

GRAPEVINE

• By GREER FAY CASHMAN

■ COINCIDENTALLY, ON the same day, President **Isaac Herzog** and his wife, **Michal**, who are longtime supporters of Beit Loewenstein rehabilitation hospital, which is one of the largest Israeli hospitals in the field of rehabilitation medicine, paid a visit and met with patients and staff. They were also given a briefing on new technologies and equipment that are being used in various therapies.

Beit Loewenstein is affiliated with Clalit Health Services, so it was natural for Clalit chairman of the board of directors **Yohanan Locker** to join Beit Loewenstein CEO Dr. **Hagay Amir** in welcoming the Herzogs.

Avi Luftan, 42, from Kiryat Shmona, told the Herzogs that he is a disabled army veteran. Twenty years ago, he was seriously injured during his military service, and for nearly two decades he suffered excruciating, chronic pain. Physicians advised him to undergo the amputation of his leg. It was a difficult decision for him to make. But in consultation with various medical professionals, he reached the conclusion that this was the best course for him.

What helped him a lot, he said, were the interpersonal relationships with his nurses, his therapist and even the head doctor. They were with him all the way, as were other patients,



MICHAL HERZOG and (below) her husband, President Isaac Herzog, join in pony petting therapy with a five-year-old child at Beit Loewenstein rehabilitation hospital. (Kobi Gideon/GPO)



he said. The nurses let him know they cared, because they frequently checked on him. The door of his physician Dr. **Michael Tamir** was always open to him. "I feel as if he's my support system, and that's very important," said Luftan. "He gives me the strength to continue to develop."

The Herzogs were charmed by a cute five-year-old girl who happens to have been born a spastic. Among the therapies prescribed for her are pony rides and petting. Michal Herzog joined the little girl in petting the pony, but the president was braver, and got into a pony-drawn cart with her, and the two – the president and the little girl – went for a ride together.