



“Thank you for your witness  
of love and care for the needy.”  
– Dr. Walid Kerry,  
St. Luke's Hospital,  
Nablus

**Building Hope in Our Holy Land**

[www.afedj.org](http://www.afedj.org) • Fall 2017

## Your Support for Ahli Hospital Saves Lives in Gaza

Our car turned off a paved street in Gaza City and lurched onto a narrow dirt path. Several donkey carts and a group of curious children blocked the path. We were ready to start our tour of Malalha, one of the neighborhoods served by Ahli Hospital's Community Clinic.

We visit the Diocese of Jerusalem's Ahli Hospital in Gaza every year, but this was our first opportunity to visit several of the Community Based Organizations (CBO's) that operate in neighborhoods throughout Gaza and partner with Ahli to identify patients for Ahli's free Community Clinic.

Muyassar Hasanat, Director of the Roya Association, the CBO that serves Malalha, explained that people in the community know and trust her and her



A kitchen in the Malalha neighborhood of Gaza

volunteers. They visit families in their homes to identify people who need medical care. "People in this community are isolated. They don't know that free medical care is available to them at Ahli Hospital. They are shy and think it is inappropriate to ask for help," Muyassar told us. "Many children are sick from their environment. The paths flood with sewage

**"In Gaza's crisis, Ahli Hospital is a place of refuge and hope."**

and the water is contaminated. Some children and adults are still receiving care for injuries from the last war in Gaza. There are many children who suffer from trauma and need psycho-social therapy."

We visited two other CBO's that work in the Shajaya and Jabalia refugee camps. Like Roya Association, these CBO's serve desperately poor communities and their community outreach staff are mostly volunteers. Because the Gaza economy is so broken, many of the CBO volunteers

are college graduates who can't find jobs. Three of the volunteers we spoke with have advanced degrees – a lawyer, a journalist and a young man with a PhD in agronomy. They have no prospects for employment in their fields. They devote their days to helping in the poorest, most desperate communities.

Living conditions in all three communities are appalling. We asked the director of the Al-Sahel Association if she has hope. "Today is a peaceful day," she replied. "We're thankful and full of hope. Tomorrow... no one knows."



Muyassar Hasanat, Director of the Roya Association



Children of Malalha are served by Ahli's Community Clinic

Later we visited with Suhaila Tarazi, the director of Ahli Hospital. "It's best to bring patients to the hospital for good medical treatment. We need the CBO's to help us find the poorest of the poor. That is who we serve in our free medical mission," said Suhaila. She described Ahli's many

*continued on page two*

## Ahli Hospital *continued...*

challenges, including shortages of medical supplies, equipment and medicines. "Gaza is still under siege. All borders are closed. In Gaza's crisis, Ahli Hospital is a place of refuge and hope. Everyone who comes to Ahli for help is equal. We are living Christian values every day. People know this. They know that at Ahli they will be treated with dignity and respect. We are so thankful for the support that AFEDJ donors provide our Community Clinic. You allow us to provide free services. You allow us to be a place of hope."

You can help the families of Malalha, Shajaya and Jabalia. Please visit our website [www.afedj.org](http://www.afedj.org) and click on the Ahli Community Clinic campaign link. The need is great. You can make a difference. You can save a life in Gaza.



Al-Sahel Association's motto



Jabalia Camp boy at Ahli Clinic



Shajaya refugee camp

## "It's My Hope and Dream that There Will Be Peace"

Dr. Merrill Moore felt a call to mission as a young physician attending a Baptist conference. He learned of a need for surgeons at Ahli Hospital through what was then known as the Foreign Mission Board of the Baptist Church. In no time, Merrill and his wife Patty were enrolled in Arabic classes. In 1964 they began their mission of service to the poor and suffering in Gaza and their up-close experience of world-changing events in the Middle East.

Merrill served in emergency medicine at Ahli from 1964 – 1977. Patty was an education major in college and she home-schooled their two children in Gaza. Merrill maintains his connection to Ahli Hospital as a faithful and generous AFEDJ donor.

