

Subscribe now to
Your Daily Phil

Subscribe



Amy Neustein cited
in lead paragraph

RECENT ISSUES - Select -

Your Daily Phil: Providing a safety net for Oct. 7 orphans

May 20, 2024

Good Monday morning.

*In today's edition of Your Daily Phil, we report on a new study on diversity in nonprofits by **Candid**, and feature an opinion piece by **Jan Reicher** on the role of "board culture" in carrying out an organization's work. Also in this newsletter: **Rabbi Burton Cohen**, **Amy Neustein** and **Daniel Lubetzky**. We'll start with a new nonprofit looking to support the hundreds of Israeli children who lost one or both parents in the Oct. 7 attacks.*

Scroll to "Worthy Reads" for description of Neustein

Lior Krengel worked in high-tech for 16 years, including a six-year stint at the project management software company Monday[dot]com, until the devastation of the Oct. 7 terror attacks forced her to reconsider her life's focus: helping the country, specifically the children who lost one or both parents in the massacres.

"[The attacks were] a wake-up call for me that our country needs everyone to be joining and helping and supporting. This is for all of us now to take care of," Krengel told *eJewishPhilanthropy's* Esther D. Kustanowitz. She spent five months volunteering with evacuees from Kibbutz Kfar Aza, who had been relocated to Kibbutz Shefayim in central Israel.

"Everything is broken for them," said Krengel, who now serves as the CEO of the nonprofit *Atufim B'Ahava* ("Wrapped In Love," but known in English as the Israel Children's Fund).

"Some witnessed [one or both of] their parents murdered, others had to hide in a closet for 30 hours. All of them are refugees in their own country, many lost their best friends, other siblings," she added. "We need to make sure they're fully supported and as fast as possible. Otherwise, those orphans today are the at-risk youth tomorrow."

More than 643 children have lost one or both of their parents in the Oct. 7 terror attacks and the subsequent war in Gaza and fighting along Israel's northern border, according to a recent study by Israel's Knesset Research and Information Center. Of these, 251 are the sons and daughters of civilians killed in the massacres, while the rest are the children of fallen members of the country's security services.

Shortly after the Oct. 7 attacks, Israel's high-tech sector mobilized to contribute funds and expertise toward creating a system of support for these children as they encounter major milestones and minor moments over the next 25 years.

"[It] started off as an emergency thing," Krengel said, adding that initial efforts — including the distribution of more than \$500,000 during the first weeks of the war — focused on the immediate future. Now ICF is taking a longer-term view, building governance, infrastructure, partnerships and solid foundations, organizationally and financially, she said.

"I have to make sure that we build it efficiently, that every dollar, every shekel that is given, is needed," Krengel said. "It's not replacing government money, [or] another organization's money. It's needed, [and there are] a lot of partnerships, a lot of hands that need to be connected and held, so that we are all supporting them efficiently."

Former tech CEO and member of ICF's founding team Marni Mandell told eJP that philanthropically, ICF has an ambitious goal: to raise the needed funds within an 18-month period, while it's still top of mind for donors. So far, they've already had more than 2000 donors over six months raising upwards of \$20 million.

One supporter, actor Mark Feuerstein, perhaps best known for his lead role in the procedural TV series "Royal Pains," became involved after attending a benefit for the ICF at the home of his friend, angel investor and ICF supporter Joseph Varet.

"[After that] I knew I would do what I could for this cause," Feuerstein told eJP. "These kids are the future of Israel — if we want Israel to remain strong in the face of suicidal jihadists, we will need this next generation."

"I often worry about imposing on people to give, but in this case I genuinely felt, 'I am giving people the opportunity to do a mitzvah, to give to a just and noble cause,'" Feuerstein added. "I hope and pray each of these children gets to live a normal life with what's left of their families, that they have the means to pay for food, shelter and a full education, a normal life to compensate for the abnormal, tragic and traumatic day they were forced to live on Oct. 7." (Feuerstein has, to date, raised more than \$25,000 for the ICF.)

Right now, ICF is estimating the need at \$200,000 per child, and the organization's financial model accounts for inflation and other unpredictable variants, Krengel said. With this safety net in place, ICF leaders hope that mothers or other guardians will have the breathing room to focus on the day-to-day needs of their families, and to start healing from their own trauma.

"We all know when we look back to history, when we look back to the Holocaust, we see great stories of heroes and leaders that came out of this [trauma], built amazing lives and did great things for humanity. At the same time, we have too many stories of people that ended up in poverty," Krengel said. "We are here to ensure that kids who lost one of their parents on Oct. 7 are all taken care of and that no one ends up being forgotten. At the end of the day, we want to make sure that all children have the opportunity to thrive."

Worthy Reads

Camp Ramah For Life: Following the recent passing of his father-in-law, Rabbi Burton Cohen, John Podhoretz [recounts](#) in *Commentary* the role Jewish day camp played in Cohen's life — and the role Cohen played in Jewish day camp. "He was forever changed when, as a teenager, he went to the newly established Camp Ramah in Wisconsin. This was one of the great experiments of American Jewry, this summer sleepaway program and a few others across America. They took the camping movement — then all the rage among those determined to improve the social and physical health of urban youth and introduce them to the pleasures of fresh air and open climes — and added philosophical and practical Zionism to it... It was there he met his wife, Bobbie, with whom he would have three children and remain married for 57 years until her death in 2012. He made Ramah his life study and his profession... My father-in-law was one of those unsung stand-up guys who gave far more in his life than he ever got, a man of genuine modesty and gentle spirit, who never said a bad word about anyone — and yet with his own quiet tenacity helped to build and expand a lasting and vibrant institution that has done nothing but good when it comes to helping young people make the connection to Judaism's astonishing past, its tumultuous present, and its vitally important future." [\[Commentary\]](#)

Art of Distraction: In an opinion piece in *Womens eNews*, Amy Neustein [accuses](#) the U.N. of timing its public statements to detract attention from and undermine revelations about the sexual violence perpetrated by Hamas terrorists on Oct. 7. "[A] week after the release of [Sheryl] Sandberg's documentary showing unimpeachable documentation of the execrable acts of sexual violence and torture toward females (and even males), the UN released a troubling story to Agence France-Presse (AFP) — headquartered in Paris and serving as the oldest news wire service in the world reaching out to over 150 countries. The flashy heading, 'UN Experts Condemn Israel's Sexual Assault and Violence in Gaza,' was designed to catch attention though the article fell short of providing any meaningful details of sexual violence perpetrated by IDF soldiers against Gazan inhabitants. Nevertheless, this absurdly fatuous, unsubstantiated UN report, condemning Israeli military for horrific acts they didn't commit, was intended as sabotage and subterfuge so as to divert attention from the blood-curdling incidents of rape and sexual torture copiously documented by Sandberg in 'Screams Before Silence'... I am going to add my 'screams' by turning up the volume and shouting from the rooftops until the women's movement and the UN acknowledge the horror and dreadfulness of the unprecedented sexual violence painstakingly captured in Sandberg's 'Screams Before Silence.' To do anything less would be a betrayal to my sisters in Israel, and to womankind." [\[Womens eNews\]](#)