



By Zachy Adler ('10)

Last year I spent my Chanukah with my family lighting candles, eating latkes, and receiving presents, basically what most people do. This year was a completely different experience. I spent my week dressed as a clown.

Lev Leytzan, or the Compassionate Clown Alley, is an organization that teaches High school students the skills needed to become Medical Clowns. These clowns then go to Hospitals in the New York Metropolitan area. Then once a year, for a week during Chanukah, some of the Clowns go to Israel to clown there. They visit hospitals, orphanages, and even make many house calls to many of the sick children in Israel.

These clowns reached every part of Israel. They went to the Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem, Alyn Children's hospital, Tel Hashomer in Tel Aviv, and even some houses in Gush Hatzion; clowning to bring some happiness to relieve the kid's situation that they are in, even for a small amount of time..They also distributed tens of thousands of dollars in toys to the unfortunately sick children of Israel, in partnership with the Ossie Schonfeld Memorial Toy Fund.

This year, I was able to become part of the third annual trip to Israel, to clown for many children, along with other students, including many DRS alumni currently studying in yeshivot. In every hospital there were even more children that you wanted to make a connection with. Every room, each clown wanted to make that kid feel like that was his personal clown. These clowns did everything to make these kids happy for just those few minutes, and even longer by creating a long lasting memory.

This trip was a moving experience. Bringing smiles and laughter to the children and their families made it a true moment. We touched their lives with simple peek a boo games with infants at Migdal Ohr (an orphanage) to an elaborate mock clown wedding at a child's home. Every breath and action that we took was to bring smiles to the faces of these ill children.

Every morning we woke up with the intentions to make a difference in every child's day that we met. We were able to bring joy into many children's lives. Many kids who aren't happy most of the time, because of their unfortunate situation, we were able to bring certain happiness for the time that we are there so that they aren't always thinking of what's happening in their life. To see even one kid's smile makes the whole trip worth it.

Many people asked us, when they saw us in our make-up and costume, if it was Purim. That made me think, on Purim we switch things around, so too we wanted to switch a child's frown into a smile. The feeling itself of seeing the child smile, is a feeling that could never be replaced, and I would jump on a plane right now to do the whole trip again. This Chanukah was truly a Chanukah to remember.