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
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

$125,000 is the average cost for a Mobile Intensive Care Unit

MDA AMBULANCES AND MOBILE INTENSIVE CARE UNITS

Every year, MDA needs 100 new ambulances to replenish its fleet. Without them, Israelis are at risk.

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.

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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.

MDA fun fact:

143 emergency medical stations operate in Israel

MDA Stories from Israel

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.

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 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, was himself killed in a drive-by terrorist shooting just outside Hovat 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.

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 Elmaleh, 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.”

MDA FUN FACT

Medicycles in service

+500
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.

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.

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 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.
The fifth annual AFMDA Los Angeles Red Star Ball raised more than $18 million — a new record for any single AFMDA event — at The Beverly Hilton on Monday, October 30, 2017, to support the lifesaving work of MDA. For the second time in three years, the star-studded event featured a performance by entertainment icon and comedian Jerry Seinfeld.

The gala, chaired by AFMDA Western Region President Dina Leeds and her husband, Fred Leeds, an AFMDA Western Region executive board member, honored the lifesaving work of MDA’s first-responders in Israel. Dr. Miriam and Sheldon Adelson, who pledged $12 million at the event, were honored with the Humanitarian of the Year Award. Renee and Meyer Luskin received the Lifetime Achievement Award, and Nikita Kahn was the Leadership-Next Generation Award recipient.

MDA FUN FACT

7-8 Years

the average lifespan for each ambulance

An MDA paramedic and EMT processional kicked off the record-setting evening at The Beverly Hilton.

The iconic Jerry Seinfeld performed two rousing comedy sets at the Red Star Ball.

Two IDF soldiers whose lives were recently saved by MDA paramedics and blood services, Roy Grilak (far left) and Gilad Mezamer (second from left). The MDA ambulance that rushed Mezamer to the hospital was sponsored in 2012 by then 13-year-old Los Angeles native Robert Leeds (second from right). MDA paramedic Aharon Adler (far right), who rushed blood units to that ambulance aboard his Medicycle, joined Mezamer and Leeds on stage for an emotional first meeting between the three young men.
WESTERN REGION IN ACTION

The Arizona Friends of AFMDA’s sixth fundraising concert, “A Tribute to Your Favorite TV Shows,” was held at the Tempe Center for the Arts on January 29, 2018. More than 400 guests sang along as the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra performed hits from such TV shows as Bandstand, Boogie, Gidget, Hogan’s Heroes, and Happy Days. An MDA ambulance sat outside the venue so people could view it, step inside, and ask about ways to support Israel’s national emergency first-responders.

Thanks to regional co-presidents Barb Zemel and Jay Bycer, whose efforts made this event the most successful concert ever produced by the Arizona Friends group.

Arizona Friends of AFMDA co-presidents Barb Zemel and Jay Bycer.

MDA’S STORK CLUB: SAVING — AND DELIVERING — LIVES IN ISRAEL

MDA ambulances are routinely called to help transport women in labor to hospitals. Sometimes the babies decide not to wait, and so the ambulance becomes a de facto delivery room. AFMDA salutes the American sponsors whose ambulances helped bring new life into our world in the last three months.

DECEMBER
Rose Goteiner – girl
Vera and Paul Guerin – boy
Rubin Family Foundation – girl
The Joan and Phil Berger Charitable Fund – boy
Gaby and Mark Lehrer – boy
Alice Bushinsky – boy
Estate of Lona Moroz – girl
David Wiener – girl
Lois Pope – boy
Gilberg and Minerva Rosenberg – girl
Lois Pope – girl
Vision for Israel – girl
Cyrus Dean Agoss z’l – boy
Boca Pointe – girl
Arlene Sardell – girl

JANUARY
Elisa Sheldon – girl
Gratilde Jaffee – boy
Boca Pointe – girl
Porto Vita Community – girl
Bob and Robin Berman – boy
Wolfson Estate #2 – boy
Wolfson Estate #2 – boy
Martin and Ruth Clayman – boy
Mattland Minyan #1 – boy
Zila Besner – boy
Alan and Lucia Rosenfeld – boy
Bob and Robin Berman – girl
Hague Ministries #2 – boy
Crown Foundation – girl
Kevin and Masha Keating – girl
Lillian Rohtberg z’l – boy
Nathan Wolfson z’l #2 – girl
Ira Hoffman – boy

FEBRUARY
Cecile Mory – girl
Boca Pointe – Burt Goodman – girl
Vera and Paul Guerin – boy
Audrey Goodfriend – boy
Estate of Robert Rimer #1 – girl
Nathan Wolfson z’l #2 – boy
Joyce Goodwin – boy
Joseph Gyongyosi – boy
Blasi & Galtzer – boy
Bittner & Hirschmann – boy
Fink & Hefter – girl
David Wiener – girl

MDA FUN FACT

15,000 volunteer first-responders, EMTs, and paramedics
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 crowning—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. The American Friends of Magen David Adom is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Charitable contributions are tax deductible. Any amount of cash gifts annually. There is no change in the limits on charitable gifts has increased—from 50% to 60% of AGI. Contributions of appreciated assets (still 30% of AGI). • In 2015, 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 70 ½ 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, consult your tax advisor or Jeff Lipkin at jlipkin@afmda.org or 866.632.2763.
The Pulse - The AFMDA Newsletter - Issue 7

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Editor-in-Chief: Erik Levis
Design: Brittany Collins

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.

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