Therapeutic Hiking is Good for Body and Soul

Terror victim with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other teens with disabilities learn to cope with their challenges through therapeutic hiking.

Eden, who was severely injured in a terrorist attack on a bus in April of 2016, is one of a small group of young people with physical challenges due to burns, cerebral palsy, disorders of the nervous system, spina bifida, paraparesis and multiple fractures from a road accident who took part in our Therapeutic Hiking Group this past spring and summer.

The aim of the project was to give the teens the opportunity to face challenges encountered when hiking - such as boulders and steep inclines - with the goal of developing their ability to foresee a challenge, plan a strategy to overcome it, implement the strategy and experience the satisfaction of having succeeded. In this way, the Therapeutic Hiking Group has

Eden, wearing pressure garments that help to reduce scarring from burns and using an arm crutch that offers support while walking, smiles with self-confidence as she navigates the rough terrain of the Jerusalem Forest.

instilled in the youths both the practical skills and the confidence they need in order to tackle many obstacles that they may encounter in their lives.

It has also given them an additional feeling of "normalcy" being able to participate in hiking - one of the most popular pastimes in Israel enjoyed by so many of their peers.

Police inspect the remains of bus #12, which was engulfed in flames after a suicide bombing attack in April 2016. Eden was one of the most severely injured victims. Photo: Hezki Baruch.

Upon arrival to ALYN Hospital in June of 2016, Eden was covered in bandages and in a wheelchair. She felt that there was little hope that she would ever be able to walk again.

By June of 2017, thanks to the Hiking Group, Eden was not only able to walk with the aid of an arm crutch, but she was even able to climb down difficult hills (with just a little help from her friends).