

# Day 2 of our Young Solidarity Mission to Israel

August 31, 2014 at 9:08am

What a morning it's been!!!

We began our day at Givat Oz HaGaon. A place in Gush Etzion established to perpetuate the memory of the three teens (Eyal, Gilad & Naftali) who were killed by Hamas leading to the war in Gaza. We were met by a lady, Nadia, who explained the purpose of the site and what the goals were. She then set us up for some hard labour which was going to take place later on.

She introduced us to Rachel Frenkel, mother of Naftali, one of the three murdered teens. What was so poignant was how she (Rachel) was able to translate her grief into something so positive. What a special human being she is. **I asked myself, why is it that the world doesn't see this humanity?** As Ilana Arje (the driving force behind this trip) put it, "She was such an inspiration to all of us - she has taken such an immense tragedy and chosen to do so much good."

That concept was reinforced later when we met Shirley, a volunteer at Pina Chama - a place run entirely by volunteers and donations to provide soldiers with a chance to grab a cold drink or cooked goods, etc. In fact, all their cakes and cookies are baked by volunteers. "We schmoozed with the soldiers, gave them candy and cards we brought from children in Toronto and they were so grateful and gracious. This was such an inspiring morning" said Ilana Arje.

Before we left Givat Oz, they put us to work, doing the same kind of infrastructure work JNF does. We cleared an area so that they could put up a structure to house for a security office. Everyone pitched in and really took their roles seriously. We made a great team!!!

This group is really awesome!! They all have their own motivation for being part of this solidarity mission but they are going to be great community leaders in the future - we will be in good hands.

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