

United in Pain - a project for the families of 10 firefighters who died in the Beirut port during the explosion on 04/08/2020.

They stepped into the fire together!

3 men from Qartaba – Charbel, Najeeb and Charbel - forged a path on one of the surrounding hills. Along it, they placed massive stones with engraved scenes from the Way of the Cross. At the top they placed a huge cross. Till now, it is not known how they did it. But they did it for no reason, in a gesture of joy for who they are, where they live.

For the local community, they were heroes even before their death. They organized charity fairs, supported people from nearby villages.

Together with other firefighters, they died on duty in a port warehouse in Beirut.



Karlen was a wife for one of them, a sister for the other, and a cousin for the third. On that day she lost three family members. She is raising two wonderful girls.

We visit Qartaba from time to time, we share our tears, we walked the Way of the Cross together.

Karlen is strong, her mother's instincts keep her away from being weak. Although her eyes are glazed as if empty, she always has a smile for us. George, on the other hand, is like the leader of a community. "My heart is dead ... I can't silence the voices in my head." - he says.



Shoes by the firemen's bed ...

Joe and Ralf were friends from one street in Ain el Remmaneh. In their fire station in the Karantina estate, they shared a bed, because the station is in a deplorable condition. When they heard the signal, they set off for their last action.



Ralf's father wandered for hours through the smoking debris in the harbor, calling on the name of his beloved son. Joe's parents are still struggling to recover today. This pain is incurable.

Every day, families pray at two chapels built in memory of the boys. Pictures of Ralf and Joe hang on strings above the streets. When the streets are empty in the evening and a light Beirut's wind blows up, photos and silence whisper the names of two souls. On one of the walls there is a birdhouse where you can leave a book for others - "A bird sat in a tree - Ralf Malachee's bookcase".



Don't leave us!

We were at Ralf's funeral as we lived on the same street then. The bullets ripped the air, the women sprinkled flowers, the family shook the coffin, shedding tears.

We made a decision that we must do something. Joint fundraising with the State Fire Service in Poland, support for each of the 10 families, then further actions.

We helped Ralf's father to open the shop, then we did the same for his second son, Davo.



Today, the family is able to take care of itself, and Davo is planning a wedding. We are all waiting for little Ralf. Father smiles more, mother is more talkative. However, there is still heavy silence during the meetings, the eyes get wet, and the street reminds us of an unhealed wound. Unfortunately, pain also turns into anger, a cry for justice, for an account.

We come back irregularly, it is about solidarity, so that they remember that we promised them to be with them if they need to. Poles-Strangers-Close.

What we did so far?

- First phase of the project was conducted with polish firemen under the supervision of the Main Chef of the Fire Brigade in Poland. Together with we collected 3200\$, which we delivered to all 10 families in January 2021. Promo materials for the project were prepared by Michał Kłosiński.
- As a next step we organised additional financial support for the family of M. Hawa, for the widow S.Khaki and for the 3 families from Qartaba.
- We are also providing psychological support to Lea, daughter of Ramy, and a walker for her brother
- As a part of "Give a Job!" we helped to the family of R. Mallahee to open 2 shops.

Costs: 4433 USD (excluding costs of 2 shops)

