


February 2, 2010 Tuesday 18 Shevat 5770 9:37 IST  Print

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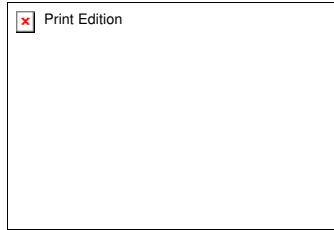


Photo by: Courtesy

## 'Woodley Elysee will be like new'

By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH  
02/02/2010

Haitian boy with congenital heart disease to undergo catheterization and open-heart surgery in Israel.

Woodley Elysee – the six-year-old boy from Haiti who was brought here Friday by the Israeli rescue team for treatment for a serious congenital heart defect and greeted by the president and prime minister – is due to undergo on Wednesday a diagnostic catheterization at Wolfson Medical Center in Holon.

Then, according to the hospital's Save a Child's Heart organization, he will undergo surgery to cure his cyanotic heart condition in which there is an inadequate supply of oxygenated blood to his heart and lungs.

Dr. Sion Houri, director of pediatric intensive care at Wolfson, is not only looking after him, but is also his interpreter, as both speak French. He told *The Jerusalem Post* on Monday that Elysee was not allowed to get upset or to exert himself – but coming from a rural village that was not affected by the deadly earthquake, he has been excited about taking his first plane ride, taking his first elevator and being on Israeli TV.

Elysee, an intelligent child who has not yet entered school, is a bit small for his age and has never been able even to play ball. Had he remained in Haiti, he would probably have died in his teens, as his heart and lungs, with their inadequately oxygenated blood, would have been unable to support him.

His parents, whose home was not affected by the quake, remain in Haiti, as his mother is due to give birth to her fifth child in a few months. Elysee's aunt, who was in Port-au-Prince when the earthquake struck and managed to get out of a building just in time, accompanied him. They are staying at the Save A Child's Heart home in Azor, where foreign youngsters who will undergo operations performed by volunteer Wolfson surgeons stay before their surgery and during recovery.

Houri said the boy, who hardly speaks because of his condition, does not seem to be emotionally traumatized, but he is aware that he will soon go for a minimally invasive diagnostic medical procedure and then for major open-heart surgery.

"He will not have much when he returns to Haiti, but he will be able to breathe, grow and play soccer," Houri said.

Elysee is expected to be like new. He does not suffer from any of the infectious diseases that are prevalent in his deprived Caribbean homeland, the doctor added.

Dr. Alona Raucher Sternfeld, one of the boy's doctors, said that Elysee's dark skin became deep blue when he made any physical effort. But cognitively, he is well developed, she added.

After the operation, he will have to be hospitalized for five to seven days, recuperate in the Azor children's house and then return to Haiti with his aunt, equipped with the medications that he will need for full recovery.

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