



Update . . .

June 2007

5767 Sivan



Fathering the Fatherless

by Richard D. Weisskopf

Ariel and Gabriel were brothers who never knew their father. Their names are fictional - unfortunately the situation is quite real. Their mother's drug addiction became so severe that she could no longer care for them. I met these brothers less than two months after the court took custody of them.

Ariel was the older of the two. He was bright and outgoing - a real leader. Ariel wanted to be a physical therapist. Gabriel, the younger, was scared and confused. Whatever traumas they had experienced in their young lives were beyond Gabriel's ability to explain. Despite being nearly illiterate, both boys were very intelligent.

For every available bed in foster homes at the time, there were ten children like Ariel and Gabriel. Boys their ages were the least likely to find homes. Their

caseworker was very fortunate to find a foster home for Gabriel and had to place Ariel in a shelter for abused and neglected children.

The trauma of losing his brother was a huge setback for Gabriel. However, his foster father had training and experience in social work. This man devoted himself full-time to the children in his custody. He patiently helped Gabriel open up and cope with his situation. Over the course of a year, Gabriel was gradually learning to read and write.

Within three months of placement in the shelter, Ariel ran away. He joined a street gang. Within a year he was in prison.

The news of his brother was another big setback for Gabriel. He nearly lost everything he gained during his first year in the foster home. The foster father, though,

was determined not to give up on Gabriel. Over the course of his second year in the foster home, Gabriel nearly caught up with his classmates.

Years later I met Gabriel's foster father and asked about the two boys - now men. Ariel now serves a life sentence in prison with no hope of being a physical therapist. Gabriel is now a police officer in the drugs and gangs unit. He is married with children of his own.

I sometimes wonder what kind of physical therapist Ariel would have made if given a fair chance in life. Gabriel's community now has an excellent police officer because somebody took the time and patience to give him a second chance.

While Ariel and Gabriel had a 1-in-10 chance of finding a foster home; Israeli children in state custody nowadays have a 1-in-16 chance of finding foster homes. *Beit Netanel* shall implement a proven community-based strategy to help these children. Gabriel's story illustrates the importance of going the extra mile to recruit qualified full-time foster parents to give these precious ones another chance in life.

Please consider partnering with us to help the most vulnerable and needy citizens in Israel. Shalom from Jerusalem.

You can download *Beit Netanel's* proposal at:
http://love4israel.org/Beit_Netanel_Proposal_Download.pdf

Chairman's Note:

This summer I will be in the United States to talk about our upcoming projects this Fall.

Our three high-priority projects this Fall are:

- Launching *Beit Netanel*.
- Back to School . . . with Dignity.
- Care Packages for Lone Soldiers.

I will be available from August 1st through September 4th and would love to share with your congregation or group. If you would like to reserve a date, please contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements.

The majority of funds have come in to successfully launch *Beit Netanel* this fall. We still need \$25,000 to cover the rest of the start-up costs.

Every \$25 we receive sends an impoverished child back to school with dignity. Nothing will warm your heart more than a "*todah*" from the child you helped.

Every \$100 we receive sponsors a young soldier with no family in Israel. We would like to take sponsors who are in Israel during one of these distributions along as our guest. Words cannot describe the feeling you will have by this experience.

One behalf of the Israelis you help - *todah* and Shalom from Jerusalem!

Send checks to:

Love for Israel Relief Fund
2020 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Suite 445
Washington, DC 20006