

We founded La'Aretz Foundation, a dedicated Israeli-led NGO based in America, to fill urgent gaps left by unprepared government systems in the wake of war. While official aid is slowly coming in, thousands of Israelis still face severe hardship.

By partnering with local experts and leaders, we identify those most in need and deliver direct financial aid to help them rebuild. Our U.S. partners are compassionate allies with deep connections to Israel, helping to ensure no family faces this crisis alone.



\$2 Million

Amount Raised in 2025



\$10 Million Since Founded

650+

Households Assisted in 2025



1000+ Since Founded

40+

Scholarships Awarded in 2025



200+ Since Founded

Special Projects

In 2025 Thousands of evacuated families from Bat Yam received immediate support following the missile attack from Iran.

Dear Friends,

This past year was both extraordinary and unfinished. It brought moments of profound relief as hostages returned home, while the reality of war continued to shape daily life in Israel.

Because of you, support reached families when they

needed it most. Each grant, each emergency response, and each moment of stability restored was made possible by your decision to show up.

You were not watching from afar; you were part of every family supported, every reservist helped return home, every small business given a chance to reopen.

Now, as life slowly resumes, the challenges remain clear. Many soldiers are still serving in reserve duty, others are in rehabilitation centers working to rebuild their lives, and the effects of post-trauma are only now surfacing after months of survival and postponement.

The threats facing Israel across multiple fronts have

not ended, and the need for steady, compassionate support continues. And together, we will continue.

With deep gratitude,



Shelly & Mike Pitman
Founders, La'Aretz Foundation

Voices From the Field

At La'Aretz Foundation, we work with municipal social workers in Israel to identify families in need. Our local team verifies each case, and eligible families receive emergency grants, ensuring your support reaches those who need it most.



Tali Kalfa

**Social Worker, Bat Yam
Regional Council**

In Bat Yam, after a direct missile strike forced families to evacuate, La'Aretz provided immediate, direct assistance to 550 households, helping them rebuild stability while easing financial and emotional stress.

How do you remember the event in Bat Yam?

"It was probably the closest I've ever come to real, physical fear. The destruction was unimaginable. We were standing there in the chaos, with missiles still in the air. Then a strong sense of mission took over - to bring order and help people reach safety."

How was your experience working with the La'Aretz Foundation?

"Truly exceptional. A small group of deeply humane people - humble, attentive, and flexible. They insisted on seeing each family as an individual and understanding their needs."

How was working with them different from other assistance?

"The grant was the largest by far, and the money was transferred directly, not as vouchers. That allowed families to pay rent, buy furniture, and start rebuilding."

How significant was the support for recovery?

"Very significant. This was a low socioeconomic neighborhood with no safety net. It wasn't just financial aid - it was the first step toward rebuilding life."



Shai Asayag Somech

**Social worker, Upper Galilee
Regional Council**

In the northern community of Galil Elyon, where residents have endured home destruction and emotional trauma, La'Aretz has worked closely with the municipality to support 11 homes with fast, personalized assistance.

How has your experience been with La'Aretz?

"Excellent. The process was personal and responsive. Reut (a La'Aretz project manager) worked with us to adapt the aid based on each family's situation."

What sets La'Aretz apart from other foundations?

"Other groups require heavy paperwork: quotes, vendor registration, etc. La'Aretz simplifies things and makes it easier for families under stress."

Any memorable outcomes?

"One family used the grant to restart a business after losing everything. Another used it for therapy after evacuation trauma. It was exactly what they needed."

Do you feel that La'Aretz Foundation trusts you?

"Very much. They rely on our insight but also guide us to shape impactful support. It's a true collaboration."

Does the grant meaningfully contribute to the supported families recovery?

"Absolutely. It helps rebuild both emotional and financial stability, bringing families one step closer to normalcy."



Voices From the Field



Carmel Agassi Rubin

**Social worker, Mevo'ot
HaHermon Regional Council**

In the Mevo'ot HaHermon region, where many residents face long-term displacement and trauma, our partnership with local social workers has enabled La'Aretz to support 25 households with urgently needed financial assistance and dignity-centered care.

