



Update . . .

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5770 Tammuz



Fatherless children in art therapy at an emergency shelter.

A Father's Day Appeal

by Richard D. Weisskopf, chairman

An unusual opportunity came my way soon after graduating from the University of Illinois. At age 23, I was beginning life's journey as an adult. I made friends with a probation officer from juvenile court. This friend wanted me to get certified by juvenile court to mentor kids who were within six months of being discharged from prison.

While some of the kids were as young as 10 years-old, others were only a few years younger than I. This probation officer noticed none of the kids had fathers in their

lives nor any positive male role models at all. That was the common denominator among the kids with whom this probation officer worked.

A mutual friend of ours had already taken a 12 year-old boy under his wing every weekend. The impact on this boy's life was dramatic – and the juvenile court noticed.

My task was duplicate this mutual friend's efforts by formally developing a network of volunteer mentors. Kids within six months of discharge from prison could go out on weekends with my volunteer mentors in

hopes of offering them positive influences after they would be released.

During my tenure overseeing this program, we mentored approximately 100 kids. Not a single one of our kids was ever arrested again. That contrasted against a 90% re-arrest rate for kids who did not participate in the program. Furthermore, many of our kids invited their friends to join our activities and outings.

Unofficially, our program prevented many more kids from going to jail at all – or suffering a worse fate.

The lesson here was the important role fathers play in children's lives. Without paternal guidance, children can be vulnerable to negative influences and victimization. When kids have positive male role models to look up to, it can make all the difference.

This is not to minimize the important role women play in child development. Quite the opposite, women oftentimes are very dedicated to the children around them. We men need to step up to the plate also for the sake of the kids in our lives.

Unfortunately, there is a shortage of positive male role models in the lives of at-risk kids. This Father's Day I would like to put out a challenge on behalf of needy kids in Israel and in your community. The Love for Israel Relief Fund greatly appreciates your financial contributions to

needy kids who we help. It means more than words can express. Please also donate some of your time for the kids in your community. Any police officer, probation officer, judge or juvenile lawyer will confirm that little of your time can make a big difference in the life of a kid a few doors away from your home. Thank you for your love of needy kids.

Special events, like weddings and bar mitzvahs, happen year round for hundreds of at-risk kids and needy young adults in Israel. Donations designated "special events" will be set aside for such use.

Show your support for Israel. Visit our YouTube.com channel and link our videos to your web site:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/LIRFchairman>

You can donate online at:

<http://love4israel.org/donate.html>

Send checks to:

Love for Israel Relief Fund
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