



Ofer Baram

“For eight years I’ve seen terror destroy peoples’ lives. When someone’s home is wiped out by a Kassam rocket, they are lost. When I came with a check from the Jewish Agency’s SOS Fund I gave them hope. I showed them that they are not forgotten.”

Ofer Baram epitomizes the Israeli sabra (native), brusque on the outside and warm and caring on the inside. For the past 18 years he has worked for the Jewish Agency for Israel, directing and establishing absorption centers for new immigrants from Ethiopia, and carrying out dangerous rescue missions in Yugoslavia and Kosova on behalf of the Jewish Agency.

Today, Ofer is the Southern Region Community Director and his booming voice and forceful personality have sustained many terrorized citizens living in Sderot and Gaza perimeter communities.

In the years leading up to the Gaza War, and during the War, Ofer put himself at personal risk and traveled to the homes of people who were hit by Kassam rockets. Through the Jewish Agency's SOS Fund, he gave these people immediate financial assistance in the sum of \$1,000.

"When I gave the check to people within 48 hours, it brought tears to their eyes. For some, it paid for immediate food and clothing. For others, it covered initial hospital bills. For all, it showed that someone cares," says Ofer. The funds come from the Jewish Agency's partners around the world, who donated so generously to the Israel Emergency Campaign (IEC).

Ofer is no stranger to terror. He and his family live in Kibbutz Kfar Aza, two miles from the Gaza border. In May, 2007 a fellow

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הודפס בבית הדין של הסוכנות היהודית

Kibbutz member was killed by a Kassam rocket. From the 800 original members, only 100 people remain. "I stay because there is so much work to do, and because this is my home, my land and my country," says Ofer.

Ofer tells incredible stories of people on the frontline who miraculously escaped death. Like the Idan family of 13 from Netivot who stayed in their bomb shelter a few minutes after they heard the signal to leave and minutes later a Grad missile fell directly on their home, destroying everything.

"My work for the Jewish Agency gives me the energy to believe that we, the Jewish people from all over the world, can work together for peace and to continue building our homeland," says Ofer with passion.