

A Cry for Help in the Jordan Valley

A fourteen year old girl from a dysfunctional family receiving aid from Social Services, was caught stealing in her neighborhood. Instead of pressing charges, the decision was made to refer the girl to a course of therapy. Her program included psychological help, guidance for the parents and involving the girl in community volunteering.

“You gave me a chance and you won’t be sorry. I learned from my mistake... I harmed my own community and I have to prove that this won’t happen again. My therapy is helping me deal better with my problems at home and at school... My parents are finally beginning to understand me. My father is treating me differently; he learned how to speak to me without anger and threats. Now I’m more willing to listen to him and respect him.”



A number of teens of the Jordan Valley were showing signs of distress. The municipality, in an attempt to prevent the small acts of rebellion and vandalism from turning into full-fledged teens at risk, started a youth program called “Connecting With a Difference”. The program organized activities to get the teenagers involved and occupied, to keep them busy with productive, entertaining social activities. Sadly, though, as the relationship between the counselors and teens developed, problems no one was aware of arose; more serious problems than anyone had imagined, existed. Their problems covered such a massive range and variety that sometimes the families and those working with them were overwhelmed. There were children suffering from phobias, learning difficulties, drug use, sexual abuse, suicide attempts and tragedies within their families. Something needed to be done. There was a crucial need to provide accessible therapy and guidance solutions for parents and their adolescents. Accessible, local services would allow more people to take advantage of what is offered. Of primary importance was finding professionals specializing in this challenging age group who would not violate confidentiality.

The mayor, the Department of Education, school principals and teachers, youth counselors and Social Services all became involved and they set up a “Teens at Risk” center as an extension of the existing program. The goals of the center are to decrease the cases of at-risk 11 to 22 year olds with early intervention and treatment, giving the youth the tools to deal with the stress so much a part of their age. The parents would also receive guidance in how to deal with their children and how to improve their relationships with them. The sessions would take place in the local school for a period of up to three months, taking into account the impatience of the children for anything long-term, and to allow for constant updating and revising of the specific needs of each child.

In 2010, 27 families were treated: 9 children, 12 adolescents, and 6 sets of parents.

- The Jordan Valley “Connecting With a Difference” was established to answer signs of teenage distress... cases of vandalism and rebellion. What it uncovered were overwhelming cases of drug and sexual abuse, serious problems as a result of family tragedies and even suicide attempts.
- The “Teens at Risk” program provides these lost souls with treatment, guidance, therapy and love... and the tools with which to pull themselves up and out of the hole they have dug themselves into.



The Jordan Valley communities have turned to CFOIC for assistance in funding the Teens at Risk Center. Help is available. But the lists of those in need are growing. This past year alone, there were 25 cases treated. There are constant referrals from the educational systems, health and social services and from the parents. Some teenagers are even referring themselves! This is a cry for help and nobody should be turned away.

Project Budget

Annual Costs of Salaries and Expenses for psychologists	\$44,000
Ministry of Health	18,775
Parent Participation	4,700
Regional Council.....	7,775
TOTAL FUNDS REQUIRED:.....	\$12,750

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