What has it been like working with La'Aretz?

"Reut (a La'Aretz project manager) was my main contact, and I'm very impressed with her sensitivity and professionalism. The process is flexible and supportive - one case involved transferring funds directly to a recipient's sister to help install kitchen cabinets. The foundation trusted my judgment, and we worked together to make it happen."

How does this differ from other organizations?

"La'Aretz feels like a true partner. They listen, they adapt, and they care. Many organizations have rigid systems. La'Aretz is human-centered."

How do families respond to the grants?

"They feel seen. When Shelly and Mike visited, families expressed deep gratitude. The aid goes beyond money. It offers recognition and hope."

What keeps you motivated to work with La'Aretz?

"The trust they place in me and the shared mission. I feel this is meaningful work that truly improves lives."



Pnina Haron

**Social Worker and Head of Social
Services, Hadassah Mount Scopus**

At Hadassah Hospital, where we treat wounded soldiers and their families, La'Aretz has stepped in to support 31 households with critical aid, helping patients begin rehabilitation with less financial and emotional burden.

Can you describe the process?

"We received clear eligibility guidelines, and the follow-up with Reut (a La'Aretz project manager) was always prompt and thoughtful. The process is quick, respectful, and removes unnecessary bureaucracy."

How do you know the right people are receiving support?

"Only the social workers treating patients handle referrals, so we know the families well. That ensures precision."

Is there any feedback from recipients?

"Absolutely. One soldier said, 'This helped me lift my head above water.' Others mentioned it helped them begin treatment or manage lost income."

What's unique about this partnership?

"It's rare to feel so seen by a foundation. We're a small hospital. This connection gives us access to critical support larger institutions usually receive."

How does the grant help overall recovery?

"It's essential. Injury affects the whole family. The grant reduces stress and accelerates healing - emotionally, financially, and practically."



The Stories of Our Families

La'aretz Foundation provides direct financial aid to Israeli families affected by war and terror, helping them cover essentials like food, housing, childcare, and therapy. Since October 7th, we've supported over 1000 families, including displaced families, injured reservists, orphans, and survivors, with grants and ongoing care.



Noam and Gaya Friedman with their three children

Friedman Family

Father is an Injured reservist, commander and father of three

\$5,000 Grant

Noam Friedman, father of three, was a successful project manager before October 7th, when he was called up for reserve duty. He served over 100 days of combat service until he was seriously injured during an operation in southern Gaza on January 30, 2024, when his unit came under fire and a grenade killed his close friend Yuval Nir. Noam underwent multiple surgeries and spent six months hospitalized, followed by a long and ongoing rehabilitation. He returned home to a life forever changed, with his family suddenly left without a functioning father. During this difficult period, his third son was born. At this critical moment, La'aretz supported the family by helping organize the Brit Milah and providing essential assistance for the newborn.

“

From the moment I was injured, our lives changed forever. During our hardest moments, La'aretz extended a warm and loving hand that reminded us we were not alone. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”



Tomer Asis

Asis Family

A Displaced family from Bat Yam

\$5,000 Emergency Relief

Tomer lost his wife to cancer five years ago and has been raising their six children alone ever since. His youngest is just six years old, and his eldest daughter is currently serving in the IDF as a field observer. On June 16th, their home was struck during the Iranian missile attack on Bat Yam. The family survived after taking shelter, though Tomer was injured while helping a neighbor reach the protected space.

Evacuated to hotels with hundreds of residents, Tomer was quickly connected to us by the hotel social-work team, and within two weeks an emergency grant was transferred directly to his account. With no financial cushion for such a disaster, the grant was truly “a breath of air,” helping cover urgent expenses for moving into a new apartment in the city so his children could remain in their familiar schools.

Tomer's son, Ari, celebrated his bar mitzvah on Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan and received a special bar mitzvah grant—donated by a young bar mitzvah boy from New York in support of children in Bat Yam affected by the missile attack.

