

Good evening. The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers.

It is my privilege to say a personal thank you to all our 1,000 volunteers... and to everyone here tonight as your support has allowed us to truly be a light unto the nations.

I will mention just a few of Ve'ahavta's accomplishments this past year – to give you an idea of how your generosity has positively impacted the world around us.

In Canada, we have:

- ◆ Provided 5,000 meals, clothing, and counseling through the Mobile Jewish Response to the Homeless.
- ◆ Our Ve'ahavta Street academy moved nine of ten people from the streets to jobs and college.
- ◆ Our TNT breakfast clubs, community dinners and Passover Seder meals served 1000's of at risk youth and the most vulnerable.
- ◆ We have supported hundreds of low-income families through Our Lita and Mikey Homework clubs.
- ◆ and just recently our support to the victims of the Wellesley street fire, was symbolic of how Ve'ahavta can turn its attention to a population so devastated yet so ignored by those around us.

The beauty of all these programs is that they not only accomplish so much for so many but they also provide an opportunity for our young volunteers to learn the values of tikun olam while exposing them to the realities of our society.

On the international stage,

- ◆ We provided primary healthcare for over 1,000 people in Guyana and
- ◆ We supplied over a million dollars of pharmaceuticals and medical aid in Zimbabwe.
- ◆ We distributed over 10,000 Kinder Kits – critical educational supplies to children around the world
- ◆ And finally, In Haiti, with the help of Feed the Children and our Israeli partners Magain David Adom, the Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief and

the Israel Trauma Coalition we were able to provide life saving food, water and medical aid to save 220 precious young lives.

Ve'ahavta is currently working to expand the orphanage, its school and its staffing. Its remarkable to think that for just \$500 a year we can give a child a home, an education and a family. Thanks to the generosity of Ajax Downs, whom are matching all funds raised for the orphanage this month, it will now cost just \$250 to accomplish this same goal.

Donors don't give to institutions. They invest in ideas and people in whom they believe and we hope you feel that our ideas and our people, have given you an incredible return on your investment.

My wish for this evening is that you not only get to understand better what we do but also after hearing from our esteemed award recipients we are all reminded of how one person can truly make a difference.

Of course a huge thanks to David Shore a man whose HOUSE, with his wife Judy and children, offer so much without ever asking for anything in return. To Sir Bob Geldof, a very special thank you for your participation tonight as we know it has come at a particularly personally challenging time.

Thank you to the Ve'ahavta Board, Executive, and Starry Nights Committee and of course to Malka and Alison our chairs for tonight who specifically asked not to be thanked and so I will not thank them. Also a huge thank you to our Ve'ahavta staff who in many ways are volunteers as well, as they work endless hours and give of their heart and soul – and for this we are all so grateful.