



“We look to the future with great hope knowing we are providing high quality education to our deaf and deaf-blind students.”
– Archdeacon Luay Haddad
Holy Land Institute for the Deaf
Salt, Jordan

Building Hope in the Holy Land

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Saviour's School: a safe haven for empowering a “can do generation” of girls

In Zarka, the second largest city in Jordan, the tensions and economic strain of a vast influx of Syrian refugees often cause families under financial stress to choose to educate their sons but pull their daughters from school.

But at Saviour's School, a K-12 school of 302 students operated by the Diocese of Jerusalem, General Director Dua'a Bisharat and her teachers work hard to keep the girls enrolled on track to graduate and take their place as equal members of society.

Recently Bisharet talked with us about the opportunities open to girls upon graduation, “Acceptance of women in the workforce is limited due to societal attitudes. With the lack of domestic helpers, public transportation, and a low minimum wage of 250 Jordanian Dinars a month (\$360 USD), even educated women feel it makes more sense to stay at home and serve the family.”

Earlier this year the World Bank's Global Gender Gap report ranked Jordan 51 out of 144 countries for educational attainment. Literacy rates are almost identical (99.8 for men, 99.7 for women), as is primary school enrollment at 98 percent for boys and 96 percent for girls. While enrollment of girls in secondary school falls off to 86 percent – to boys' 89 percent – girls perform better than boys in almost all subjects.

The report pinpoints the disconnect between high educational attainment and low socioeconomic power. Gender inequality emerges in Jordan's rank in economic participation and opportunity for women: 138 out of 144 countries studied. Jordanian women make up only



Girl students built strong relationships with one another and their teachers at Saviour's School

15.3 percent of the workforce. Traditional societal norms frown on women entering the workforce and participating in the political process. Women are encouraged to marry early and, if they do enter the workforce, to seek positions in sectors such as education and healthcare that are regarded as appropriate for women.

“We work extensively with our girl students to provide them with the kind of nurturing and encouragement a girl needs to become all that she can and wants to be in the future.”

In a co-ed school like Saviour's, which currently enrolls 91 girls and 211 boys, the opportunity exists to teach girls and boys, from a very young age, to value a society where both genders enjoy equal access to education, employment, and economic and political opportunity. The rise in girls' aspirations and confidence

will only be fully realized when their male classmates view them as equal partners.

“We work extensively with our girl students to provide them with the kind of nurturing and encouragement a girl needs to become all that she can and wants to be in the future,” Bisharat explained, “We give them the courage and experience in school to face the challenges ahead. They are the can-do generation, and we offer them the education which will allow their leadership skills and personalities to strengthen and blossom.”



Christena, a junior at Saviour's, when asked about why getting a good education is important, replied, “It is important because a good education is the base for my success and the success of other girls within our society. It opens lots of opportunities for all, and is the basis for our future self-determination and independence.” She added, “It sharpens our personal character and strengthens our positive attitude towards the world we live in.”

Under the guidance of Dua'a Bisharat and the teachers at Saviour's School, even the youngest students have attained the confidence that the World Bank report suggests is necessary for women to take their equal place in society. Raneem, also a junior, dismissed the notion of inequality, “Boys and girls are treated the same at our school. There is no difference between us.” When asked about her own aspirations, she said, “I want to study at the university and reach my goal to be a dentist.”

continued on page two

Saviour's School *continued...*

Christena, on the other hand, hopes to become a language teacher, focusing on translation or media. Her appreciation for the education she has received at Saviour's is clear: "With God's will, the first report I want to make will be to tell the story of our school."



Raneem, Nagham, Noor, and Christena with their English teacher Muna Abulail

Over the years support from AFEDJ donors has allowed many students, through tuition scholarships, to avail themselves of the excellent education offered by Saviour's School. Making additional scholarship funds

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"I want to study at the university and reach my goal to be a dentist."
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available for girls who might otherwise be denied a secondary education and the chance to thrive is an urgent need. Please consider an ongoing gift to allow more promising young women to benefit from an education that brightens their future and opens pathways to their contributions to the wider community.

How to help:

Provide a scholarship for one student for \$2,500 per year

Underwrite books and uniforms for one student for \$300 per year

Capital projects: Replace aging plumbing system; Construct a playground; Replace substandard classroom desks and chairs.

Contact John Lent at jlent@afedj.org to learn more about specific projects to support the educational program at Saviour's School.

Meet Carol Myers, AFEDJ donor: Believer in the triumph of justice, the power St. Nicholas' message, and the importance of keeping the lights on

AFEDJ staff and volunteers caught up with Carol Myers on the exhibit floor of the Episcopal Church's General Convention held in Austin, Texas, in July. She staffed a neighboring booth promoting the work and resources of the St. Nicholas Center.

