

PRINCESS BASMA CENTER FOR DISABLED CHILDREN, EAST JERUSALEM

Opened in 1965 to serve families whose children were affected by polio, Princess Basma Center has expanded its mission to treat and empower children with a wide range of disabilities and offer support to their families by providing an array of therapies and rehabilitation services, a residential program for mothers and children, adult physical therapy, and a sheltered vocational workshop for adults with disabilities. The Center was directed for 30 years by Mrs. Betty Majaj, a visionary leader who built up the Center's services and launched the first Inclusive School in Palestine in 1987.

The Center also runs an academic K-12 inclusive school. Of the more than 400 students enrolled, nearly 40% are children with disabilities. The school is a model for creating inclusive education programs that can be replicated in schools across the West Bank to provide children with disabilities equal educational opportunities.

With its accreditation from the Joint Commission International for Ambulatory Care, Princess Basma serves as a clinical placement site for graduate students in physical, speech, and occupational therapy as well as social work.

In 2011 Princess Basma Center launched the first and only classroom and therapeutic services available to Palestinian children with autism. As part of its mission, the Center works to advocate for children with disabilities and their families and raise awareness in the wider community about the rights of the disabled.



AT A GLANCE

Princess Basma Center for Disabled Children

- + Ibrahim Faltas, Director
- + In 1987 opened an inclusive K-12 academic school where children with disabilities learn side-by-side with non-disabled students.
- + The only comprehensive program for autistic children open to Palestinian families
- + 416 students are enrolled in the inclusive school
- + Since 2018 Princess Basma Center has been greatly affected by U.S. cuts in aid to the East Jerusalem Hospital Network



*I came here feeling ashamed,
and I leave here feeling strong.*

— A mother who with her daughter participated in the residential Mother's Empowerment Program

SERVICES PROVIDED

- Inclusive education for disabled and non-disabled K-12
- Physical therapy
- Hydrotherapy
- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Music therapy
- Dedicated program for children with autism
- Sheltered vocational workshop and community for adults with disabilities
- Psycho-social support for mothers and families
- Advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities

The inclusive school allows mainstreamed students to benefit from expert therapy during their school day without needing to travel to a separate clinic.



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