



AFEDJ

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Bearing Witness

A Journey with Holy Land Christians

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM MINISTRIES

Rehabilitation Centers

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM MINISTRIES:

REHABILITATION CENTERS

“It’s part of our duty to walk in Jesus’ footsteps. And to walk in Jesus’ footsteps we need to walk with other people, especially with the needy, especially with people with disabilities, especially those who are marginalized by the society and by the community.”

– The Rev. Wadie Far

Stories of Jesus’ care for the marginalized and his frequent crossing of social boundaries to associate with the outcast fill the Gospels. It is at the margins of society where unwelcome outsiders and handicapped individuals are often stigmatized, rejected, and forgotten. The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem offers healing and grace to all – no matter their religion, ethnicity, or economic status. The Diocese offers love for neighbor by showing mercy to all.

It’s important for all to notice and understand the needs of people who live on the margins of our communities, who are treated as invisible or unlovely because of how they look or who they are or where they come from. Jesus clearly notices and loves them and calls us to do the same. What matters to Jesus should matter to us. The Diocese of Jerusalem bears witness to the power of Jesus’ love through its ministries that serve children and young people with disabilities.

Many children with disabilities in the region served by the Diocese of Jerusalem are isolated and excluded from society and their communities. They are often unable to learn, socialize, play, and enjoy life. Their right to proper care, adequate nutrition, quality health services, and education are frequently denied or deemed a low priority.

Often, the most significant barrier in the Middle East to rehabilitation and inclusion of children and young people with disabilities are the negative attitudes and stereotypes they encounter. Stigma associated with disabilities often moves families and communities to keep children with disabilities hidden, cutting them off from vital rehabilitation and education services.

The sad fact is that in this region of the world, education typically is not inclusive or accessible, so children with disabilities often cannot go to school in their communities and learn alongside their peers without disabilities. Parents and caregivers of children with disabilities do not receive education and support to raise their children. And children with disabilities do not all have access to rehabilitation services and therapy, including psychosocial support, that they need to live productive lives.



Jerusalem Princess Basma Center (JPBC)

Mission: The Jerusalem Princess Basma Center works to promote the integration and empowerment of children with disabilities and their families by providing quality physical rehabilitation and inclusive education, developing best practices, and influencing policy and legislation. The Center stands out as a unique institution in Palestine in two ways. First, JPBC is the only rehabilitation center in the area where all necessary services are available under one roof, which allows families to access care for their children without having to navigate arduous travel restrictions. Second, by combining direct services with advocacy work and technical assistance for other Palestinian organizations, JPBC builds capacity across all of Palestine to serve children with disabilities.

JPBC offers a comprehensive rehabilitation program for children with disabilities and their families to ensure children can participate fully in school, with their families, and in their communities. The program serves more than 1,300 children annually, who have a wide range of physical and cognitive disabilities.

JPBC provides technical assistance to partner rehabilitation centers across the West Bank through its Outreach Program. In 2021, more than 900 children with disabilities received assessments as part of the Outreach Program, through 160 visits by JPBC staff to partner clinics and health centers.

Location: Mount of Olives, East Jerusalem

Founded: Founded in 1965 with support from Princess Basma bint Talal, sister of the late King Hussein and aunt of Jordan's current king – Abdullah II.

Serves: 1,300 children and families in the Rehabilitation Center; 453 students enrolled in the Inclusive School, and hundreds of children and families through the Outreach Program.



The Reality:

Children with disabilities and their families in Palestine face myriad hurdles in obtaining proper rehabilitation services and education. Funding from the Palestinian government is way below the levels required. There are not enough trained professionals who can care for and teach children with disabilities. Travel restrictions make it difficult for mothers and children living in the West Bank to travel to East Jerusalem to participate in programs and care for their disabled children.

Responding to the Reality:

JPBC's Inclusive School, established in 1987, provides children with disabilities the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers to gain a high-quality education. The school serves over 400 students each year – 33% are children with various disabilities. The school is a model for K-12 inclusive education, where children with disabilities study side-by-side with children without disabilities. Children with disabilities at the school receive comprehensive rehabilitation services and psychological support.

JPBC offers a comprehensive rehabilitation program for thousands of children with disabilities and their families. A signature program of the Center is the Mother Empowerment Program – a two- to three-week residential program that provides intensive, individualized early interventions to children with a wide range of cognitive and physical disabilities. Parents act as “shadow therapists” to learn how to help their children develop at home. Parents also receive psychosocial support and educational workshops on health issues related to disabilities and the rights of children with disabilities. The program serves 400 families annually with 15-19 mothers and their children in residence at a time.

Holy Land Institute for the Deaf (HLID)

Mission: The Holy Land Institute for the Deaf enables deaf, hearing-impaired, and deaf-blind children and young adults, as well as those with other sensory and physical disabilities, to acquire the academic, vocational, communication, and interpersonal skills to live productive lives as independently as possible. HLID prepares these disabled children and youth to participate, in meaningful ways, in the lives of their families and communities and to make their own valuable contributions to civic society in the Middle East. The school's vision statement states: “We believe in a world in which all are seen as equal, both in the eyes of people as well as of the Creator, the Lord our God.” HLID offers:

- A full range of therapeutic services for hearing-impaired, deaf, and deaf-blind students
- A K-12 academic boarding program
- A wide range of vocational training in woodworking, weaving, hospitality and culinary arts, barbering, mosaics, and sewing
- An auditory clinic for members of the Salt community
- Clinics for children with disabilities in three Syrian refugee camps, offering diagnostic services, treatment, and awareness activities

Location: Salt, Jordan

Founded: Founded in 1964, the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf was the first school for the deaf in Jordan and remains the leading institution for deaf and deaf-blind education in the Middle East.

Serves: 100 deaf, deaf-blind, and hearing-impaired students



The Reality:

Social stigma against children with disabilities still exists in Jordan. While social acceptance of children with physical disabilities has started to slowly improve over the last decade, people with disabilities still face severe discrimination. The reality is that people with disabilities are still regularly treated as subjects of charity rather than as independent people deserving of the support they need to lead productive lives. Teacher preparation and professional development are major challenges, especially for teachers of deaf children in Jordan. Just 6% of Jordanian teachers who work with deaf and deaf-blind students have specialized training in the field.

Responding to the Reality:

HLID's campus is a beautiful, calm oasis in the middle of the dusty, gritty city of Salt. The instructional facilities are state-of-the-art and provide whatever learning tools and resources the teachers require to reach and teach their students. Student dormitories are carefully designed, welcoming spaces that are kept clean and tidy by the students themselves under the supervision of older students and teachers.

HLID provides the highest-quality training and ongoing professional development for its teachers and staff. The lead teachers and directors are highly-trained, inspirational education leaders who practice and train their teachers in the latest, most progressive and effective pedagogies. The teachers' capabilities and confidence create a learning environment that is purposeful, organized, loving and highly effective.

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Bearing Witness funding provided by: The Constable Fund of The Episcopal Church and Carol and David Myers

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