

## Teddys with a message

### Bears sent to bolster Israelis

By Debra Rubin

Photos by Debra Rubin

Noah Siman picked out a teddy bear for a "little boy who's in Israel."

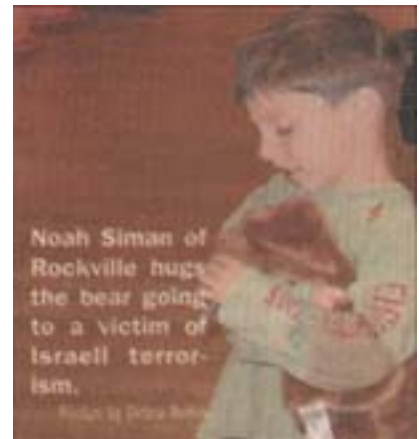
Lindsey Taff selected one for a 13-year-old who was injured in a suicide bombing in 2004.

All together, 33 teddy bears were chosen on Sunday for Operation Embrace's "Build a Bear" project. Each stuffed bear, purchased last Sunday at the Build a Bear store at the Westfield Shoppingtown's Montgomery Mall Bethesda and taken to Israel this week by five local women, included a message by the contributor. "I'm Lindsey from Potomac, MD.," the 10-year-old recorded. "I wanted to make a bear to help you feel better."

Noah, 3 ½, of Rockville planned to record a message saying he hoped the recipient had fun with the bear.

The project also raised \$700 for Operation Embrace, which assists Israeli victims of terrorism and their families. The brainchild of Potomac's Aviva Tessler, one of Operation Embrace's founders, the teddy bear project was coordinated by Kimberly Pomerantz, 15, of Annandale.

"I hear a lot of the stories about how touched people were when they received something from Operation Embrace, and I wanted to help Mrs. Tessler," said Pomerantz, who worked on the project with fellow teen Michelle Bronsky of Potomac.



Potomac's Lindsey Taff, and Bethesda's Claudia Carpel discuss what messages they'd like to record with the teddy bears being given to victims of terrorism in Israel.