulances for its People

The miracle of Israel isn’t just about its re-establishment as the Jewish homeland in 1948 after a nearly 2000-year absence as an independent state. It’s also about Israel’s continued survival since then and its ability to thrive socially, economically, and democratically through ceaseless attacks — both politically and militarily.

Join American Friends of Magen David Adom in celebrating Israel’s 70th anniversary by supporting AFMDA’s 70 for 70 Campaign, a program designed to put 70 additional ambulances on the streets of Israel to save lives.

“Through the 70 for 70 campaign, donors will be able to help sponsor ambulances that every day will be involved in saving lives in Israel,” said Cathy Reed, chief development of American Friends of Magen David Adom. “While Life Support Ambulances cost $100,000, this program will enable donors to pool their contributions with other people committed to Israel to help save lives there by purchasing these lifesaving vehicles together.”

Donations to AFMDA’s 70 for 70 Campaign can be made at www.afmda.org/donate.

MARCUS NATIONAL BLOOD SERVICES CENTER
MDA’s Marcus National Blood Services Center is still under construction, and sponsorship opportunities are available — from naming a molecular lab to securing the facility’s subterranean floors. This is the highest priority national security project in Israel today, and your support will safeguard Israel’s national blood supply.

MDA FUN FACT
$125,000 is the average cost for a Mobile Intensive Care Unit.

Join AFMDA in celebrating Israel’s 70th anniversary by supporting its future. AFMDA’s 70 for 70 Campaign will ensure that 70 additional ambulances are on the streets of Israel to save lives this year. To learn more about these items or any other funding opportunities, contact your regional AFMDA office or AFMDA Chief Development Officer Catherine Reed at CReed@afmda.org or 866.632.2763.
MDA inaugurated 14 new Medicycle — including its 500th — in a festive ceremony at its Tiberius medical station on January 17. The newest Medicycles will be deployed to northern Israeli regions, including the Golan Heights, the Galilee, and the Jordan Valley.

Medicycles are specially designed motorcycles that shorten valuable emergency response time by weaving through hard-to-navigate places in Israel — such as congested highways and narrow streets — ahead of incoming MDA ambulances.

AFMDA National Board Member Barry Feldman was the first American to sponsor a Medicycle in 2013.

“To me, saving lives in Israel means we should try almost everything,” Feldman said. “These vehicles are amazing innovations, and I’m especially proud that so many other people are answering the call.”

By the end of 2018, MDA expects to have approximately 700 Medicycles in operation to compliment its fleet of 1,100 ambulances.

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MDA will be able to respond to car accidents, even when the driver is unconscious and no one witnessed the crash, thanks to new technology being rolled out in Israel starting in April.

With eCall, sensors on new vehicles will capitalize on MDA’s cutting-edge geolocation capabilities — a feature most American 911 centers don’t have. eCall will alert MDA EMTs when a car has been involved in an accident. Dispatchers will then be able to use a cellular connection in the car to talk to the driver and send an ambulance if the driver is unresponsive or says they’re injured.

eCall is one more example of how MDA is using technology to get to the sick and injured more quickly, to begin treatment sooner, and ultimately save more lives.

At a ceremony at the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv in early January, MDA inaugurated five bullet-proof ambulances sponsored by Sheldon and Dr. Miriam Adelson for use in Judea and Samaria.

The Adelsons are tremendous supporters of Israel and AFMDA and, in October 2017, made a new leadership gift supporting the new Marcus National Blood Services Center.

MDA's National Blood Service Center recently announced that it will soon open Israel's first breast-milk bank to allow nursing mothers to donate surplus milk for babies who don't have access to it. It is scheduled to begin operation in April 2018 MDA is working in conjunction with Israel's Health Ministry and the Israel Milk Bank, a nonprofit organization that works toward creating a human milk bank in Israel.

MDA To Open Israel's First Breast-milk Bank

MDA FUN FACT

There are approximately 500 milk banks around the world, but this will be the first one in Israel. It is scheduled to begin operation in April 2018 MDA is working in conjunction with Israel's Health Ministry and the Israel Milk Bank, a nonprofit organization that works toward creating a human milk bank in Israel.

143 emergency medical stations throughout Israel.
MDA Remembers Raziel Shevach, z”l

On January 9, the men and women of Magen David Adom lost a brother — Raziel Shevach, a Magen David Adom volunteer first-responder and senior EMT, who was recently honored for his lifesaving response to a terror attack. Shevach was himself killed in a drive-by terrorist shooting just outside Havat Gilad, where he lived in Samaria.

