

WEEKLY SEE INSIDE

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR EXPERIENCE AND VOLUNTEERING IN THE GALILEE

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Israel's storm of the century, and the terrifying story of a Holland Survivor

Packing for Israel in February, I can remember thinking how hot and arid this place was during Taglit, and how I wouldn't need my cold weather clothes. Not for the first time, Israel pushed my preconceived notions out the door with something I didn't expect.

Last week brought what everyone is now calling "the storm

of the century." Some cities received more than two meters (six feet) of snow -an unprecedented amount in this region. During the storm, some of us were visiting other volunteers and ended up stranded because all public transportation was shut down by the weather. However, being stuck in Kibbutz Gezer turned out pretty great because of Israeli hospitality and the best hummus restaurant in Israel (Samir's, in Ramle).

The relaxing break this week was especially nice because still on my mind was the previous week's enrichment. One of the more memorable yet difficult we've had - meeting a Holocaust survivor born in Holland in 1933, who now lives a short walk from us. His family split up to survive, he escaped a train car headed for a camp and was sheltered by people a sympathetic Nazi SS officer set him up with, just to name a few highlights. A truly difficult story to grasp.

His story was a mix of every horrifying story I've ever heard about the Holocaust, yet still empowering because of his ever optimistic attitude today. It's a special experience to speak with survivors, because it won't be an opportunity forever, and I feel fortunate to have had the chance while here.



Shlomo Hertag, a survivor of the Shoah, meets with SEE Galilee

SEE Galilee is a five-month volunteer program based out of Northern Israel, in Kfar Vradim. Started by Galila, a Northern Israel social program foundation, the program is sponsored by Masa and administered by Israel Way. To find out more, visit www.destinationisrael.com.