



St. Louis circus group in Israel during troubled times

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IMPERIAL, MO (KTVI)-A group of St. Louis teenagers is in Israel right now during a time of tension and violence. Friday saw a fourth day of airstrikes in the Gaza Strip that, according to the Israeli military, is targeting the homes of suspected Hamas leaders.

Israel's prime minister says he will not cave to international pressure to stop the attacks until rocket fire from Hamas stops.

Thousands of miles away in Missouri, parents are anxious about their kids safety.

"When Nick was coming up on his 13th birthday he had seen a YouTube video of this really cool unicycler and so he asked for a unicycle for his birthday," says Jennie Dodson.

Her son, 16-year old Nick Dodson of Imperial, MO, is a member of [Circus Harmony at City Museum](#). Nick and several other teens are in Israel to perform with the Galilee Circus, which is made up of Jewish and Arab students.

"He's an ambassador. That would not be his word, but he's an ambassador along with the other kids in the circus to promote... see we can get along."

But with rockets falling in Israel there is worry back home.

"It would be a lie to say I'm anything but a nervous wreck," Jennie Dodson said.

Nick and his dad have been in Israel since Wednesday. The circus troupe began practicing right away and will be performing throughout the country for several days.

“And I think, getting into the routine really quickly, that leaves kids less time to sit and think about what’s going on. I don’t know if they have heard sirens or not.”

Jennie gets frequent updates on [the Circus Harmony Facebook page](#) that the group is safe and well. They have been assured by their Israeli hosts that the circus is not a target in the conflict. A worried mom is also a proud mom.

“I have mixed feelings of being scared as a mom and a wife, but also being incredibly proud of my son, my husband, all of those kids.”

The Circus Harmony group returns to St. Louis July 23rd.