



**"Jordan River Village is the most important thing that I am connected to in my life, besides family."  
- Chaim Topol ז"ל**

We at Jordan River Village are deeply saddened by the loss of our President and Israel Prize laureate, the late actor Chaim Topol (ז"ל). Our hearts go out to his family during this difficult time. Topol, who was the founder of Jordan River Village, served as its chairman of the board from its inception until 2020 when he was appointed president.

Topol first learned about the idea of Jordan River Village from his friend, the late actor Paul Newman, founder of SeriousFun Children's Network, a global community of independently managed and financed camps serving children with serious illnesses and their families. Together with Murray and Marilyn Grant (ז"ל), Topol helped bring the dream of a place for sick children and their families to life.



Topol's unwavering dedication to the Village served as an inspiration to all. He visited regularly, interacting with and encouraging campers every step of the way. Often, you could find Topol acting as camp counselor, assisting at the climbing wall, performing and dancing alongside the children on stage, and participating in all types of activities. Topol was always there for the children.

Prof. Kobi Ramon, the current Chairman of Jordan River Village, said of Topol: "Before meeting him, I knew of Chaim Topol as a world-renowned, revered, and beloved actor. It was an honor to meet and work alongside him at Jordan River Village, where I saw firsthand his dedication and passion for making it a significant experience for thousands of children and families. Despite his fame, Chaim was humble and diligent, leading the management committee with enthusiasm and passion. His legacy will remain an integral part of the Village's backbone, inspiring future generations to come. May his memory be a blessing."

Topol's work and contribution to Jordan River Village were recognized with the President's Award for Volunteers in 2014, and last year he received the prestigious Knesset Speaker's Award.



In speaking of the founding of Jordan River Village, Topol would recount a conversation he had with Paul Newman in 2001. While they were visiting the camp Newman founded in Connecticut for children living with serious illnesses, he told Topol that he would be very proud if a similar summer camp was established in Israel. Topol replied that "in a small country like Israel, we don't have the luxury of building a summer camp that operates only two months a year, but a need for a village that could operate year-round." Topol then set out to turn that dream into reality.

The American Friends of Jordan River will continue to honor Chaim Topol's legacy in the future and support his never-ending work to bring the fun and friendship of camp to seriously and chronically ill children in Israel.