Carol, with her husband David, a long-time psychology professor at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, are donors to AFEDJ through the David and Carol Myers Foundation.

AFEDJ: You've spoken about your interest in and concern for the well-being of the Palestinian people. How did your interest in and compassion for Palestinians begin?

CM: Years ago I heard a missionary from the area speak about the injustice in the region, and I've had a heart for Palestinian people ever since. The reality is so different than what is so often reported in our country.

AFEDJ: What worries you about the future of the Palestinians? What gives you hope?

CM: Our government's current stance towards the Israel/Palestinian situation is of great concern along with the rise of sectarian nationalism within Israel. Hope? I try to believe that the great arc of history bends toward justice and freedom for all people. And, as the Episcopal part of the Jesus Movement, it is our responsibility to be a part of God's work on earth to make that happen.

AFEDJ: What motivates you to give generously to AFEDJ?

CM: I support AFEDJ because they support such important humanitarian work in the Middle East. Work that particularly benefits Palestinians who have so few options. AFEDJ provides vital essential services—medical care, education, support for children with disabilities—that would simply not be available otherwise.

AFEDJ: Your foundation supports the general operating expenses of the organizations you fund. Can you explain your thinking behind this approach to philanthropy?

CM: Having served on many boards, I know that the most valuable money for any organization is undesignated. Someone has to pay for the utilities! A stable organizational base is what enables the wonderful special projects we all care about.

AFEDJ: You are passionate about St. Nicholas and work hard to promote understanding of his work and influence. Why do you work hard to help people know and care about him?

CM: St. Nicholas is really a model for living as faithful Christian people. He fulfilled the two great commandments by truly loving God and neighbor. Everything he did grew out of his faith, and he cared for those who were the most vulnerable: children, women, the unjustly imprisoned, and those suffering from famine. He truly is a saint for justice. Knowing and understanding St. Nicholas also helps Advent and Christmas focus on Jesus, as he always points to Jesus. This helps us think of others more than ourselves and our immediate families in the holiday season. So, the St. Nicholas Center offers all the resources, freely, for families, churches, and schools to understand and celebrate this very special saint.

For resources and activity kits to help celebrate the story and ministry of St. Nicholas, visit www.stnicholascenter.org or visit the "Resources" tab at www.afedj.org.



Harold C. Smith Foundation gifts “live it” by transforming children’s lives across Jordan

In 1860, Johann Schneller, a German missionary, founded a home in Jerusalem for boys who lost their parents in the conflict between the Christians and the Druze, with his son Theodor taking over in 1889. One legacy of the original “Syrian Orphanage” is the Theodor Schneller School in Amman, Jordan, where impoverished children, some of whom come from families broken apart by the current war in Syria, are welcomed, cared for, and offered an education.

The philanthropy and compassion that guided the founding of the Schneller School remains alive in the work of the Harold C. Smith Foundation, whose founder, the Rev. Dr. Harold C. Smith, weaved a 40-year career in both ministry and finance.

In the spring of 2018, Nancy Opalack, the CEO of the foundation, announced a transformative grant award of more than \$500,000 to three institutions in Jordan operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: \$180,000 to renovate student bathrooms and kitchenettes in eight dorms and renovate and equip a new science lab at the Schneller School; \$170,000 to provide full annual financial support for the cohort of 12 deaf-blind

students at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt; and \$161,000 to renovate elementary-level classrooms and fund full annual costs for 14 low-vision students at Saviour’s School in Zarka.

Opalack said of the award and the foundation’s relationship with AFEDJ, “There are no better organizations to partner with. We are honored to support the Diocese of Jerusalem with AFEDJ.”

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The impact of these gifts on the students at these three schools is immeasurable. An aging infrastructure in the dormitories at Schneller School resulted in bathrooms and living spaces that were worn out, unsafe, and difficult to repair. For children who have lost so much, the improvements to the place they now call home is crucial to fostering their well-being and ability to learn.

The news that a portion of the grant would cover the costs of all blind-deaf students at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf was met with surprise and awe by HLID Executive Director Archdeacon Luay Haddad, “This morning when I opened my computer, I was amazed to read the good news,” he said. “We look to the future with great hope, knowing each day we are making significant strides to providing better and higher quality education for our deaf and deaf-blind students and their families.”

Dua’a Bisharat, director of Saviour’s School, had a similar response, “I was very much thrilled when I heard the news of the generous gift! It will not only further assist in achieving educational and career goals for our visually-impaired students but will increase their chances of success.”