Raziel was driving in his car when it was riddled with more than 20 bullets fired from a passing vehicle, at least three of which struck him. The 32-year-old father of six was able to call MDA for medical assistance, but had already lost consciousness when MDA and IDF medics arrived just minutes later. He was pronounced dead on arrival at Meir Hospital in Kfar Saba.

May his memory be a blessing.

Two Babies, One Shift

On January 12, a team from MDA’s Modi’in station was called to two separate emergencies of women in labor. In both cases, the women gave birth in the ambulance as they were being rushed to area hospitals. While MDA paramedics deliver more than 200 babies every year, delivering two in one shift was indeed an unusual occurrence.

MDA’s first-responders are prepared for anything, whether it’s a terror attack or a heart attack. Or the kind of calls MDA’s EMTs love — a chance to welcome new life into the world.

MDA Honored with Rabin Award

MDA recently received the National Award for Quality and Excellence in the Public Sector. The award, named after Israeli statesman Yitzhak Rabin, z”l, and issued by the prime minister’s office, is given to organizations that achieve the highest quality standards in service to the general public in Israel.

The award committee reflected on MDA’s exceptional level of quality in emergency medicine and response times, the breadth and scope of its national services, innovation and technological capabilities, and its unique volunteer infrastructure.

Spotlight on a Hero: Rivka Or

Over the last several months, MDA Senior EMT Rivka Or has responded to two of the most brutal terrorist attacks in Israel. In each instance, she’s rushed to the scene instinctively and without hesitation, and, in the process, saved lives. So what motivates Rivka and countless other MDA emergency responders to run toward danger to help others?

“In that moment, every person imagines their own life or their own home,” she says.

Rivka, a longtime EMT based out of MDA’s Jerusalem region, was among the first to arrive on the scene in Halamish in July 2017, when a Palestinian man stabbed several members of the Salomon family at Shabbat dinner. Three family members died, but Rivka was able to treat Tova Salomon, the family matriarch, who survived her injuries.

“When you enter a scene like that, you hope and pray you’ll be able to save the patients. That’s why you do everything you can,” Rivka says.

In December 2017, Rivka’s rapid response helped save the life of 25-year-old Asher Elmaliach, a security guard who was stabbed at Jerusalem’s central bus station. Rivka and her team immediately took measures to stanch his bleeding and got him into surgery within 10 minutes from the time of the attack.

Officials at Shaare Zedek Medical Center credited MDA’s rapid response with saving Asher’s life.

“When I arrived at the scene and saw the patient’s condition, I understood that the most important thing was to get him to the operating room. “Within nine minutes of the stabbing we were already in the hospital.”

Cristiano Ronaldo Supports MDA

Cristiano Ronaldo, the Portuguese national and Real Madrid soccer star considered one of the best players of all time, is now an ambassador for MDA’s blood donation campaign.

Ronaldo, a regular blood donor whose BeThe1 campaign aims to raise awareness of the need for blood donations, has teamed up with MDA and Abbott Israel, a world leader in infectious disease detection, to encourage Israelis to become regular donors.

“It is within our power to bring about change by donating blood,” Ronaldo said. “This is why I’m excited about joining forces with Abbott Israel and MDA’s campaign.”

MDA FUN FACT

+500 Medicycles in service
Work on the world’s first underground blood bank and processing center is now well underway. Magen David Adom’s new Marcus National Blood Services Center is located in Ramla, the capital of the region during the Ottoman Empire, and a burgeoning high tech hub today.

MARCUS NATIONAL BLOOD CENTER CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

After more than five years of painstaking planning, the dream of building the world’s first underground, reinforced blood bank to protect Israel’s national blood supply from rocket, terrorist, chemical, and biological attack is becoming a reality.

The massive job of excavating the site has begun in anticipation of the more than 11,000 truckloads of soil that will be removed from the site in order to accommodate the three floors of the facility that will be built underground, each with footprints that will dwarf the floors above ground. To facilitate the excavation, contractors have constructed slurry walls, essentially retaining walls built in place by digging deep, narrow trenches; filling them with a loose water and clay mixture to exert pressure on the trench wall to prevent it from collapsing into the gap; and then pouring concrete into the trench, which displaces the liquidy clay slurry. The slurry is recaptured by pumps to use elsewhere on the site.

When the concrete hardens, it forms a subterranean wall outlining the excavation area, enabling construction workers to dig out the site without the soil collapsing into the hole. Slurry-wall technology, in fact, is what was used to create “the bathtub,” the retaining walls that hold back the water table at New York’s World Trade Center site and which famously survived 9/11, averting what would have been an even greater disaster. Slurry walls are also currently being put in place by the Israel Defense Forces to block Gaza terrorists from building tunnels that can breach Israel’s borders.

