



# UK Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum (FBFF)

NEWSLETTER 23, MARCH/APRIL 2012

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## Bereaved mother talks about a coincidence that spurred her into action for PC-FF

When Racheli Wolfson approached us and said she had chosen to raise funds for the Parents Circle–Bereaved Families Forum in memory of her beloved daughter Rikki we felt very honoured.

Rikki died when she was 15, more than four years ago, falling from a tree in a terrible, freak accident. After her tragic loss Racheli wanted to find a cause to support that would be a fitting tribute to Rikki.

Last November she attended an event in London where an Israeli and a Palestinian member of the forum spoke. She was moved by the courage of the speakers who had also lost loved ones in an untimely fashion and who were using their personal loss to promote the cause of peace and reconciliation.

At around the same time she received an e-mail about the Tel Aviv Marathon. Suddenly things clicked into place. She decided she wanted to raise money for the forum and a sponsored run seemed the perfect way to do it.

'It was as if it was meant to be,' she said. 'Hearing the inspiring speakers from the forum and having the information about the run landing in my inbox at almost the same time was the kind of coincidence that spurred me into action.'

She decided she would run 10 kilometres – a quarter marathon. Although she was quite fit she had never been a serious runner and at first one lap of her local park was an enormous struggle.



**'It all seemed so obvious... Grief knows no bounds of creed or colour'**

**- Racheli Wolfson**

'The first time I attempted a run I was so breathless and I thought I was going to be sick,' she said.

Soon, though, she had built up to ten minute runs interspersed with ten minute walks. She began to do some research and picked up runners' knowledge and jargon – suddenly pre-nating, orthotics and keeping the body aligned became well trodden parts of Racheli's vocabulary. And once she had overcome her initial breathlessness she began

to look forward to her runs. The act of running helped her to deal with Rikki's loss.

'Rikki was such a free spirit. She was always off somewhere on her bike or climbing trees. She used to say that her bike was her wings. She was a voracious reader and borrowed hundreds and hundreds of books from the school and local libraries. She loved nothing better than to sit high up in a tree where the world was peaceful, listening to her MP3 player.

'She was perched in a tree 14 metres off the ground when she had her accident.

'As soon as I decided to raise money for the forum it all seemed so obvious,' she said. 'I love the fact that this charity involves bereaved Israelis and Palestinians working together – because grief knows no bounds of creed or colour. The focus of the forum's work is on human understanding. It touches us at a very profound level. It really is very special.'

We wish Racheli lots of luck for the run on 30th March. Please help her reach (or exceed!) her target and sponsor her by clicking on this JustGiving link:

[www.justgiving.com/  
Racheli-Wolfson](http://www.justgiving.com/Racheli-Wolfson)

Thank you.

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# Focusing on the physical

*Dear Friends,*

Welcome to the March/April issue of the FBFF newsletter.

Physical activity is our theme in this edition with stories of different fundraising activities involving running and mountaineering.

Young people from the Jewish youth movement Noam last year scaled two peaks to raise funds for three charities including ours.

And Racheli Wolfson is running in the Tel Aviv marathon on 30th March to raise funds for us. There's still time to sponsor her via the JustGiving link to help her reach her target.

We're inspired by everyone's efforts and wish Racheli lots of luck for her run. A big thank you to everyone involved.

*Diane Taylor*

(FBFF manager)

# Sowing seeds of co-operation

More than 100 Israeli and Palestinian members of the forum marked the beginning of spring last month with a successful visit to Wadi Mahrur

near Beit Jala to plant 100 trees. Everyone worked together to plant the trees, donated by the forum. It was hungry work and afterwards everyone made pittot (round pocket bread) on Saj eaten together with labane, zatar and olive oil.

Participants in the Israeli-Palestinian narrative programme joined the forum along with some young

people who had been involved in last summer's camp. Also on the agenda was a film called 'Our water, their water' produced by Friends of the Earth Middle East. The film documents the problems of water in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

'It was great to be working on something very practical and useful together,' said forum member Ayelet Harel.



**UK Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum (FBFF)**

16 Lynmouth Road, London N2 9LS • Tel 07966 145098 • [www.FamiliesForum.co.uk](http://www.FamiliesForum.co.uk)

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## Sponsored climb raises £800



*Jessie Schlagman and Yoav Guttman of Noam handing over their cheque for £800 to UKFBFF chair Judith Elkan*

Noam, the Masorti Synagogue's youth movement has raised £800 for us with a sponsored climb of Mount Snowdon and Scafell Pike in the Lake District.

The young mountaineers were hoping to climb Ben Nevis too but ferocious winds prevented their ascent.

'We wanted to fundraise for organisations who reflect what we are,' said Yoav Guttman, communications officer for the Masorti movement.

'Your organisation is working towards peace and that's something that everyone in our organisation believes in.'

Jessie Schlagman, Noam's summer programme coordinator, said that the mountaineering had been a great experience.

'We didn't get round to doing quite as much training as we had planned. But we all managed to complete the climb and felt very happy on the way down!' she said.

## Church of England urged to back PC-FF

General Synod member Dr John Dinnen has proposed a private member's motion calling on the Church of England to support groups working for peace in Israel and Palestine.

He urges the Church to back the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Programme in Palestine and Israel along with various aid organisations and peace groups, mentioning Parents Circle–Families Forum by name.

So far he has 175 signatures including those of eight bishops. It is hoped that the motion will be debated either at the next meeting of the Synod in July or at the one after that in February 2013.

We wish John the best of luck with the motion.

## Inter-faith enterprise oils the wheels of peace

There are many peace, dialogue and cooperation groups involving Israelis and Palestinians.

One of them is Oil For Peace, which was born out of the Interfaith Encounter Association, an organisation dedicated to promoting peace in the Middle

East through dialogue and cross-cultural study between the different religions of the Mediterranean. The 400 interfaith groups from Israel and Palestine which are members of this association meet once a month.

The organisation focuses on faith links

rather than politics and on the development of strong connections between the people.

The idea for Oil for Peace came out of one of these interfaith groups. Jews, Muslims and Christians got together to help Palestinian olive farmers who needed

help harvesting their olives.

Once it has been processed and bottled, Oil For Peace markets the oil locally in both Israel and Palestine.

It also hopes to develop new markets for the oil in Europe.

[www.oil4peace.org/en/](http://www.oil4peace.org/en/)

**Please support our work. You can make an on-line donation to FBFF by clicking here:**

**DONATE NOW**





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