

American Friends of NATAL Holds Gala Supporting Mental Health Crisis in Israel, Hosted by Michael Rapaport

For millions of Israelis, the hardest fight is just beginning. American Friends of NATAL gala to raise funds & awareness for unprecedented mental health needs.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, October 31, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [American Friends of NATAL](#), a U.S.-based organization that supports [NATAL: Israel's Trauma and Resiliency Center](#), will hold its annual gala on November 10th in NYC hosted by acclaimed actor and outspoken advocate Michael Rapaport. This year's event marks AFN's 20th anniversary and comes at a pivotal moment, as Israel transitions from wartime survival to the long and complex journey of psychological recovery.



AFN will host its annual gala on November 10th in NYC hosted by acclaimed actor and outspoken advocate Michael Rapaport. Source: Improv

"For over two years, Israelis have lived in a state of high alert, focused on sirens, loved ones in uniform, and the fate of the hostages. Now, as active conflict begins to subside and the nation exhales, a new crisis is emerging: the profound mental health toll of prolonged terror and war. The Gala will be a powerful evening dedicated to hope, resilience, and healing, with proceeds supporting NATAL's lifesaving work treating trauma and PTSD across Israeli society," shared Maayan Aviv, CEO, American Friends of NATAL.

To find out more and purchase tickets: <https://www.afnatal.org/afngala>

When The Fighting Stops, The Healing Crisis Begins

"This year, holidays didn't bring peace. They brought a flood of pain," shares Aviv. During a recent 9-day holiday period, NATAL received 1,341 calls to its Helpline -- that's nearly 80 calls a day, a

staggering jump from 30 per day in previous years. Traditionally, holidays bring quiet time with family, moments of joy. But this year, Israelis were hit with the trauma they'd held in for months.

- 1,300+ crisis calls per week are pouring in
- Headlines trigger dozens more calls from civilians, reservists, and parents
- 500 trained trauma specialists are working across the country to meet unprecedented demand

"I know firsthand the invisible toll that service and war take on the human spirit. As a retired captain in the Israeli Navy and the son of an Air Force fighter pilot, I've seen how the wounds we don't see can be just as lasting and just as devastating as the ones we do," shared Ran Eliasaf, Founder of Northwind Group and Chairman of the Board, American Friends of NATAL.



Israel is transitioning from wartime survival to the long and complex journey of psychological recovery.

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Maayan Aviv, CEO, American Friends of NATAL

He continued, “Today, the need for NATAL’s work in Israel has never been greater. In a time when so many Israelis are coping with trauma, loss, and uncertainty, NATAL stands as a vital source of healing and resilience. For 20 years, American Friends of NATAL has been supporting these efforts, helping Israelis find strength, growth, and hope on the other side of trauma. As I begin my first year as Chairman after eight years on the board, I’m deeply committed to expanding our impact and ensuring that every Israeli who needs support has access to NATAL’s life-changing care.”

Spotlight: Michael Rapaport and the Power of Voice

Michael Rapaport joins the gala for a live podcast-style conversation with Daniel Goldstein, a 33-year-old reservist, licensed social worker, and trauma survivor who has served 320 days since October 7th while coping with PTSD.

Today, Daniel leads NATAL’s peer support program, a growing initiative that empowers survivors to support each other through shared experience. Built on the understanding that those who’ve walked the path of trauma are uniquely positioned to guide others through it, the program is

rapidly expanding to meet the rising demand for mental health care across Israel. By training survivors as peer supporters, NATAL is building a scalable, community-based model of care and is better able to reach people who might not otherwise seek help.

An anticipated highlight will be Pastor Chris Harris from Bright Start Church in Chicago who will perform a moving rendition of "Hatikvah," Israel's national anthem in an expression of unity, resilience, and shared hope. Pastor Harris travels the world building relationships between African-American and Jewish Clergy and has visited the Holy Land seven times, leading more than 70+ faith leaders to Israel on interfaith trips.

Art as Witness, Art as Healing: Curated by the Unframed Art Collective
This year's gala will feature a powerful art experience curated by Gemma-Rose Stern-Meiraz and Daniela Joy Tehranian, founders of the Unframed Art Collective. The Art Room will serve as a living, breathing centerpiece of the evening where curated works by international and Israeli artists give form to the emotional journey of trauma, resilience, and hope. Several of the artists began painting as a form of therapy and escapism, and now offer their deeply personal pieces as acts of connection, transformation, and testimony. Guests will have the opportunity to acquire these works in real time or participate in a silent auction.

A Multidisciplinary Response to the Invisible Wounds of War and Terror

By integrating clinical care, community resilience, professional development, and global training, NATAL offers a full-spectrum response to trauma that's grounded in compassion, expertise, and



Maayan Aviv and Ran Eliasaf were interviewed at the NYSE about business and philanthropy. Source: Romina Hendlin



Daniel Goldstein, a 33-year-old reservist, licensed social worker, and trauma survivor has served 320 days since October 7th while coping with PTSD. He will be interviewed in a podcast format by Michael Rapaport.

innovation. NATAL delivers a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to trauma care for individuals and communities affected by war and terror including:

- Clinical Unit: Licensed therapists, social workers, and professional supervisors provide individualized trauma therapy.
- 24/7 Helpline: Staffed by trained volunteers and clinicians, the helpline offers immediate psychological first aid and emotional support.
- Community Resilience Programs: Group workshops, trauma-informed yoga, art therapy, and peer support groups promote long-term healing and coping.
- Career Development: Survivors receive career coaching and mentorship to rebuild professional paths and regain independence.
- Global Outreach: NATAL exports its proven trauma-care model to cities like Chicago and Kyiv, training professionals worldwide in trauma intervention.
- Research & Evaluation: A dedicated research team ensures all programs are evidence-based and continuously improving.



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Business and Philanthropy: Coming Together for a Common Cause

The American Friends of NATAL Gala brings together global leaders who share a deep commitment to supporting trauma recovery and mental health in Israel. C-level executives from New York and across the country will join for an evening that blends purpose and connection, demonstrating how business and philanthropy can work hand in hand to advance a critical cause.

American Friends of NATAL wishes to extend deep gratitude to generous sponsors: Northwind Group, Nelson Mullins, Polsinelli, GFP Real Estate, IDB Bank, Royal Abstract and MD2 Property Group.

About American Friends of NATAL

American Friends of NATAL (AFN) supports NATAL – Israel's Trauma and Resiliency Center, the premier organization treating trauma related to war and terrorism. Since October 7th, NATAL has been operating at unprecedented levels of demand. AFN also collaborates with U.S.-based organizations on trauma preparedness and response, helping bring NATAL's expertise to communities affected by violence and disaster around the world.

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