MDA FUN FACT

785,000+ patients transferred by MDA to hospitals every year

THE BLOOD-PROCESSING FLOOR

Much of the publicity surrounding the design of the Marcus National Blood Services Center has focused on the fact that it will be the world’s first underground, shielded blood center, designed to safeguard Israel’s national blood supply. But from a medical standpoint, the center’s most important feature is its blood-processing floor, about 23 feet underground, which will increase Israel’s blood-processing capacity nearly two-fold to accommodate Israel’s rapidly growing population. Here too, the blood will be safety-tested for pathogens, sorted by blood type, and labeled and tracked using a highly secure computer system to ensure patient safety.
NEW YORK GALA

AFMDA held its annual MDA New York Gala on Thursday, November 30. The event drew more than 500 guests and featured a variety of multimedia exhibits showcasing MDA’s lifesaving work.

The event, held at Pier Sixty at Chelsea Piers, recognized MDA’s first responders in Israel and honored Kent M. Swig, a leading commercial and residential real estate investor and developer in New York, with AFMDA’s Visionary Award. Elie Y. and Esther Katz received the Young Professional Leadership Award. Elie is the former mayor and current deputy mayor of Teaneck, NJ. Ambassador Dani Dayan, Consul General of Israel in New York, made opening remarks. TV journalist and social entrepreneur Jessica Abo hosted.

DRIVEN TO GIVE: DONNA CALCATERRA

Through their 613 Foundation, Calcaterra and her daughter, Jenna, have donated 15 vehicles — including a specially constructed bloodmobile — to MDA. The first, an ambulance dedicated to the memory of Calcaterra’s parents and uncle, was sent off following a ceremony at the Bergen YJCC in Washington Township, NJ, in 2009.

“I had wanted to donate an ambulance since my first visit to Israel in 1970,” Calcaterra recently told the New Jersey Jewish Standard. “I saw all the MDA ambulances dedicated to people, and I thought if I were ever rich enough to do something I’d like to do. I didn’t think I’d ever have the money, because I was supposed to be a famous artist. But instead, I wound up on Wall Street as a commodities broker. The day my stock IPO’d, my first call was to Gary Perl (at AFMDA’s New York office).”

Donna Calcaterra (at left) with Myrna Haas, whose late husband Ernie — a Holocaust survivor who then became a NJ-area community leader — is honored on Calaterra’s 15th ambulance.
HERB DONNER AND SYLVIA SZNAJDER AMBULANCE DEDICATION

Herb Donner and his sister, Sylvia Szajder, along with their families, have been staunch MDA supporters for decades. Their support started when their father, Abraham Donner, sponsored ambulances in the 1970s. Herb and Sylvia continued their father’s legacy, sponsoring multiple ambulances, as well as the observation deck of MDA’s William H. Bloomberg Emergency Medical Station in Jerusalem after their mother and step-father. MDA is such an important part of the Donner-Sznajder families’ lives that they decided to have a grandson’s bar mitzvah celebration at the Bloomberg station last year.

When MDA launched its campaign to build its new Marcus National Blood Services Center, the families jumped at the opportunity to be a part of this project. “When we found out about the need for a new, state-of-the-art, underground blood center to keep Israel’s blood supply safe from attacks, we knew we had to support this cause. The need is so vital and there is nothing else in the world like it,” Herb said.

MDA was an organization dear to the heart of Daniella Moffson (z’l), a former MDA overseas volunteer and young Manhattan resident who tragically passed away in 2016 while on a volunteer mission in Honduras. But Moffson’s lifelong passion to help those in need lives on, and nowhere was this more apparent than at the NYC Half Marathon in March 2018. More than 650 donors and 21 runners helped raise $110,000 to sponsor a new ambulance for MDA. The total was double the goal of $50,000 set by the Daniella Moffson Foundation, a beautiful example of how a community can come together to honor a loved one and save lives at the same time.