“

In a moment when I was carrying everything alone, this support reminded me that we were not alone and that someone was looking out for my children.”



The Stories of Our Families



Rachel Dayan

Dayan Family

A Displaced family
from Northern
Israel

\$2,500
Small Business Relief

On Kibbutz Kfar Blum, Rachel Dayan's "Café Bluma" served as the community's beating heart until war forced its doors closed and plunged her into debt. Undeterred, Rachel leveraged every resource to feed soldiers free of charge, turning her café into a sanctuary for those on the frontlines. Today, with loans to repay and the café's hours curtailed by staff shortages, La'Aretz emergency grant enabled Rachel to cover critical repayments, rent, and support her children's education and daycare costs—proof of how immediate aid can revive both businesses and community spirit.

“

My husband lost all his clients, and my cafe collapsed. I began feeding soldiers for free, just needing to do something. Eventually, I started asking for donations to keep the meals going.”



Hamutal Cohen

Cohen Family

A Displaced family
from Bat Yam

\$2,500
Emergency Relief

When an Iranian missile demolished their Bat Yam apartment on June 15, the Cohen family— a single parent and two young children— lost not only their home but the security it held. With a \$2,500 emergency grant, they furnished their temporary accommodation with beds, appliances, and basic necessities, turning an unfamiliar space into a semblance of home. For this family, your support is more than financial— it is a warm embrace in their darkest hour, reminding them they are not alone as they rebuild.

“

This is not only financial support but a warm embrace and the knowledge that we are not alone in our coping.”



Shachar and Einav
Bitan with their four
children

Bitan Family

A Displaced family
from Northern
Israel

\$5,000
Grant

Shachar and Einav Bitan, parents of four and recent evacuees from Kfar Yuval now living in Tzfat, have faced unimaginable hardship since Sept. 1, 2024. While on guard duty, Shachar was struck by an anti-tank missile, leaving shrapnel in his body and triggering severe anxiety alongside his physical injuries. Thanks to La'Aretz's grant, the Bitans have covered fuel for hospital trips, restocked essentials for their home and children, and found a measure of stability amid uncertainty.

“

Your generous donation helped us a lot in our difficult moments: with fuel expenses for the many trips to the hospital, shopping for the house, and clothing for the children.”



Scholarship Recipients



Menachem Mendle Reinitz,
La'Aretz scholarship recipient.



Menachem Mendle Reinitz,
La'Aretz scholarship recipient.



Ghila Disegni, La'Aretz scholarship recipient.



Mollie Salomon, La'Aretz scholarship recipient.

La'Aretz Foundation offers scholarships to Israeli students in need, especially reservists, helping them continue their studies without financial strain. In partnership with leading universities, we support those who serve while pursuing their education.



I'm originally from New York, and I made Aliyah as a lone soldier in 2018. After serving in the Orev special forces unit and completing my service in 2022, I moved to Herzliya, worked at the Ministry of Defense, and am now a second-year government, counterterrorism, and security student. Since being discharged, I've poured my energy into mentoring fellow lone soldiers through Garin Tzabar and Ach Gadol, hosting Shabbat dinners, sharing experiences, and stepping in when the army's mental-health system falls short. One of these young men suffered severe trauma in Gaza; I drove three hours twice just to ensure he got the help he needed. These bonds, and seeing their progress have been among the most rewarding parts of my journey.

On October 7th, I was called up after finishing a double night shift and have now logged nearly 300 days of reserve duty in Gaza. I lost 23 brothers-in-arms and carry that weight every day, which is why I attend weekly therapy and group sessions to process these experiences. Balancing studies, work, volunteering, and reserve service has been a challenge, **but your generosity reminds me, and all of us, that we never truly stand alone.**

- Menachem Mendle Reinitz

The past year has been intense, as I spent most of it serving in reserve duty. I love playing volleyball, horse riding, and walking by the beach at sunset. Living in Israel holds deep meaning for me, as it's a place where I feel a strong sense of belonging as a Jew. During my military service, I served as a combat soldier in a search and rescue unit. This experience taught me resilience and the importance of never giving up. I continue to serve in the reserves as a lone combat soldier, as my family is not here in Israel. I also served in a combat unit during the Gaza War and continue to serve today. Currently, I am in my first year of studying communication.