Smith, who died in 2017, put it this way, “We must be able to move out of our theological disciplines to engage, confront, and attempt to shape the world or any little piece of the world we might be able to shape or influence.” He added, “We’re going to live it. We’re not going to preach it.”

It’s likely the Schnellers would agree.



Ms Khadijeh, the head of HLID’s deaf-blind unit, and Nancy Opalack, CEO of the Harold C. Smith Foundation



Teacher and blind-deaf student at Holy Land Institute for the Deaf



Blind students at St. Saviour’s School learn to use a braille typewriter



Before and after photos of bathrooms and kitchenettes at Schneller School



St. Luke's Hospital in Nablus: So much is riding on a new ambulance

Do you remember which year the Space Shuttle Columbia exploded? When Mr. Rogers died? The Human Genome Project wrapped up? *Finding Nemo* was released? Californians elected Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor?

The answer for all these questions: 2003.

That was also the year that St. Luke's Hospital put an ambulance in service to provide emergency transport for thousands of patients in Nablus and the surrounding towns and governorates. In 2017 alone, according St. Luke's Director Dr. Walid Kerry, the hospital was called upon to make more than 2,100 emergency trips.

The vehicle's wear and tear after 15 years of daily use, breakdowns and disruption of service required St. Luke's to divert an additional 2,000 calls to other medical service providers to ensure the safe transport of patients to treatment.

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However, not until this year, when the Palestinian Ministry of Health announced tighter standards in its annual hospital accreditation review, did the liability of using an aging ambulance rise to the level of concern. The Ministry of Health requires each hospital to demonstrate that it can deploy a well-equipped, safe, and operational ambulance as a condition for annual accreditation. No safe and operational ambulance? No accreditation. No hospital.

For the people in the five governorates



Both the years and the mileage have taken a toll on St. Luke's ambulance

of northern Palestine – Nablus, Tubas, Salfit, Qalquiya, and Tulkarem – who seek care at St. Luke's because it offers the region the highest level of patient care – the possibility of losing access to medical treatment due to an elderly ambulance is frightening. For donors of AFEDJ, who have been long-time supporters of the mission of St. Luke's by providing for nurses' salaries and staffing clinics in outlying villages, the prospect of St. Luke's losing its accreditation should be of deep concern.

Other services are also vulnerable: St. Luke's ambulance offers the best possible medical transportation of patients who are referred for MRIs or advanced CT scans in Ramallah and elsewhere.

A new Volkswagen van is listed at \$59,000. The conversion process, estimated at \$20,000, emergency equipment and supplies – \$28,000 – and about \$4,000 in insurance and licensing fees, bring the total cost to \$110,000. The price tag on a new ambulance dwarfs the cost of losing safe and reliable medical transport and, because of lost accreditation, access to a wide range of services provided by a crucial institution serving thousands of people in the region.

Remember, \$110,000 may sound like a lot, but it's only \$82,847 in 2003 dollars.

We are grateful for your help. Visit www.afedj.org to make your donation.

A Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Pilgrimage in general, and to the Holy Land in particular, has long been an important spiritual practice for Christians. Many who are followers in Jesus' way have felt themselves spiritually strengthened by going to the places associated with his life. That is not in any way because the risen Lord is somehow more present in such places; the ordinary places of our lives are no less privileged places of encounter with God. But—as many of us will affirm—to experience the landscape of Jesus' story, with hearts that seek to know him, and in the company of faithful companions—this can be a something truly transformative. "Life-changing" is indeed a phrase one often hears from pilgrims. That is especially true when they seek active engagement with the Church that is living and active there today.

Many of us who are committed to the mission of the schools and hospitals in Diocese of Jerusalem – and to the friendships we have forged among those who serve there – live that commitment out of an experience of pilgrimage. That is why AFEDJ constantly encourages all who are able to make a pilgrimage. But we also strongly insist that not just any tour will do: there must be connection to Christians doing Christ's work in the Holy Land here and now.

We also affirm that those who cannot make an actual pilgrimage can still live as pilgrims and join us in grounding this personal spiritual practice in the reality of the Church's life and work in the Holy Land today. Together we are forming a friendship that does great good and is a blessing to many – not least ourselves!

Yours in such friendship,

+Barry

The Rt. Rev. Barry Beisner, AFEDJ Chair
Bishop of the Diocese of Northern California



Bishop Beisner with students at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf

Cuts in U.S. aid jeopardize healthcare services to our most vulnerable brothers and sisters

Since the announcement in September that the U.S. Government planned to cut \$200 million in aid to UNRWA, the United Nations' agency dedicated to providing humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees, and the news the following week of \$25 million in cuts in direct aid to support hospitals affiliated with the East Jerusalem Hospital Network, we have been tracking the implications of those cuts on the institutions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, particularly Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza City and the Princess Basma Center for Disabled Children in East Jerusalem.

