

# Innovation and Diversity Bloom in the Desert

*Participants from around the world join American Friends of Soroka to support the outstanding medical care and breakthrough research at Soroka Medical Center*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, US, October 12, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- American Friends of Soroka Medical Center (AFSMC) will host the [Desert in Bloom Virtual Gala](#) on October 18th, 2020 at 12PM ET to support Soroka Medical Center's continued efforts to provide excellent and advanced care to the region's diverse population. From Bedouins to Ethiopians, IDF soldiers to Orthodox Jews, Arabs and more,

Soroka exemplifies peaceful coexistence in action, providing premier healthcare for all. The 8th annual gala will also celebrate Soroka's successes in fostering scientific and medical innovation in the service of saving lives, positioning it as a leader amongst Israeli hospitals and worldwide. The

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Soroka's groundbreaking research in Genetics, Autism, Geriatric Issues, Environmental Health, and Digital Health have led to innovative treatments & medications for patients with advanced diseases.”

*Dr. Shlomi Codish, director general of Soroka Medical Center*



Glato Kshaun gave birth at Soroka 10 days after her husband, Sgt. Maj. Bayhesain Kshaun was killed in action in Gaza. Photo by FLASH90

event will feature a unique musical and philanthropic experience with more than 500 guests expected to participate, including a special guest appearance by Oscar, Grammy, Tony, and Golden Globe Award-winning songwriter, Benj Pasek.

Soroka is affiliated with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and is the primary teaching hospital in BGU's Faculty of Health Sciences. The physical and organizational connections between Soroka and BGU foster fruitful scientific cooperation among researchers at both institutions with a myriad of collaborations in fields ranging from biology and medical sciences to behavioral sciences and engineering.

The Desert in Bloom Virtual Gala will honor two important innovators. Dr. Michael Hayden is a

Killam Professor of Medical Genetics at the University of British Columbia and the recipient of the David Dubinsky Humanitarian Award. Hayden is best known for his research in Huntington's disease and was the former CMO of TEVA Pharmaceuticals. He is currently Program Director of the Translational Laboratory in Genetic Medicine, Singapore and a champion of using the arts to educate and communicate with the public about complex scientific breakthroughs.

Marc Bennett, who has spent his life creating powerful images and stories in print and on film, will receive Soroka's Healing Arts Award. "I am committed to art and film as visual languages that can entertain, inspire, educate and enlighten as well as be vehicles for positive change and philanthropy worldwide," remarks Marc Bennett, artist/filmmaker. Bennett's [The History of the Star of David](#) is a time capsule that invites us to discover the centuries-long evolution of the six-pointed star. The History of the Star of David will soon become the focal point for Soroka's new Comprehensive Cancer Center's healing garden. It evokes a sense of survival and determination, as well as a celebration of Jewish culture, tradition and faith.



Artist Marc Bennett standing with his creation - The History of the Star of David



Dr. Michael Hayden (right) on Soroka campus

AFSMC will present both [live and silent auctions](#) featuring a VIP trip to Israel, Explore Aspen Experience, a retreat to the exclusive Jumby Bay resort in Antigua, Kistler wine, fine jewelry and much more.

From medical breakthroughs like non-invasive liquid biopsy testing to detect advanced lung cancer faster to its COVID-19 pooled testing method, Soroka continues to lead the field with innovation. With the help of its generous supporters, clinical research at Soroka is set to become the most advanced research center championing global and innovative health.

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American Friends of Soroka Medical Center is a New York State 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. AFSMC is a community of individuals, families, foundations and businesses dedicated to supporting the vision and lifesaving work of the Soroka Medical Center. AFSMC educates the U.S. public about Soroka's medical treatment, breakthrough research and global impact and cultivates philanthropic funding to ensure Soroka can achieve its goals. [soroka.org](http://soroka.org)

Soroka Medical Center is Israel's leading healthcare institution providing world-class healthcare for all. Located in Be'er Sheva, it is the sole medical center in the entire Negev, one of the country's most diverse and fastest-growing areas. Soroka serves over 1.2 million residents, including over 400,000 children, in a region that comprises 60% of Israel's land. With two medical schools, a proven record of producing groundbreaking research and life-saving treatments and an extraordinary staff, Soroka offers exceptional healthcare for all, regardless of race, religion, or politics. This unique institution, founded in 1959, exemplifies a deep commitment to outstanding medical care, peaceful coexistence in action and medical research that has a global impact.

Marc Bennett is an artist and filmmaker from Brooklyn, NY and is a member of the Directors Guild of America. Bennett received his education at The Brooklyn Museum Art School, The School of Visual Arts in New York City, and Otis Parsons and Art Center in Los Angeles. Bennett has been honored with awards including; the Art of California Magazine's "Discovery Award," the Stamford Art Association's "Color Award," and was honored with the World Medal from the New York Festival's Television Advertising Awards. His artwork has been used to raise funds and awareness for organizations and institutions such as Soroka Medical Center, the Anti-Defamation League, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and the Museum of Tolerance. Bennett is currently directing the documentary Ride for the Living (working title) about an inspirational annual bike ride that re-traces the steps of Polish holocaust survivor Marcel Zielinski's 60 mile walk of liberation, as a child, from the gates of Auschwitz to Krakow in 1945. [starof davidart.com](http://starof davidart.com)

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