

A Success Story

Atieh Subeih, a former student at Al-Shurooq, was one of the guests invited for the Christmas party. Atieh joined Al-Shurooq School in 1996 when he was eleven. He had never been to a school before. No school would accept him since he is physically disabled and visually impaired.

When at Al-Shurooq, Atieh excelled academically and was able to do four years in two. He was then integrated back to a local school in Al-Khader, his home village, and was followed-up by Al-Shurooq staff until he finished his high school and was able, with great success, to enter Bethlehem University. Today, Atieh is a first year student reading Arabic literature and enjoying it tremendously. We are indeed very proud of Atieh and wish him all the best.



Atieh Subeih at
Al-Shurooq's Christmas Party

Christmas Poem

Dear friends of ours at Elgin High Church in Scotland have sent us this beautiful poem about Bethlehem that depicts a true picture about the current situation and thought we'd share it with you. It is sung to the usual tune for O little Town of Bethlehem.

O broken town of Bethlehem your people long for peace
But curfews, raids and barricades have brought them to their knees
Yet still they strive for justice and still they make their stand
Their hopes and fears echo down the years come heal this Holy Land.

O holy child of Bethlehem a royal refugee
Your place of birth, now hell on earth through our complicity
Innocents still suffer their backs against the wall
We see the curse, violence and worse and choose to ignore it all.

O holy streets of Bethlehem deserted and destroyed
Frightened faces fill sacred places pilgrims once enjoyed
Yet in the midst of darkness a hopeful beacon shines
Future lies in humble sacrifice and not in guns and mines.

O holy star of Bethlehem help us to watch and pray
With love and light shine on the night reveal the Kingdom's day
Lord, dare us to be angels your awesome truth to tell
It must be heard, you are The Word, Our Lord Emmanuel

We would like to seize the opportunity to wish you all a peaceful New Year 2007. May the Lord give you joy, tranquility and good health.

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED



The National Library For The Blind

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Quarterly Newsletter - Winter 2006

Dear Friends,

Especially with the coming of every New Year, our hopes and prayers for everlasting peace are renewed; a peace that would bring a bona fide change to the perpetual dour situation. Whenever we think we have reached our height of sufferings and matters could not possibly get worse, they do, and ultimately we find ways to adjust. Our resilience appears to be somehow expandable...

In addition to the daily killings, imprisonments, house demolitions and pain, approximately seventy percent of the Palestinian population is either unemployed or government employees who have not received their salaries for the last ten months, as a result of the restrictions imposed on the democratically elected Hamas government.

However, it is not only Hamas that is being affected, but people who didn't even vote for Hamas in the first place! For instance, three members of staff at our school have not been receiving their salaries, since they are paid by the Palestinian Ministry of Education.

Nevertheless, our heavenly father has continued to bless us and abundantly. He has helped us to progress in the care and education of our blind and visually impaired children. For without good education there will be no promising future.

Helena Shehadeh

The New Building

As you all know, the UNDP (United Nation Development Programme) has undertaken to build two floors out of the three of the permanent premises. The problem was that the allocated budget for our building project was three hundred thousand euros, and when doing the exact bill of quantities and cost estimation for the two floors that they intend to construct, it turned out that the allocated budget lacked fifty thousand euros.

We have come to an agreement with the UNDP representatives regarding the financing of the new building and struck a conditional deal. The UNDP would find a way to deliver the extra fifty thousand euros only if the Society finds a way to cover the remaining one hundred thousand euros required to complete the third floor of the building. So rather than the UNDP complete the two floors and hand us the key to move in and then us starting all over again with the construction of the third floor, we saw it fit that we find the remaining one hundred thousand euros and finish the whole building completely altogether.

The best part about the deal was that the construction of the new premises will start within the next couple of weeks and we might be able to move into the new school by the beginning of September 2007.

Building Fund

Some of you might remember we have established a 'Building Fund' this time last year (Newsletter Winter 2005) to support the construction of the new premises. Many of you dear friends and supporters have responded generously to our appeal. To date, we have received fifteen thousand two hundred euros towards the fund. We will contribute this amount as part of the one hundred thousand euros the society is required to provide towards the completion of the building.

We are quite certain that in one way or another the rest of the amount will be provided, for the Lord has always been with us and He has never failed us.

The Smiling Child Festival

An invitation has been extended and circulated by the Turkish Association of Spinal Cord Injuries to participate in an international festival entitled the Smiling Child Festival. It is for children between the ages of 9-15 and will be held from the 20-24th of April in Istanbul. Our Board of Trustees has agreed that it would be beneficial for our nine-year-olds to participate in such an international gathering and gain the experience of visiting another country. The accommodation is free and we are left with the traveling expenses. The traveling cost for seven children accompanied by three staff members is estimated between five to six thousand US dollars.

Christmas at Al-Shurooq

The place was bubbling with excitement in the children's anticipation for Christmas. Since mid November, all one could hear was the music of Christmas carols that both Lara and Shahd have taught themselves to play on recorders they received for their birthdays. The children have not had as many Christmas parties as previous years and have come to the conclusion that Santa has become poorer this year. We explained that Santa works for the government and has not been paid for quite some time!!

The YMCA-Jerusalem Christmas party took place on December the 17th. The party was very similar to last year's. The activities were the same and our children participated by singing two carols, one in English and a duet in Arabic. Needless to say how much this annual event is enjoyed and appreciated not merely by our own children, but by a couple of hundred other less fortunate children of the land.

The school's Christmas party took place on the 27th of December. We invited some of our friends and former pupils. We had a lovely Christmas lunch, followed by carol singing and ending with a visit from Santa which was, as always the highlight of the day.

Thank you for those who made the party possible.



Eagerly exploring the contents of the boxes

Library and Book Production

We managed to print out a few Braille books on our decrepit Braille printer. We are still looking for best offers and best use for a new Braille printer. Nevertheless, we have added to our collection seventy new titles and made six hundred copies.

Please note the change in our email address: info@nsfvh.org