The people Ahli hospital served in those years aren't that different from today. "There were people with wealth in Gaza when we were there," said Merrill. "But Ahli ministered to the poor. The hospital was known then as a place where they'd get respectful, dignified and quality medical care."

### "We need to make sure the hospital stays open to relieve suffering"

The Middle East and Gaza were rocked in June, 1967 as the Six Day War changed the political landscape of the region forever. Patty and the children were evacuated to Beirut, then Ankara and finally to Rome, where they stayed for three weeks. Merrill's emergency room was overwhelmed by people needing care for wounds and hundreds of people made the Ahli compound their refuge. Water supplies were strained making surgery difficult. "We were hit by bombs and mortar fire," recalls Merrill. "The Lord had a hand in preserving Ahli. It was damaged but not out of business."

Reflecting on conditions in Gaza and the challenges facing Ahli Hospital today, Merrill tries to find hope. "It's an inspiration to see Suhaila Tarazi in charge. Her father was one of our Arabic teachers and I served with her sister Sylvia who is a surgeon. It's my hope and dream that there will be peace in Gaza. There have been so many missed opportunities. I'm afraid that true peace requires greater sacrifices than either side is willing to make. We need to make sure the hospital stays open to relieve suffering. We need to do all we can to support their work."

Merrill Moore and his son in 1972 at excavations in Ashkelon, Israel





# AN INSIDE LOOK

## Your Gifts Are Transforming Schneller School

So many of you have responded to the needs of Schneller School with generous gifts. You're giving hope to the region's most needy children – Palestinian refugees, orphans and young people from families who struggle to support them. These children are receiving a solid academic education, practical vocational training and a safe, secure place to live.

Some of our best moments visiting Schneller last year were watching spirited soccer games on the school's dirt playing field. Clouds of dust billowed up from the field as children raced after the ball, dodging patches of tall weeds. We can't wait to return to Jordan to watch soccer games on the school's new turf field. The Schneller School teachers, staff and students, and all of us at AFEDJ, are grateful for the generous support of the Harold C. Smith Foundation to this transformative project. The Foundation's gift has given these energetic children a

safe, modern playing field – truly their field of dreams.

Schneller School sits in the middle of Marka, Jordan, a gritty, dusty town where families have little. Yet, Marka has an abundance of one important resource – sunshine. Three hundred and twenty days a year of sun! Schneller School has recently completed Phase 1 of their

### Your gifts touch the lives of orphans and refugee children in Jordan

solar energy project. Phase 2 is in the planning stage. When completed, the Schneller solar project will power the entire campus and allow Fr. Khalid Friej, the school's director, to add some needed improvements such as air conditioning in the student dormitories, the school's offices and the computer lab.

Schneller classrooms were dilapidated and outdated. Broken chairs and desks. Drab walls in need of paint. Broken floor tiles. Dim lighting. With your help, Schneller students returned to bright new classrooms this fall. New wiring and recessed lighting. New flooring, desks, chairs and curtains. Refurbished windows, walls, ceilings. What a huge difference you've made by giving these children and their teachers updated, welcoming learning environments.

There are still so many projects Schneller School needs your help to complete. At the top of the list are phase two of the solar project and renovation of dormitories for the boarding students. Please visit our donation page at [www.afedj.org](http://www.afedj.org). Your gift of any size will help continue the transformation of this vital school serving children that need and deserve your help.



Classrooms before and after renovation.

*Thank you for your help in creating bright, new learning spaces!*

Schneller's playing field before and after installation of the new turf.

*Your gifts turned it into a field of dreams!*



Photovoltaic panels on Schneller School roofs will power the entire campus.

## Message from the Chairman

### You Are All Evangelists

Dear Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem,  
It is an honor and a privilege for me to serve as Board Chair, following the retirement of my friend and colleague, Bishop Barry Howe.

I came on the board about five years ago at the invitation of Phoebe Griswold. I had just returned from my first visit to the Holy Land and shared with her my desire to be more involved supporting our Christian brothers and sisters there. She told me how the American Friends were a group of able, committed people who shared my interest. As is always the case with Phoebe, she was right!

