

METIV - PEACE OF MIND

“Israelis sometimes feel that it’s us against the whole world.

Here we have seen that we are not alone.

You have opened your homes, and your heart to us. Thank you “

When we embarked on the Metiv Peace of Mind journey in 2019, we could not have imagined that it would take 3 years for our hosting of the ex-combat soldiers to take place. But it was worth the wait.

We met 19 fantastic Israelis, 2 were therapists and 17 had served together as Navy Seals, the elite Israeli Shayetet 13 units. They are considered to be one of the best units in the world.

They are 32/33 years old and most of them are now in civvy street holding responsible jobs, all are married, many of them fathers. This programme helped them process what they had been through together with the aim of achieving a journey of well being and health. Our community was privileged to provide the warm and welcoming environment in which that journey, away from the pressures of normal life and the triggers of terror attacks in Israel, could be facilitated.

“You have opened your hearts and given us a psychological place which has helped us in our journey”

We had a fantastic team of volunteers who hosted the soldiers, cooked their lunches, provided all day refreshments, organised and hosted the social evening, communal shabbat chavurah and kiddush, did a lot of cleaning and clearing up, and overall went above and beyond! And despite giving so much, the overall verdict was, that was so worthwhile, lets do it again!

“Being Jewish in Israel is not the same as being Jewish out of Israel. You have shown us how you have to build a community with your own hands and your own involvement out of Israel.”

We did it under the joint auspices of Wimbledon Synagogue Israel Committee and the South London Israel Forum, which is cross communal. More than 40 other Metiv Peace of Mind Groups have been hosted previously in the UK, but we are the first to be cross communal, with families from two Reform synagogues and Chabad involved in hosting and Richmond United Synagogue and many others supporting it financially. According to the amazing driving force behind the programmes in the UK, Anthony Goldstein, we are the talk of the town!

“Thank you for your warm welcome . We want to maintain the relationship.”

Group picture from our farewell (eyes of our guests covered for security purposes)



Here is the honour roll –

Organisers -Liat Korduene, Myriam Brunswic-Citron, Judy Weleminsky

Venue and catering – Stanford Meyer O’Reilly, Sharon Coussins, Stella Mason, Orli Kendler-Rhodes, Anne Clark, Hilary Leek, Lynne Sidkin (and her team of bakers).

Hosts – Julian and Tammy Hunt, David and Eleri Beiber, Myriam Brunswick Citron, Martin and Marion Motz, Marian and Michael Conn, Rabbi Dovid and Sarah Cohen, Liat and Alex Hearn, Myles Kaplan and Nicki Zisman, Mel and Barry Angel.

“We are really grateful for your flexibility , us coming back home late at night, and giving us time out to re bond and release our emotions. Thank you”

And here is the report from one of our host families, Julian and Tammy Hunt.

If a week is a long time in politics sometimes (ask L Truss PC MP) seven days in Jewish Earlsfield with two delightful Navy Seals from the IDF undertaking a therapy course via Metiv is not. Our family was so very pleased last month to host two men at our

house for the week taking them each day to the synagogue for their sessions (with the motherload of curries on the first night to welcome them).

This was a deeply fulfilling programme which you should think about taking part in. The guests staying with us spent much of their time away but we know were very happy to be part of this programme and spend some time in South London.

We were the only family to host two full time soldiers with most being reservists with fresh occupations. The programme co-ordinators are very good at matching the right people up with the right families : we had two men with young families themselves so having lumps kicked out of them by a four year old wasn't a total no no. What the programme does do very well is bring the diaspora of all hues closer to these brave men and women. It also gives the IDF veterans a very busy week of activities. This seems to me no bad thing.

Would we do it again? Yes, we would. It's not a burden at all but was a pleasure. The kids ended up with great and vivid memories of neat tidy and really pleasant guys who get up at 6am and go for runs with their own loving families waiting for them at home. I was surprised at their adoration of Gail's Bakery in Southfields - is the coffee really that good there? It was also good for them I think to be with their unit in a pleasant very different place for a week and good for us to support the programme.

I finally salute as best as I can the organisers for the week whom I know worked and above and beyond to get it right.

If you don't volunteer now, when?