

Wounded IDF Veteran Celebrates By Helping Others

Local News

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Six years ago, when he was 21 years old, Dror Dagan was shot by a terrorist at point-blank range while he was serving his country and defending the Jewish homeland. Dror had been called back to service by his commander after he had completed his mandatory military service a few days earlier. He was called upon to take part in a mission to arrest a terrorist leader in Bethlehem. When Dror arrived at the house of the terrorist, the wife of the terrorist staged a fainting. Dror called in the medics and together they tended to her. Meanwhile the terrorist was hiding behind the wall and shot Dror with two bullets, one in the chest and one behind the eye, leaving Dror paralyzed from the waist down. The doctors told Dror's family that he would never breathe again, he would never speak again, he would never see again. He was fighting for his life.

A year after his injury, in 2005, Dror's situation greatly worsened. He required life-saving surgery in the U.S. that was made possible thanks to a long fundraising campaign that he organized. He flew to the U.S. for the surgery and it was a success. "During my recovery process, I was not able to forget the value that I learned in the army to 'never leave a soldier behind,'" Dror explains. "I made a vow to myself that I would do something to contribute to other wounded soldiers who are less fortunate than I am."

For this purpose, Dror, together with Mr. Eli Benson, an investment banker from New York, founded the Dror for the Wounded Foundation. The purpose of the foundation is to minimize the difficulties and challenges associated with a soldier's injury. The foundation works with the severely wounded and helps each one build an individualized plan that will maximize his or her recovery and enable the wounded to return to a normal, productive life. In addition, the foundation has two soldier advocates who actively work to seek out those in need of assistance, rather than wait for those in need to find them. Many of the organizations that provide for soldiers either do not provide for the wounded or only provide for the wounded once they are fully recognized as veterans, which can take up to three years.

Since its inception in the U.S. in 2006, the Dror for the Wounded Foundation has provided over \$180,000 directly to dozens of wounded soldiers in Israel for services that the government and no other agency would fund. Dror for the Wounded has provided funding to wounded soldiers for medical treatments and equipment not covered by the government, for legal and professional services in helping a wounded soldier get his/her injury fully recognized by the government, for general humanitarian aid such as for studies and apartment rent, etc. There are currently 10,000 soldiers who were wounded in combative circumstances, and many of them have needs that only Dror for the Wounded will provide for.

It has been six years since Dror's injury, and he is excited to start the next journey of his life, which is his upcoming marriage to Genia. However, Dror realizes that there are still wounded soldiers who are not as fortunate as he is who can not yet look forward and continue on their journey in life.

The best wedding gift that Dror can receive is one that will go towards helping other wounded soldiers. Thus, in honor of Dror's upcoming marriage to Genia, Dror for the Wounded asks you to help Dror celebrate this occasion by making your commitment to "never leave a soldier behind." Dror will also be flying to New York a few weeks after his wedding for the annual Dror for the Wounded benefit, which will take place on October 6. For further information on how you can take part in this cause and celebrate together with Dror, visit www.drorfoundation.org, call 646-710-3767, or write to dror4wounded@drorfoundation.org