### "Our work of healing is needed now more than ever"

That does not mean that we don't face challenges. The needs of the Diocese are staggering, while in this country the political climate is hardly conducive to helping any Arab peoples, even when they are Christians!

That is why it is only right that the first thing I do as your new Board Chair is thank you, our donors. What has impressed me already is the willingness that so many of you have to not only make your own generous gift, but also to tell others you know about the Diocese of Jerusalem's work. The word we use for that in church is "evangelism," and it means "sharing the good news." In our case the "good news" centers around mothers learning to better care for their children, young people mastering a trade that will support them for life, the deaf and blind learning to find acceptance, and people of all ages and all faiths finding physical and mental healing in hospitals and clinics. You all share in that good news. You are all evangelists.

I look forward to working with you and the Board to creatively continue this mission. Our work of healing and reconciliation is needed now more than ever, and I ask for your continued support and prayers.

+ Kirk S. Smith

The Rt. Rev. Kirk Stevan  
Smith, Bishop of the  
Episcopal Diocese of  
Arizona



## A Pilgrim's Journey Sally Rhett Roberts

By Lynn Lantz

"My pilgrimage to the Holy Land is one of the most wonderful trips I have ever made in my life," says Californian Sally Rhett Roberts, about her 2014 pilgrimage. "I felt elated while I was there, but then also very sad."



Sally and her husband are former teachers, so in addition to visiting the ancient holy sites, she was also interested in the present day culture, education in particular. Sally's sadness came from the extreme inequality that she saw all around her. "The lack of opportunities for Palestinian Christians and Muslims is part of what has caused so much conflict and hopelessness. Education offers these people hope, but they need access to good education. Equal education for Palestinians, and now thousands of refugees in our Holy Land, is not a reality. The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem serves so many families and children, including many Christian refugees who have left Syria. I saw first-hand that the Diocese is working hard to offer quality schools and vocational training for all Palestinians and refugees," Sally elaborated.

### Lack of opportunities is part of what has caused so much conflict and hopelessness

On this particular pilgrimage, Sally's Palestinian tour guide arranged for pilgrims to attend a celebration and dinner at the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School in Ramallah. "Seeing that school reminded me that while every child in the Holy Land deserves to learn in such a caring place, most of them don't have the opportunity," Sally said. Even so, her experience was incredibly moving. She said that the program was full of beautiful children and teenagers who sang in Arabic and English, danced, and played musical instruments. Teachers and parents proudly clapped and cheered for these students. Seeing up close what the Diocese of Jerusalem was accomplishing motivated Sally.

Years earlier, Sally's family had established a foundation whose mission is to strengthen educational opportunities for those in need. She adds, "The first step for our foundation before donating, is to ask what is needed. Because AFEDJ works so closely with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, it is in an excellent position to identify and fulfill the most crucial needs. They know better than I do what their schools and institutions need the most."

Before going on this journey to the Holy Land, Sally admits, "Some part of me was hoping a bright light would shine down on me... but it didn't." Or did it? Since 2014, Sally and her family's foundation have faithfully helped to provide quality education for hundreds of children in Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem schools.

This energetic and caring pilgrim says it best, "As Christians we have a responsibility to care for our fellow Christians and neighbors everywhere."



## Lives You've Touched

Waseem Wasaya knew he was not getting closer to his dream of becoming a software coder. His school in Ramallah offered a watered down academic curriculum and, as Waseem told us, "I knew I couldn't live my dream if I stayed there. The school was more about the teachers than about us kids."

A year later Waseem was enrolled in the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center (ETVTC) in Ramallah, taking courses in math, physics, engineering and advanced coding. He graduated last spring with the school's highest marks on the national matriculation exam, the *tawjihi*, and just started his first year as a computer engineering student at Birzeit University in the West Bank.



