

Connecticut Jewish Ledger



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Connecticut dentist brings a smile to Jerusalem youth

Dr. Stephen Katz of Greenwich recently returned from a two-week trip to Israel. But lying on a Tel Aviv beach on the shores of the Mediterranean or trekking up the awe-inspiring face of Masada wasn't a part of the retired dentist's itinerary. Instead, Katz spent his "vacation" volunteering at the Trudi Birger Dental Clinic in Jerusalem as part of Dental Volunteers for Israel (DVI), a unique program that provides free dental care and oral health education to thousands of needy children in Jerusalem, regardless of race and religion.

The June trip was not the good doctor's first. In fact, Katz has made 15 trips to the Jewish state for the purpose of volunteering his services with DVI.

“I enjoy every opportunity to come to Israel to work in this wonderful organization,” says Katz , who despite his retirement still works at the Columbia University School of Dental Medicine’s DentCare network. “They treat children and young adults, who otherwise would not receive dental treatment whatsoever, totally for free. They do not discriminate against anyone and have many children from different backgrounds, nationalities and religions. Personally, for me, it is a unique opportunity to give back in a small way to the people of Israel, my talents as a dentist, while I still have them. It is a true pleasure and allows me to contribute to the public good.”

The DVI Trudi Birger Clinic treats disadvantaged children and at-risk youth (aged 4-26). Volunteer dentists from around the world, together with their Israeli colleagues, perform about 1,000 treatments each month. In 2017, 143 volunteer dentists from around the world performed 10,798 treatments, helping 2,700 kids in crisis and at-risk youth in Jerusalem. Since its founding 38 years ago, more than 4,500 dentists have volunteered at DVI.

For more information on Dental Volunteers for Israel contact international@dental-dvi.org.il or visit <http://americanfriendsofdvi.org>.

CAP: Dr. Stephen Katz with a patient at the DVI Trudi Birger Clinic