Without your generosity, studying in Israel would not have been possible for me, as my parents are unable to support me financially. Your support has made a profound difference in my life, and I am deeply thankful.

- Ghila Disegni

I am a 23-year-old lone soldier originally from London, now studying economics and entrepreneurship with data science at Reichman University. After making Aliyah at 18, I served in the IDF Combat Search-and-Rescue unit, rising to sergeant major and leading my platoon during the war in Gaza. Despite the loss of close friends and the challenges of wartime leadership, my service taught me invaluable lessons in resilience, leadership, and teamwork. Called to reserves on the first day of university, I pushed through missed classes and succeeded academically. Looking ahead, I hope to intern in the private sector and volunteer with Heroes for Life in Panama. I'm deeply grateful for the La'Aretz Foundation's support.

It has empowered me not just to study, but to grow, lead, and give back. Thank you for making this journey possible.

- Mollie Salomon



Special Projects

Jun. 2025

Bat Yam Emergency Campaign

After Iran's missile barrage on June 13, La'Aretz quickly mobilized to help **over 550 families in Bat Yam** access clothing, baby supplies, medications, and food. What started as rapid relief has grown into a long-term rebuilding commitment.



A residential building hit directly by an Iranian missile. (JNS / Photo by Avshalom Sassoni)

Mar. 2025

Support for Druze Bereaved Families

La'Aretz, in partnership with **Daliyat al-Karmel leaders**, launched an initiative to support **bereaved Druze families** who lost loved ones in service or terror. Thanks to a lead donor, we've already provided direct aid and aim to reach many more.



Dr. Ramzi Halabi, Chairman of Druze Yad Labanim; former Minister Ayoub Kara; and Mike and Shelly H Pitman, Founders of the La'Aretz Foundation.

Oct. 2025

Remember Oct. 7 Commemoration Ceremony

La'Aretz Foundation, with Consul General Ofir Akunis, hosted "Remember Oct. 7" ceremonies in **New York and Miami** honoring the victims of the October 7 attacks.



Shelly H. and Mike Pitman deliver remarks at the ceremony. (Photo by Ohad Kab)

Mar. 2025

YAMAM Foundation Partnership

La'Aretz partnered with the **YAMAM** Foundation to support **widows, wounded fighters, and bereaved families** through therapy, healing retreats, holiday assistance, and long-term care.



Noa Argamani, rescued hostage; Jules and Stephanie Trump; and Tal Nahmias, widow of a YAMAM fighter. (Photo by Shay Cohen)

Mar. 2025

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Project

In March, We celebrated the Bar and Bat Mitzvahs of **60 children** from families affected by **October 7** with prayer at the Western Wall, traditional gifts, and a joyful communal meal in Jerusalem.



Bar and Bat Mitzvah children marching into the Western Wall plaza in Jerusalem.



Community Building and Fundraising in 2025

Jan. 2025



Student Tamir Pace with Mike and Shelly H. Pitman at a La'Aretz scholarship ceremony.

Scholarship Distribution Ceremony

We gathered in Israel to personally award scholarships to **40 students**, recognizing their resilience and ambition in the face of war.

Mar. 2025



Stephanie Trump with Shelly H. Pitman, Founder & Executive Director, La'Aretz.

Women of YAMAM – Miami & New York

In honor of **Women's History Month**, we held powerful events recognizing the sacrifices of the **women behind** Israel's elite YAMAM counterterrorism unit.

Apr. 2025



Luis Har, rescued hostage from Gaza, with his daughter. (Photo by Shahr Azran)

Baron Capital NYC Event

Titled Echoes of Freedom, this unforgettable evening featured the story of a **rescued hostage** and reflected on our nation's ongoing struggle and resilience.