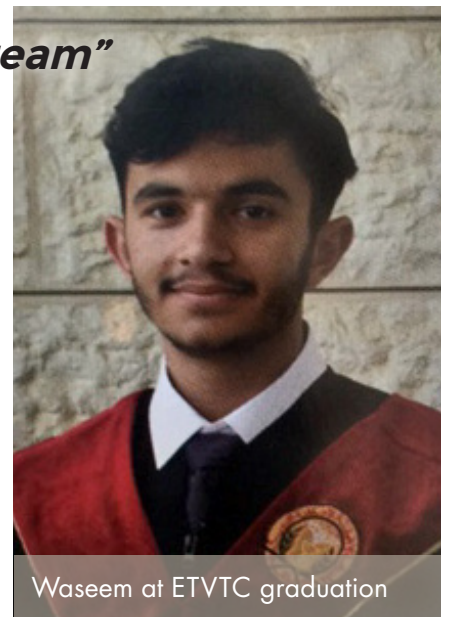
## "I want to live my dream"

We spoke with Waseem late last spring about living in Ramallah and how ETVTC changed his life. "Ramallah is the only place I've lived," Waseem said. "We have no freedom of movement. But we don't give up. We are always trying to achieve more. That's why it was so important for me to attend ETVTC."

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**"We need people everywhere to believe in us"**  
.....

"My teachers at ETVTC are like brothers. They really care about students. They want us to succeed. At my old school, all we did was memorize facts. At ETVTC our learning is practical and hands-on. My programming teacher Rabee Jarara said that our studies must be connected to our future."

Waseem is thankful for everyone who supports ETVTC and its students. "We need your support," said Waseem. "We are ambitious for our country. We need people everywhere to believe in us. When our teachers tell us that Americans are helping our school, it means so much to us. It is important to know that you have our backs."



Waseem at ETVTC graduation

Waseem says  
**"Thank You!"**

Your gift will give an ETVTC student like Waseem an opportunity to live his or her dream. A full year's tuition costs \$2,300. Please give generously.

## Celebrate St. Nicholas Day, December 6th

Connect the spirit of St. Nicholas, patron saint of needy children, with needy children in the Holy Land today. The real St. Nicholas, a Bishop in the Middle East in the 4th century, gave all he had to the poor, the sick and the suffering. If you're searching for ways to put more meaning into the frantic Christmas season, start a new tradition celebrating St. Nicholas and giving to needy children in the place where Jesus lived and taught.

Encourage the children in your congregation to give to children in the Holy Land who need their help. AFEDJ will send you a supply of special Diocese of Jerusalem mite boxes. Please email [bwilson@afedj.org](mailto:bwilson@afedj.org) to request your FREE mite boxes.

Visit [www.afedj.org](http://www.afedj.org) and click St. Nicholas Day to find alternative Christmas gifts, pageants, cookie recipes, costume patterns, games and ideas for making your celebration a fun day for all.

Order prayer cards, stickers, coloring books, cookie cutters, St. Nicholas costume components and full activity kits from the amazing St. Nicholas Center website [www.stnicholascenter.org](http://www.stnicholascenter.org).





# AFEDJ

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Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

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Address Correction Requested



Lina is malnourished and  
needs your help

## Take a Tour of Ahli Hospital in Gaza

Ahli Hospital, in the center of Gaza City, is a haven of peace and hope in one of the world's most troubled areas. Most families in Gaza lack insurance and can't pay for health services. Ahli Hospital's free Community Clinic is their only source of medical care. The hospital treats everyone and turns no one away.

Visit our home page [www.afedj.org](http://www.afedj.org) to view a new video about Ahli's life-changing ministry. While you're there, you can make a gift to help Ahli Community Clinic continue to serve the poor, the sick and the suffering in Gaza. Thank you for meeting the challenge. Ahli can't continue to operate without your help.



*Your friendship, prayers and financial support help us sustain our mission and ministry through the parish work and through our schools, hospitals and institutions for people with special needs.  
Thank you!*

*– The Most Revd Suheil S. Dawani, Archbishop in Jerusalem*



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