

## ***New Braille Printer***

As most of you already know that for the longest time we've been having immense technical problems with our old Braille printer. We were unable to fix it locally and therefore we had the producing company's consultant come from Germany to repair it on site. After having a very close look at the machine, it became apparent that the problem was with parts that the producing company no longer manufactures. The printer was obsolete! This meant inevitable, the purchase of a new Braille printer.

The Society is in the process of extending its efforts in fund-raising for a new Braille printer in the cost of approximately €36,000 (thirty-six thousand Euros). Such a printer will help in meeting the demands of more blind people of all ages.

## ***New School Building***

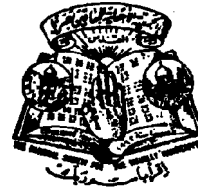
Construction of our new school building is progressing rapidly. To date, skeleton works on the outside is finished for all three floors. Internal finishes of plastering and tiling have started on the first and second floors.

As for the internal furnishing of the rooms, we managed to raise the money for most of the rooms! However funds for the library, the social worker's room, the crafts room, the multipurpose hall and the lift are still not available.



School building

It is not very often that dreams come true. But in our case, this has truly happened. God willing, it looks as if we could be moving into the new school by September. It has always been our cherished wish to have our own premises, and not keep moving from one building into another. Eventually, and after much prayers and perseverance, the dream is being fulfilled. Indeed, we are greatly humbled by the generosity, love and dedication of all our friends who have made it possible. We all, children and staff, say "thank you" to each and every one of you.



# **THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED**

## **The National Library For The Blind**

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## **Quarterly Newsletter - Spring 2008**

Dear Friends,

There has been considerable unrest and a great deal of turmoil throughout the whole world during the last three months, not the least in our beloved land. The cost of petrol has risen immensely, and food prices have increased in a fabulous way. The prices of some items have gone up to a hundred percent. This has had a drastic effect on the majority of people, particularly as there has been no change in their earnings. The political arena has not been any better. Ever since the meeting in Annapolis, instead of peaceful negotiations, Israel has decided to escalate its alleged war against terror. Destroying houses and killing as many innocent lives as possible, of whom are many women and children. This is not exactly the way to find the most suitable solution for the Palestinian issue that has been going for so long and causing a great deal of suffering. The situation in Gaza is unbearable; and many of the people we know there are looking for opportunities to leave the Gaza Strip. Needless to say, that such drastic conditions and events, has put the average Palestinian in a hopeless state of mind, unable to envisage any kind of solution to our problem; this is causing most of our Christian young men and women to leave the country. In the end both Israelis and Palestinians are the losers. On the other hand, matters at the National Society are going smoothly; thanks be to God almighty and to our friends and supporters who have been so faithfully interested in our worthy cause for the blind and visually impaired. The problems of our main library in East Jerusalem have been solved; after forty years of service, both employees have been pensioned off. Currently the Society has appointed a woman from East Jerusalem, who is able to carry out all responsibilities there. The aim is that all publications in Braille will take place at the newly built premises in Beit Jala, and the Jerusalem office will serve only as a lending library.

*Helena Shehadeh*

## *Doris Fundraises In The UK*

Helen and I were very thrilled when an invitation was extended to our school by members of Clarkston Churches Together in Glasgow (Busby, Carmunnock, Greenbank, Netherlee, Stamperland and Williamwood Churches of Scotland, St Aidan's Episcopal Church and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church) to raise awareness towards our work with blind children and life in the besieged Bethlehem. I was to be there during the week of prayer for Christian Unity in January.

I went to the UK accompanied by my 11 year-old daughter, Dina, through Jordan. We flew to London then took the train to Edinburgh, together with our very dear friend Rev. Clarence Musgrave who met us at the train station. We stayed with the Musgraves for four days, during which Clarence and Joan had arranged wonderful plans for us. They invited friends over, and I was very pleased to meet some that I only knew by name and others that I haven't seen for a long time. We also spent a beautiful day at St. Andrew's, where we had lunch at the infamous golf club then took a long stroll down the magnificent beach, which brought back vivid memories of "Chariots of Fire"!!



Joan Musgrave, Dina and I at St. Andrew's

On our last day in Edinburgh, the Musgraves went through the trouble of driving us all the way to Greenbank, where we were very warmly received by Rev. Jeanne Roddick, her family and Rui, the extra friendly dog.

We spent four days in Greenbank between events at different places. From a visit to Williamwood High School to a Ceilidh dancing party, from a coffee morning to a fund raising dinner with various dignitaries and old friends, from a tour in Glasgow to shopping on Buchanan Street, from two Sunday morning services to an evening service. I also got the chance to visit Hazelwood School, Glasgow's school for children with sensory and dual sensory impairment. It was wonderful to meet throughout, those smiling faces, get the chance to talk to many and make friends with most.

After Greenbank, Dina and I spent four days in London mixing business with pleasure!

The Palestinian Ambassador to the UK based in London, Dr. Manuel Hassassian kindly offered to introduce me to many friends, whom he thought might be interested in our work. I did, and there just might be some thing there!

I was truly humbled by the hard efforts that everyone made in order to make my visit to the UK successful, pleasant and very enjoyable. I was touched by the turn out of friends at every event, especially those who came from very long distances; it made all the difference to me. Thank you all for making a difference.



Fund raising dinner at Netherlee, from left to right: Councillor Greene, Rev. Roddick, Councillor Miller, Provost Mackie, Rev. Cameron - Moderator of Glasgow Presbytery, Doris, Rev. Nelson, Councillor Montague, Councillor Carmichael

## *A New Comer*

Towards the beginning of March, a five-year-old child from the city of Salfeet, north of the West Bank, joined Al-Shurooq. Born on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002 after six months of pregnancy, Muna weighed 600 grams. She was placed in an incubator for two months to reach a weight of 1450 grams; she was very frail and weak. Muna had a twin brother, who later died at hospital. Both were a result of many IVF trials and she is the only precious thing that the parents possess. Her father himself is physically disabled, a university graduate and works as at the Ministry of Youth in the Palestinian Authority.



Muna Taher