

FOR RELEASE:

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**San Diego Jewish Community Foundation Donors Respond in 72
Hours Giving \$350,000 to Victims of the Fires in Israel
*Focus Now on Rebuilding, Infrastructure Development***

San Diego – In the face of the tragic wildfire in the Carmel Mountains of northern Israel, the worst natural disaster in Israel's history, more than 50 individuals and families who partner with the Jewish Community Foundation for their giving, immediately responded within 72 hours to the crisis directing more than \$350,000 in grants to help victims of the forest fire.

"Unfortunately, San Diego is well-acquainted with the destructive consequences of wildfires," said Marjory Kaplan, President and CEO. "Our community acted swiftly to get funds on the ground to aid Israelis during this unprecedented disaster."

With Israel now focusing on rebuilding and infrastructure development to help mitigate future fire damage, the Foundation is assisting in forging connections between San Diego individuals and organizations who have dealt with post-fire recovery and infrastructure redevelopment with their counterparts in Israel.

The immediate grants were directed to three special funds set up to assist victims on the ground:

1. **The Jewish Federation of San Diego Fire Relief Fund** supports the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). Within 24 hours of the onset of the blaze, JDC and JAFI were assisting in the evacuation, transferring displaced children to temporary shelters, making shelter beds available to displaced families in the area, assisting the elderly and reaching out to victims' families.
2. The **Jewish National Fund (JNF)** worked with the Friends of the Israel Firefighters to purchase new fire trucks and safety equipment, including infra-red cameras that are critical for firefighters as they search for victims in a burning structure or forest fire. JNF is now heading up the forest restoration efforts.
3. The **American Friends of Magen David Adom**, Israel's ambulance and emergency rescue service which coordinated all of the medical teams during the crisis, brought equipment to the fire site, built temporary shelters and mobile trauma centers.

The fire is now under control, but it left a wake of destruction: 42 people have died, more than 20,000 have been evacuated, 1,000 people are temporarily homeless, 60 houses were damaged and more than 8,000 acres have burned, destroying 4 million trees.

Israel is concentrating on assisting the families of those killed or injured, providing temporary and permanent shelter and resources for those displaced, rebuilding structures and communities, and acquiring the equipment and resources necessary to confront future disasters of this kind.

“Our community responded immediately, and we continue to aid Israel by making connections that will strengthen both regions,” said Kaplan.

About the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego:

During fiscal year 2009-10, the Foundation awarded and facilitated \$68 million in 5,000 grants to more than 1,500 Jewish and general organizations in San Diego, Israel and across the world. Visit the Jewish Community Foundation at www.jcfsandiego.org or call 858-279-2740.

Since 1967, the Jewish Community Foundation has partnered with individuals, families and community organizations to help them achieve their philanthropic goals and to increase current and future support for a vibrant and secure Jewish community in San Diego, Israel and around the world.

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