While in recent weeks many European Union countries, as well as Japan, China, and Qatar, among others, have stepped up by pledging to address the shortfall, the impacts of the cuts could have devastating impacts on all sectors of society. Many thousands of vulnerable Palestinians, including women and children – particularly those in Gaza – are already experiencing the effects of these sweeping cuts.

Ahli Arab Hospital, Gaza

By early October Ahli Arab Hospital (AAH) in Gaza felt the effects on two fronts: In addition to seeing monthly support from UNRWA drop from the contracted figure of \$54,000 to a maximum of \$14,000, a three-year,

\$900,000 joint project between AAH and USAID-funded agencies that subsidize medical care to refugees was defunded. The elimination of two major funding sources at once has forced the reduction of direct services to patients and triggered staff lay-offs. The trickle-down effect of layoffs will seep into all levels of Gazan society and economic life.

Princess Basma Center, East Jerusalem

The Princess Basma Center, one of the few institutions to provide rehabilitation and medical treatment to children with disabilities and their families in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, was already on tenuous financial footing because of overdue payments from the Ministry of Health. The \$25 million in cuts in aid to the East Jerusalem Hospital Network will compound its shortfalls and further impede the Center's ability to provide critical services to children and their families. Particularly vulnerable is the service that provides newly-identified children and their mothers with an intensive two-week residential therapy program. As many as 500 children are in jeopardy of losing services if the funding shortfall is not addressed.

Archbishop Suheil Dawani recently spoke frankly about his grave concerns,

"If we don't act immediately and shift gears to find other means of support and subsidy to our affected diocesan Institutions, I can't perceive how we can sustain and support them with the limited resources we have. I am very much concerned and afraid that cutting off all American assistance, mostly in humanitarian aid, has hobbled the aid agencies that receive the funds, and more consequently, crippled the lives of Palestinians who continue to live in dire need and have fewer employment prospects now more than ever. This is unfair and beneath our compassion."

"As many as 500 children are in jeopardy of losing services"

Your gifts provide critical support to the humanitarian organizations that serve Palestinians in need of medical care, rehabilitative services, and education. All of you who have visited the Diocese of Jerusalem provide people hope with your presence. Thank you for all you do. Please consider helping again with a recurring gift of any size. Your support is needed now more than ever. Donate at www.afedj.org.

Read Archbishop Dawani's full letter at www.afedj.org



Mothers waiting outside Ahli Hospital for treatment



Princess Basma Center offers the only program serving autistic Palestinian children in Palestine, Israel, and Jordan.



AFEDJ

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Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

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Address Correction Requested

"If we don't act immediately and shift gears to find other means of support and subsidy to our affected Diocesan Institutions, I can't perceive how we can sustain and support them with the limited resources we have, ... I am very much concerned and afraid that cutting off all American economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people is unfair and beneath our compassion."



The Most Rev. Suheil Dawani,
Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

See our update on U.S. cuts in aid on page 5.

How a bucket list trip becomes a legacy

Karen Telleen-Lawton of Santa Barbara, California, regarded her first trip to the Holy Land in 2005 as an opportunity to enjoy some quality time with her parents and check an item off her bucket-list. But Jerusalem grabbed her! After another trip with pilgrims from the Diocese of Los Angeles in 2007, she and her husband David organized two subsequent pilgrimages for members of their parish, All Saints-by-the-Sea, including pre-trip discussions and post-trip reports to share their experiences.

For Karen and David, including AFEDJ in their estate planning is a natural move.

"AFEDJ is kind of a three-for-the-price-of-one cause for us. Our Christian faith is important to us, so it resonates with us to make a gift supporting Christianity's birthplace – and the "living stones" of Christianity. We are also interested in supporting causes of justice in the world, which motivates us to give in support of the plight of Palestinians of all creeds. Finally, we believe it is imperative to support the earth's fragile environment. Where there is conflict about land, water, and air rights, the environment takes a back seat. Our hope is that including AFEDJ in our estate planning will support peace, justice, and health in the Middle East."

To learn more about making a planned gift to AFEDJ and becoming a member of the Jerusalem Saints Legacy Society, contact John Lent at jlent@afedj.org



Karen and David were joined by their son Timothy on a 2011 pilgrimage.



We've received a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, which means we're accountable, transparent, and financially healthy!

Sign up for the AFEDJ e-newsletter
and give securely online at www.afedj.org