May. 2025



Hikari Restaurant's grand opening honoring La'Aretz. (Photo by Shabba Ross)

Hikari Restaurant Benefit

Held in Bal Harbour, this intimate fundraiser brought together supporters to provide **urgent aid** for **displaced families** across Israel.



Community Building and Fundraising in 2025

Jun. 2025



Danny Naveh, President of Israel Bonds, and his wife Tzili, with Shelly H. Pitman.

La'Aretz & Israel Bonds "Double Mitzvah" Campaign Reception

A private event celebrating La'Aretz's growing impact and **partnership with Israel Bonds**, honoring donors and deepening community connections.

Jun. 2025



Emergency Response Center opened at NYX Hotel in Tel Aviv to support families evacuated from Bat Yam.

Emergency Response Center opened in Tel Aviv for Bat Yam evacuees

Since then, we've been distributing up to **\$2,500 prepaid credit cards** every single day, meeting families face to face in hotels across the city, helping them replace what they lost: clothing, medication, basic essentials, and a sense of stability.

Aug. 2025



Restoring Hope Dinner - The Hampton Synagogue.

Restoring Hope Dinner - The Hampton Synagogue

On August 8, 2025, the La'Aretz Foundation held the Restoring Hope Dinner at The Hampton Synagogue, **graciously hosted by Rabbi Marc and Simi Schneier**. The gathering took place in the shadow of one of the most devastating moments of the year: the massive Iranian missile assault on June 13th.

Nov. 2025



Ambassador Ofir Akunis delivering remarks at the Annual Benefit

La'Aretz Annual Benefit Event in New York

The La'Aretz Foundation's Annual Benefit at New York City's Harmonie Club brought the community together in a **profound show of solidarity with Israeli families in crisis**. Consul General Ofir Akunis delivered opening remarks, and Hamutal Hanna Cohen shared her powerful story of resilience.

In The News



La'Aretz grant recipient Hamutal Hanna Cohen. (Photo: Ohad Kab)



La'Aretz team assesses damage in Bat Yam following a reported missile strike. (Photo: La'Aretz Foundation)

THEJ.CA

La'Aretz Foundation Annual Benefit Unites New York Community In Support Of Israeli Recovery

"At the historic Harmonie Club, the La'Aretz Foundation raised vital funds to help Israeli families rebuild their lives after war and trauma..."

eJP

Brooklyn-based La'Aretz Foundation looks to give \$2,500 directly to victims of Bat Yam missile attack

"On the belief that the recipients know best, the group has raised more than \$1 million for the initiative so far, but legacy organizations are hesitant..."

y net

Not waiting for the state: The foundation that transfers \$2,500 to Bat Yam residents whose homes were hit by an Iranian missile

"After the Iranian missile strike in Bat Yam, the La'Aretz Foundation quickly provided \$2,500 in relief per affected household - far exceeding the 500 shekels per person that the state offers..."

A Message From the Team

Since the outbreak of the 10/7 war, the challenge faced by a team of Israelis living far from home, has taken on a deeper and more painful dimension.

Being distant from all that is dear to us, and experiencing pain, worry, and helplessness in the face of the hardships endured by people we love and care deeply about, is a feeling that accompanies our daily lives. From this place, we chose to act:

to support, to extend a hand from afar through financial assistance and an open heart.

This work gives us a sense of purpose and a reason to get up each morning, and to continue acting in accordance with the values that guide us and that we seek to pass on to our children.

To love Israel and its people with all our hearts - even when our hearts are broken, even from

thousands of miles away. The ability to stand with Israel at this critical moment is a privilege for us. Honored to serve our community and nation overseas,



La'Aretz Team
Sapir, Gal, Mike, Shelly, Nir and Neta-li.

Making a difference, one family at a time.



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Join us in giving.
Donate here
www.LaAretz.org



At moments that matter, La'Aretz.