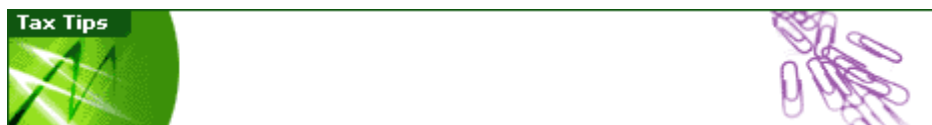




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In the face of violent death, family seeks the antithesis of terror

By Tony Stephens
September 6, 2003

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Arnold Roth is struck by the awfully synchronous history. His mother was 15 at the outbreak of World War II when she threw herself at the feet of a German officer to save her father's life; Roth himself was 15 during the Six Day War; his daughter was 15 when murdered by a suicide bomber.

He and his wife, Frimet, try to make some sense of all this. "There is almost nothing practical that ordinary people like us can do to fight barbarism and hatred," he said in Sydney this week.

What the Roths did was set up the Malki Foundation, named after their daughter, who was one of 15 people killed in a crowded Jerusalem pizzeria in August 2001.

"We want the Malki Foundation to be the antithesis of terror," Mr Roth said.

"We want to honour Malki's memory through practical acts that bring people together, regardless of religion or race. We will help Jews, Christians and Muslims."

Malki was three years old and the youngest of four children when the Roth family moved from Melbourne to Israel in 1988. The Roths had three more children in Israel, including Haya, who is blind and severely disabled.

Malki, tall, sunny, a gifted classical flautist and youth group leader, would carry Haya around. Her best friend, Michal Raziell, went with her to the pizzeria. They are buried side by side.

When the Roths recovered their daughter's mobile phone, they found that a nail from the bomb had shredded the leather case. They also found a note Malki had written herself: "Speak no ill of others."

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Mr Roth said: "The two strongest motifs in her life were her concern for others and her music. She taught herself to play the guitar and her flute-playing - Haydn and Mozart - could bring me to tears. She wore a permanent smile. She was wonderfully optimistic."

Mr Roth, a lawyer who is now chief executive officer of a company developing computer-based devices for the blind, is raising funds for the foundation. It provides therapy services for use in homes and a warehouse of goods, such as wheelchairs, suitable for disabled children and not freely available in Jerusalem. An Arab family was one of the first to receive assistance.

"The hardest thing for parents of a murdered child is to get out of bed in the morning," Mr Roth said. "This keeps me and my wife going."

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