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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 that 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’re 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 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 complement 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.

Todah 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 to keep 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 with 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.

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, with another 898 wounded. There have been 190 stabbing attacks and 139 attempted stabbings; 171 shooting attacks; and 61 car rammings.

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

• In December 2017, 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.

MDA STORIES FROM ISRAEL

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. Sponsor a Medicycle 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 inaugurated 14 new Medicycles — 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 complement its fleet of 1,100 ambulances.

MDA to Roll Out eCall Sensors in April

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 rolling 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, alerting 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, begin treatment sooner, and ultimately save more lives.

Dr. Miriam and Sheldon Adelson Dedicate Five New MDA Armored Ambulances

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 leadership gift supporting the new Marcus National Blood Services Center.

MDA To Open Israel’s First Breast Milk Bank

MDA’s National Blood Services Center recently announced 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.

Approximately 500 milk banks exist around the world, but this will be the first 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.

MDA Fun Fact

143 emergency medical stations operate in Israel
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, 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 is 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 Rabin 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, its innovation and technological capabilities, and its unique volunteer infrastructure.

MDA STORIES FROM ISRAEL

MDA Remembers Raziel Shevach, z”l

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Spotlight on a Hero: Rivka Or

In the past few 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 staunch 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,” Rivka says. “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 Be The 1 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.”
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.

**MDA FUN FACT**

+785,000

patients transferred by MDA to hospitals every year

The blood-processing floor, about 23 feet underground, will increase Israel’s blood-processing capacity nearly twofold 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.

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 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. They’re filling them with a loose water and clay mixture to exert pressure on the trench wall, preventing it from collapsing into the gap, and then pouring concrete into the trench, which displaces the 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 put in place by the Israel Defense Forces to block Gaza terrorists from building tunnels that can breach Israel’s borders.
MAJOR DONOR RECEPTION

On January 29, AFMDA’s Major Donor Reception in Palm Beach welcomed distinguished donors and residents for an inspiring evening of conversation and philanthropy at the beautiful home of Lois Pope. Yoav Limor, a senior defense correspondent for the daily Israeli newspaper Israel Hayom, discussed Israel’s defense and security establishments. Mosab Hassan Yousef, a former Hamas member turned Israeli informant, was the featured speaker.

PORTO VITA CELEBRATION OF LIFE DINNER

The annual Porto Vita Celebration of Life Dinner on January 30 in Aventura, Florida, honored Rivka Or, a senior EMT with MDA. More than 175 guests attended, and together the Porto Vita community sponsored a new MDA ambulance in addition to raising critical funds for MDA’s lifesaving work.

BOCA-DELRAY COMMUNITY EVENT

On January 31, the annual Boca-Delray Community Event at St. Andrews Country Club featured Ambassador Ron Prosor, former Israeli representative to the United Nations from 2011 to 2015, as well as remarks by journalist Yoav Limor and Mosab Hassan Yousef.
BOCA-DELRAY COMMUNITY EVENT

AFMDA SPEAKER SERIES WITH ALAN DERSHOWITZ

In December, famed scholar, lawyer, and author Alan Dershowitz headlined AFMDA’s Speaker Series throughout southeast Florida. Dershowitz spoke to more than 700 people at events at Admirals Cove, Frenchman’s Creek, and Mirasol Country Club.

RESPONDING TO TRAGEDY WITH LOVE, LIFE, AND AN AMBULANCE

Losing a child is one of the most unbearable events a parent can face, let alone overcome. But Bal Harbor’s Judy Milstein seized the opportunity to turn a tragedy into a moment of light.

Judy’s daughter, Wendy Kirshenbaum, passed away in 2016 at the age of 60 after a long and courageous battle with breast cancer. Understandably, it was the darkest hour of Judy’s life; she and Wendy had a close mother–daughter relationship.

Wendy was also a driving force in the family’s philanthropic activity (her stepfather — and Judy’s second husband — is Burlington Coat Factory founder Monroe Milstein), advocating strongly for many Jewish-related causes and organizations. As a strong Israel advocate, she also inspired a love of the Jewish State in her friends and relatives, especially her children.

So, soon after Wendy’s passing, Judy decided that the best way to honor her daughter was to help save lives in her beloved Israel.

With that objective in mind, Judy sponsored a specially designed Mobile Intensive Care Unit (MICU) for MDA. The ambulance honors Wendy as well as her husband, Monroe, on the occasion of his 91st birthday. The dedication was held December 29, 2017, at the Shul of Bal Harbor and welcomed 100 guests, including Surfside Mayor Daniel Dietch. The MICU is already en route to Israel and will respond to emergencies ranging from terrorist attacks to women in labor.

“The ambulance represents everything Wendy stood for and loved,” Judy says. “And as it speeds through the streets of Israel to save lives, it will be a constant and heartwarming reminder of her legacy.”

MDA has benefited from the family’s generosity in the past — this is Judy’s second ambulance sponsorship, and Wendy’s father was also a longtime donor. But this MICU donation was particularly meaningful.

“The pain of losing a daughter will forever be with me,” Judy says. “But knowing this ambulance will do such miraculous things is exactly what Wendy would have wanted.”
A First Shift Brings New Life

Amanda Klestzick
New Rochelle, New York

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 afterward, sure enough there was crying. And right after, out came the baby! It was a beautiful event to witness, and I will never forget my first-ever shift with MDA.

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 at the break of dawn is the welcoming and friendly group of workers that greet me and work with me every day. I knew 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 the other volunteers about their past experiences or life in Israel and anything in between.

My favorite day with MDA was a week and a half into my volunteering. There were no particularly exciting or difficult cases on this day, but it stands out for me, because on this day I felt in control. 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 No. 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 the importance of a call or the difficulty of a challenge that determines your role; rather, it’s one’s approach toward every call that will create a meaningful MDA experience.

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 as 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’re 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.

There are many ways you can provide lasting support, and some of these options may even offer current benefits. Simple bequests (in your will, trust or as a beneficiary from your tax deferred account), establishing a designated fund, gifts of appreciated assets, and charitable gift annuities can provide both immediate and long-term benefits.

For more about MDA’s Legacy Circle, please contact Jeff Lipkin at jlipkin@afmda.org or toll-free 866.632.2763.

A Beginner’s Guide to the New Tax Reform Act

If you’re perplexed by the new tax reform law 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 in the U.S. tax system — in fact, the only downturns in charitable giving occurred in 1932 and 2009 — both as a result 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 standard deduction has doubled 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 2019, 70% of tax filers used the standard deduction. With the new changes, it’s estimated that an additional 15% to 20% of filers will also use the standard deduction.
- The new tax act may be helpful to higher-income filers interested in increasing their giving. The tax act drops the Pease Amendment, which reduced deductible benefits for filers with incomes over $318,000. Donors may now 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.
- The maximum adjusted gross income (AGI) limitations on charitable gifts has increased — from 50% to 60% of cash gifts annually. There is no change in the limits on giving of appreciated assets (still 30% of AGI).
- Significantly, donors over the age of 70½ can still make gifts of up to $100,000 annually directly from their IRA without paying income taxes on the withdrawal.

These are among the basic changes donors can anticipate. To discuss how the new tax reforms may affect your charitable contributions to AFMDA, contact your tax advisor or Jeff Lipkin at jlipkin@afmda.org or 866.632.2763.
Do you know someone whose life was saved by MDA? Your story could be published in a future issue of The Pulse.

Email info@afmda.org with “Newsletter” in the subject line.

For updates from AFMDA, please visit www.afmda.org/sign-up-for-our-e-newsletter.