



A project of Yad Chazaka

What is BUS 18?

Bus 18 is a project being spearheaded by teenagers to help a driver in Israel to purchase the new bus he desperately needs. His bus is used to transport students (including children with developmental disabilities), speakers, VIPs, tourists and others around Israel. This project is based on the highest form of tzedakah according to Maimonides: giving a man the resources to earn a living instead of having to ask for a handout. The teens who are working on this project believe that “*Olam Chesed Yibaneh*” (the world is built by kindness).

The moving story behind BUS 18

Chaim and his wife Sara* (their names, and all of the names have been changed but the story is accurate) were blessed with five wonderful children. Tragically one of their children, Tzipi, was killed in an automobile accident in front of her house at the age of 9. Further, their second eldest, Benny, was born with **Progeria** - an extremely rare condition which causes physical changes that resemble greatly accelerated aging in sufferers. Currently, there are approximately 140 known cases in the world, and there is no known cure. Most people with progeria die around 13 years of age but Benny lived to the age of 21. Unfortunately it doesn't end here for the family. Shimon, their youngest child, was also born with Progeria. **(Read further to learn more about the tragic story of this family and why we have decided to help them):**

A proud man with a loving family, Chaim has been steadfastly determined to make ends meet without asking for assistance. He and his wife, Sara, had been blessed with five wonderful children. On the surface, this might sound like any of numerous families, but Chaim's story is anything but ordinary.

As a young Israeli man, he began as a driver to support his growing family. Chaim and Sara were dedicated to their children's needs, and by the age of two, discovered that their first-born son was slow in developing his motor skills. That was only a prelude of what was to come.

Years passed without a proper diagnosis. Prayer was this family's solace. Finally, Chaim and Sara received the news that their first-born son had the rarest genetic disease: Progeria. Are you familiar with this condition? It turns a small child into an elderly person, practically overnight.

The “aging disease,” as Progeria is often called, does not have a cure. And it has targeted an innocent group of less than 150 children. The life expectancy of this little boy changed drastically . . . 13 years of age was equivalent to the end of life. Surely Chaim and Sara's other children wouldn't be affected. After all, the chances were a hundred million to one.

The first child born to Chaim and Sara was a beautiful, healthy girl. At the age of nine, their daughter was killed in a fatal automobile accident, which occurred in front of their house. Could this devoted family possibly withstand any more tragedy? As G-d's servant, Chaim knew that He would provide.

The birth of another blessed son, their youngest child, was bestowed upon Chaim and Sara. He, too, was born with the disabling, deadly Progeria—two children in one single family – in one country – tiny little Israel. Prayer was this family's solace. G-d had chosen Chaim to shoulder this responsibility.

With little money to support his family, Chaim trusted in his faith. He would not ask for help. He did not want pity. He did not want charity.

Through these tribulations, Chaim and Sara chose to find that minimal speck of light and turn it into a beacon. Sara has loved every moment with her children. Each moment is a gift and should be treasured.

Chaim and Sara's first-born son lived to the unexpected age of 23. Shortly after his death, their youngest son celebrated his Bar Mitzvah, even though he was half blind and nearly deaf from the rare genetic disorder. Demonstrating the inner-strength that he had learned from his parents, he joined the band and played the drums, all the while exuding an enormous smile across his aged face.

With little money, this loving family now faces the loss of their home. Their medical bills are insurmountable and having to sell their home is only a partial solution to paying these debts. Banks have turned them away; funeral expenses have been overwhelming; better times are but remnants. Prayer is this family's solace.

Despite their own personal hardships, Chaim and Sara consider it a blessing to help others. They selflessly give their time and love to those who need care, consideration, and consolation. They've been there; they know firsthand.

I'm asking you, pleading with you, to join us in coming to the aid of this family.

Support our youth who have made the decision to be an inspiration to us all. Make a difference. Enable this family. Contribute to the cause of purchasing a new bus for Chaim so that he can continue his livelihood.

Pay it forward . . . the benefits are yours to reap.

What Happened?

Chaim and Sara have continued to struggle without complaining. (That is an understatement. You would be shocked by their joy of life and kind spirits. They are a pleasure to be around.) Unfortunately Chaim's bus is up in years. The air conditioning is beyond repair and he is not getting any business because of the condition of the bus. This lack of income along with continuously accumulating medical bills for Shimon makes it impossible for them to make ends meet. They might lose their home, and we can't allow this to happen. Thus **BUS18** was born.

Why Now?

Because now that we have entered the *Aseret Ymei Teshuva* (10 days of repentance)and our fate will soon be sealed we have an extra desire to give *tzedakah*. According to the Rambam the best way to give is to help someone earn their own living and through **BUS 18** "Chaim" will be able to continue to earn his living.

What's the cost of the bus?

A new bus costs NIS 294,200 (apx \$70,000) plus VAT and any interest unless paid in its entirety up front. Our goal is to raise \$80,000.

Do you have a suggested donation?

\$18 for each member of your household (but any amount you can give – whether more or less – is most appreciated).

What's the goal that needs to be reached?

We hope to have participation from at least 4,500 individuals – each of whom will give a minimum of **\$18**.

What will be done with any extra money?

With your help we should be so lucky that there will be extra money! All funds are being distributed through Yad Chazaka. 100% of all funds given to Yad Chazaka are distributed to numerous organizations in Israel. (A complete list of organizations that have received funds or are eligible for funds is available at www.yadchazaka.org). Any additional funds left from Project BUS 18 will be given at the discretion of Yad Chazaka to Shalva (www.shalva.org) and other organizations in Israel.

Why focus on just one family?

The teens who are running project will see how they can make a world of difference in saving a family from catastrophe and devastation. But we hope to reach many others with extra funds raised with the further distribution that will take place via Yad Chazaka.

Why is it called BUS 18?

Because the numerical value in Hebrew of 18 is "*Chai*" which means life. Through this project we hope to give continued life to the Cohen Family and all those who benefit from their kindness and works. And the teens who are involved with this program will see how their work and initiative can make a tremendous difference in the world.

How Can I Give?

Please click the **BUS 18** icon on the Yad Chazaka website – www.yadchazaka.org and please give generously so we can make this come true soon.