

Each year, approximately 300 babies are abandoned by their parents in hospitals throughout Israel. These babies remain hospitalized in various departments, sometimes for many months without a mother's loving hug. The unfortunate fact is that the care of the nurses and doctors in the hospital is not able to extend past their responsibilities and duties. First Hug is the only association that is specifically designated to provide emotional care to these lonely and abandoned babies. The Association's volunteers fill the vacuum that is created by the absence of parents and they give the babies the human touch, the emotional treatment, the warmth, and the love that is so required for their development and recovery. **FIRSTHUG** The only association that is specifically designated to provide emotional care to these lonely and abandoned babies. The Association's volunteers fill the vacuum that is created by the absence of parents and they give the babies the human touch, the emotional treatment, the warmth, and the love that is so required for their development and recovery.

How can you volunteer?

"THE GIFT OF COMPASSION AND LIFE TO THOSE WHO NEED YOU"

If you are interested, please send an email containing the following details:

- A short paragraph about yourself
- The reasons why you want to volunteer for our Association
- Your experience with babies and any relevant qualifications
- Your personal details: first and last names, address, telephone number, fax number, and email address

We will be happy to contact you upon receipt of your information.

You can send your email to: info@israelactie.nl

How can you donate?

NL92 INGB 0000 77 77 77
to **Collectieve Israel Actie**
re: **Baby's First Hug**

Or visit our website:

www.israelactie.nl/help-mee/donaties.html

Visiting address:

Stichting Collectieve Israel Actie/Womens Division
Van Heuven Goedhartlaan 937
1181 LD Amstelveen
T: 020-6448429
www.israelactie.nl/over-ons/womens-division.html

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Sometimes A Hug Can SAVE A LIFE



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Who are we?

The First Hug Association was established in 2004 in order to provide babies, who are abandoned in hospitals by their parents, with the emotional necessities that are so necessary to their proper development and recovery. When a baby is abandoned in a hospital, the hospital officially contacts First Hug. The association quickly sets up a group of volunteers to come to the hospital and immediately support the baby in creating a family-like environment.

Our volunteers spend many hours with each abandoned baby: hugging, kissing, reading stories, singing songs and giving the babies a great deal of warmth and human affection.

As we are dealing with people and the fragile emotions of attachment and stress for both baby and volunteer, we rely on a network of social workers who play an integral role at all levels of activity and communication.

Who are our abandoned babies?

There are approximately 300 babies left without even the minimal extent of parental care in our hospitals each year. These babies are abandoned by their parents in the hospital right after birth or are babies who have a family that for different reasons cannot be sufficiently present at the hospital.

The vast majority of the abandoned babies are unhealthy babies with various mental and physical disabilities. At a later stage, these babies will be taken care of by governmental welfare organizations. However, during the hospitalization period, which may last a few weeks, months or even years, they remain alone.

Why isn't the care of the medical staff at the hospitals sufficient?

The medical staff at the hospitals is busy taking care of a room full of babies. Due to the eavy workload, their attention is focused on the medical and physical aspects. The staff is not able to handle the baby's emotional needs and to provide him/ her with the warm and loving touch that is so desperately needed for early development and healing.

Studies show that the first 3 months of the babies' lives are critical to their adaptation process to the world, to their development, and to their sense of security. The loving care that is provided to the abandoned babies by First Hug volunteers helps to maximize their developmental and emotional potential, to significantly reduce heir deprivations, and to prepare them for adoption, foster care, or the institutional framework.

Volunteering with heart and soul

Our volunteers

The hundreds of First Hug volunteers are men and women aged 20 to 70 from all over the country with experience in caring for children. Each volunteer is carefully selected and accompanied by the organization's social workers on a regular basis.

The moment a volunteer accepts the call to care for an abandoned baby, she/he is obligated to be available during the entire period of the baby's hospitalization stay, a period that can range from a few weeks to several months.

Our goal is to replicate a normal family environment – giving a familiar touch, voice and smile for each child.

What do the volunteers do?

The volunteers spend a few hours a day with the baby in an attempt to fill the space created by the mother's absence. They establish a home-style environment within the ward for the baby: holding the baby in their arms or in a close-to-the-body carrier, walking with the baby, singing songs, reading stories, playing, and providing warmth and love.

Each volunteer visits the baby at least twice a week, for several hours at a time.

Each baby is cared for by a small group of loving volunteers, in order for him / her to experience and become familiar with regular faces, smiles and touch.

The baby's care takes place within the hospitals, following the guidance of the medical staff and based on the baby's medical condition. A normal process of life is emphasized whenever possible in order to help the child to adjust.

Who heads the Association?

Founder and chairperson: Michal Koriat

President: Rachelli Mishori

Donating with Love

First Hug has been awarded the "Presidential Award for Volunteerism" (2009) and The "Shield of the Ministry of Health for Volunteers" (2010).

First Hug is a non-profit organization that relies fully on public support in order to operate and expand its activities.

All donations to the Association enable it to finance the following activities:

- Classifying, evaluating, and recruiting volunteers all over the country
- Employing social workers for ongoing interaction with the medical and social staff at the hospitals
- Support and professional follow-ups for the volunteers throughout their relationships with the babies
- Initiating activities to raise awareness of the issue of abandoned babies among the general public and sprading it to social factions
- Generating activities that formalize the institutional care of abandoned babies

Hugging all the Hospitals

Unfortunately, First Hug is not yet able to take care of every abandoned baby in every hospital across Israel.

However, our aim is to do just that – to reach all the abandoned babies in all the hospitals across the country within the shortest possible time frame. And, as we grow in strength, our reach is extended every day.

In order to expand the Association's activities into every hospital across the country, the Association needs donations to ensure that not even one baby remains without the precious warmth of a hug.

Your volunteering or donation will allow us to continue to provide each child with the human warmth and family invironment that they need end deserve so much.



You can find all our details on the last page of the brochure.

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