

A Michigan Pioneer Takes a Trip That Affects a Nation

Year after year, new distinctions are added to our country's list of medical accomplishments. If we break, disfigure or dismember any part of our body, chances are there is a doctor nearby who can put us back together again. For example, take Southfield resident and DMC Sinai-Grace Hospital podiatric surgeon Dr. Harvey Mark Lefkowitz whose cutting-edge medical techniques have made him known locally and internationally.

Dr. Lefkowitz humbly believes that America's medical advancements are a privilege that should be shared with others. This has set him on a course towards giving back to a country his ancestors and modern-day family members call home.

Israel, to the average person, seems millions of miles away, but to Dr. Lefkowitz it is a country he carries close to his heart. To him it's a country that birthed a culture of people who stand up for their beliefs. A country in which he takes pride of its history and the care it gives his two adult daughters and their families.

Dr. Lefkowitz's story began long ago when his mother, a Holocaust survivor, was devastated by the death of her medical-school-bound brother at the hands of Hitler's soldiers during World War II. Mrs. Lefkowitz's devastating loss grew into feelings of resentment over her inability to witness her brother achieve his dreams. That sorrow motivated Dr. Lefkowitz to become everything his uncle could have been.

Twenty-four years later, Dr. Lefkowitz became the youngest podiatrist in Michigan and has achieved many distinctions. Only recently did he receive, from Dr. Richard Jaffe Israel's chief of podiatry, an offer of a lifetime – an opportunity to give back to the country that he will forever carry in his heart.

In March of this year, Dr. Lefkowitz, with tools in hand, boarded an airplane bound for Jerusalem to perform reconstructive surgery on orthopedic surgeon and former chief medical officer to the United Nations Dr. Yaacov Adler. The complex surgical technique, which is

not performed by Israeli doctors required Dr. Lefkowitz to reconstruct a flat foot and ruptured ankle tendon.

Jerusalem is a modern city with universal health-care, but does not always offer procedures that go that extra mile. The need for more advanced procedures motivates doctors like Dr. Lefkowitz to share their expertise with their international colleagues, like Dr. Jaffe, to perform these specialized procedures.

After eight days in Jerusalem, Dr. Lefkowitz successfully performed the foot surgery, leaving Dr. Adler's recovery in Dr. Jaffe's care. Dr. Lefkowitz returned to the U.S. feeling a sense of accomplishment. Dr. Jaffe with Dr. Lefkowitz's assistance was the catalyst in intro-

ducing a new procedure to Israel. Together, Dr. Lefkowitz and Dr. Jaffe see this as just the beginning of a mutually rewarding relationship.

"It is important for physicians here to realize how fortunate we are to have all the instruments and protocols in place that allow us to do the wonderful things we can for patients here in the U.S.," says Dr. Lefkowitz. "I think it is

important for all physicians to share their expertise around the world ... and take a more active role in reaching out worldwide rather than just here in your own community."

To date, Dr. Lefkowitz has trained over 50 resident doctors who have gone on to leadership roles in their state and national organizations. He has lectured both locally, as well as internationally on various subjects of foot and ankle surgery.

Dr. Lefkowitz maintains three private practices (Ferndale, Milford and Commerce Township) and shares those responsibilities with associate and partner physicians. He has held leadership positions in both hospitals and community organizations and continues to publish in medical journals, always lending a helping hand to other physicians when called for to assistance in complex surgical procedures.

