



**The  
Survivor  
Mitzvah  
Project**

## *SMP Meets the Challenge of Delivering Aid during the Pandemic*

**The Survivor Mitzvah Project** maintains regular contact with each Holocaust Survivor you help. This gives us a complete picture of every survivor's unique needs, allowing us to be proactive in their care. They write letters telling us how their lives have improved after receiving your lifesaving support. However, in 2020 we started receiving alarming letters about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Survivors were pleading for help.** Suddenly, due to the rapid infection rate of the virus, in-person care provided by local Jewish communities through caregivers and visiting nurses, abruptly stopped. This left isolated and ill survivors, who cannot care for themselves, unattended. Even the bedridden were now on their own without food or meals prepared, or medications administered. And those who could shop or cook for themselves were warned of strict penalties if they left their homes during repeated lockdowns. Left alone in drafty flats or freezing cold huts with no food or supplies, these elderly men and women were completely helpless and abandoned.



**We had to find ways to help.**

**The Survivor Mitzvah Project sprang into action.** We alerted our teams overseas, enlisting their help in hiring caregivers and nurses and equipping them with proper PPE so they could safely care for our people. Our "boots on the ground", Olex, Luda, Bella, Greta, Ruta, and others, are trusted, vetted, and dedicated individuals who help us. They distribute aid and visit survivors when we can't be there in person to do so. Most of them have worked with us for more than ten years. They are, to a person, selfless, tireless, and very brave. **We also asked them to continue to visit survivors in person to distribute aid, even during the pandemic. No one refused.**

**Hundreds were visited in Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Transnistria, and Ukraine, including these:**

**Frida Avramovna** - born in 1926. She survived the Holocaust in Central Asia where she spent years picking cotton while starving and suffering from numerous diseases. Her family was shot and killed by a firing squad in 1941. Ninety-six-year-old Frida has severe mobility limitations and needs help cooking, bathing, and shopping. She and her husband contracted Covid-19. They needed hospitalization but were denied, being told they were too old to occupy limited hospital beds. With your help we were able to hire a private nurse to visit daily and administer IVs and injections.

**Thanks to you, they received lifesaving aid and are now recovering.**

**Rachil Davidovna** - born in 1937. She is fighting breast cancer, has undergone multiple surgeries, and is going blind. During the Holocaust, she lost her mother and her only brother. At age five she was left alone, hungry, and sick. After the war, when her daughter was four years old, Rachil's husband was killed in a tragic car accident. She never remarried. By the time we found Rachil on one of our Emergency Aid Expeditions, her daughter was a disabled retiree who nevertheless tried to take care of her elderly mother as best she could. As much as she suffered in the past, 2020 became the most tragic year in Rachil's life, when her beloved daughter died from Covid-19. Rachil was left completely alone, locked in her apartment, and not allowed to go out as she is "a close contact of a deceased Covid-19 patient".

**Your generous support provided Rachil with a caregiver, food, medications, and heating fuel.**

**Anna Ruvinovna** – born in 1937. Anna lived through the Battle of Stalingrad, one of the bloodiest in history. By the time her family managed to evacuate, the city had lost more than 90,000 residents. Arriving in a small village in Koshki district of the Kuibyshev region, her family was forced to share one room with two other families. She wrote, “We were starving. We ate “rumex” [a type of plant] and rotten potatoes. We endured severe cold. My toes were frost-bitten, and I have suffered the consequences ever since. My toes often turn blue and are painful.” Recently, Anna suffered a hip fracture. She cannot survive without a caregiver’s help. Unfortunately, her caregiver contracted Covid-19, and Anna was left alone with no help and no food. She urgently needed another caregiver and food delivery.

**Your support helped Anna survive.**

**Michail Yankelevich** is 96 years old. When the Holocaust began, he was 16 and sent to the Front. For his bravery and courage, he was decorated with numerous military awards. Seventy-five years after the war, Michail and his wife are fighting Covid-19 at home, alone and isolated, with no medical help. Thanks to your kindness, Michail received funds to hire a nurse to care for them.

**Recently, we received good news - they are both recovering and feeling better.**



Pictured below is survivor Irina Isaevna, born in 1930, who sent this message to all of us:

*“Dear friends, I can’t stop admiring your sense of purpose! Thank you for your ongoing care of me. Thank you for your financial support, and most importantly—for your friendship, for sharing your souls and your lives with us. I prayed to G-d and thanked him for you, for your charitable project, and for the help you offer to me and people like me. I asked G-d to bless your noble deeds and to give you strength and good health.*

*With love, Irina”*

Currently, when another wave of Covid-19 is spreading at exponential speed, we anticipate more life-threatening situations. **Unfortunately, there are no vaccines available for the elderly.** The Survivor Mitzvah Project will continue to help. Your donations are crucial and will have an enormous impact on Holocaust Survivors whose circumstances have left them in greater need than ever before.

**We thank you for your compassion, kindness, and generosity, and look forward to continuing our work together in 2022.**

**Please share this newsletter with anyone you feel might wish to help. And please contact us with any comments, questions, or suggestions you may have. – Zane Buzby**

Donate online at [www.survivormitzvah.org](http://www.survivormitzvah.org)

Or send a check payable to: “The Survivor Mitzvah Project”

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100% of all donations go directly into the hands of a Holocaust Survivor in need.

\$150 supports a survivor for one month • \$1800 supports a survivor for one year.

Donations in any amount save lives.

*The Survivor Mitzvah Project is a 501c3 non-profit public charity.  
Donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowable by law.*