MDA FUN FACT

Most Services are Free

MDA only charges patients a fee — as required by Israel’s Ministry of Health — when they are treated by an ambulance team, and not hospitalized. Otherwise, all treatments are free.
A First Shift Brings New Life

by: Amanda Klestzick
New Rochelle, NY

Everyone expects their first day to be boring. I know I definitely was ready for at least an unexciting first call. This is what I was thinking as I got into the ambulance for my first shift as a ma’ar, first-aid responder. Our first call was to pick up a pregnant woman and take her to the hospital. We were told that she still had time and would make it to the hospital. We eased her into the bed and into the ambulance and off we went. Fifteen minutes in, her contractions were long and very close together, and we knew she wasn’t going to be able to wait until we arrived at the hospital. This is where we stepped in to help. We prepped for the birth and took out the birthing kit. Not too long afterwards, sure enough, came the baby! It was a beautiful event that determined your role, rather it’s one’s approach towards every call that will create a meaningful way! It isn’t the importance of a call or the difficulty of a challenge that determines your role, rather it’s one’s approach towards every call that will create a meaningful MDA experience.

Although I was fortunate to have such an amazing first experience, this isn’t my favorite part of MDA. The reason I look forward to coming to work day after day is because of the welcoming and friendly group of workers that greet me and work with me every day. I know that the language barrier would make volunteering a challenge, but the people at MDA create a nice environment in which I can grow, learn, and enjoy. When I wanted to learn more about the ambulances, the paramedics were happy to answer all my questions. And when we are having a slow day at the station, it is never boring, because I can always talk to all the other volunteers about their past experiences or life in Israel and anything in between.

My favorite day with MDA was a week in Israel and anything in between. My ambulance crew consisted of me, a volunteer driver, and two other high school volunteers. I had been volunteering the longest out of the high school students, so I was the unofficial number 2 of the ambulance. I taught the others how to check the ambulance properly and, when we received our calls, they all looked to me for direction. I took charge of the tablet and helped them with checking the vitals. I was proud that I was able to take on this role after being the follower in my previous shifts. I was able to prove to myself that I was learning and really contributing in a meaningful way! It isn’t selflessness that I first want to ensure the well-being of your family and loved ones. That is is it should be.

At the same time, many of our donors are deeply committed to MDA and have made provisions in their estate plans to continue their support even after they’ve gone. If you’re planning to make a legacy gift to AFMDA, please let us know so we can welcome you to our MDA Legacy Circle. Legacy gifts provide tangible support to the people of Israel, whose lives depend on the vital services MDA provides every day.

Of all the ways you can support the lifesaving work Magen David Adom performs in Israel, perhaps none is as personal as the topic of legacy gifts. When you do your estate planning, you first want to ensure the well-being of your family and loved ones. That is is it should be.

A Beginner’s Guide to the New Tax Reform Act

If you’re perplexed by the new tax reform law that was enacted in late December 2017 — the first major tax overhaul in more than 30 years — you’re not alone. It is difficult to predict exactly how the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will affect philanthropy and planned giving. Charitable giving has never significantly decreased due to changes of the U.S. tax system – in fact, the only downturns in charitable giving occurred in 1930 and in 2009 — both instances arising out of unstable economies.

So while the fate of donor-supported organizations like MDA does not appear to be in danger, there are some changes worth noting for donors:

• The major change has been the doubling of the standard deduction from $6,000 to $12,000 for single filers and $24,000 for married filers.

• Limits on state, local, and sales taxes are now capped at $10,000.

• In 2015, 70% of tax filers used the standard deduction. With the new changes, it’s estimated an additional 15 to 20% of filers will also use the standard deduction.

• For higher-income filers, the new tax act may be helpful to those interested in increasing their giving. The tax act dropped the Pease Amendment, which had reduced deductible benefits for filers with income over $318,000. Donors may have more disposable income to make charitable gifts. And with fewer deductible items available, charitable giving may be an incentive for filers to increase their giving.

• Another big change is the increase to the maximum adjusted gross income (AGI) limitations on charitable gifts — from 50 to 60% of cash gifts annually. There was no change in the limits on giving of appreciated assets (still 30% of AGI).

• Significantly, donors over the age of 70 ½ can still make gifts of up to $100,000 annually directly from their IRA without paying any income taxes on the withdrawal. These are just among the basic changes donors can anticipate. To discuss how the new tax reforms may impact your charitable contributions to AFMDA, please consult your tax advisor or Jeff Lipkin at jlipkin@afmda.org or toll-free 866.632.2763.

MDA LEGACY CIRCLE

MDA: A LEGACY INSTITUTION THAT’S YOUNG AT HEART

MDA FUN FACT

1,094 active ambulances

MDA LEGACY CIRCLE

THE PULSE

WINTER 2018

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Do you know someone whose life was saved by MDA? Your story may be published in a future issue of The Pulse. Email info@afmda.org with “Newsletter” in the subject line.

If you want more updates from AFMDA, please visit www.afmda.org/sign-up-for-our-e-newsletter.