



NEWSLETTER

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

August 2009

EDUCATION – FAITH IN ACTION

Education is the beginning of wisdom and the promise of a future.

AHLYYYAH AND BISHOP'S KINDERGARTEN - JORDAN

Princess Basma chooses diocesan Ahlyyyah and Bishop's Kindergarten

Princess Basma of Jordan is choosing to enroll her granddaughter, Farah, in our Ahlyyyah and Bishop's Kindergarten class this September. Under the leadership of Ms. Mirna Musharbash, the Ahlyyyah and Bishop's Kindergarten (ABKG) has improved its facilities, expanded its program, and increased its enrollment.

The ABKG, which focuses on enrolling children who will continue on in our adjacent Ahlyyyah School for Girls or our Bishop's School for Boys, has added an additional classroom with two teachers to accommodate the increased requests to enroll children for 2009-2010. This is good news for both upper schools, especially the Bishop's School for Boys, which had faced a declining enrollment until Mrs. Haifa Najjar, Headmistress of the Ahlyyyah School for Girls and a member of Queen Rania of Jordan's commission on education, accepted the position of Superintendent of both schools in the Fall of 2008.



In a brightly lit building with much natural light filling a central closed courtyard, the ABKG provides a stimulating and nurturing environment for young children to get a head start in their academic lives. Children who arrive between 8am and 9am are provided with tutoring until the formal day begins. At 9am, the children gather in their classrooms for circle time, held in both Arabic and English, with puppets to assist in conveying the concept of the morning. With almost 200 preschoolers divided into two levels based on age and ability, the ABKG is able to tailor each day to the developmental stages of the children.

Circle time is held again after other activities, snack time, and outdoor play time. The curriculum is supplemented with physical education, instrumental and vocal music, as well as various afterschool clubs focusing on music, dance, Arabic, English, and sports, including basketball.

With regular continuing education, the ABKG maintains the highest quality early education standards. In August 2009, three teachers attended the Amman National School workshop on the "Latest Methods of Teaching Reading and Writing" for kindergarten and first grade teachers. In keeping with the reputation of the Ahliyyah School for Girls, the three schools, Kindergarten, Girls' and Boys' Schools, strive to increase their income and fundraising in order to upgrade facilities to match the most modern in Jordan as well as to offer scholarships to deserving children. As Mrs. Najjar clearly states, education is an important 'part of building the civil society of Jordan.'

HOLY LAND INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF – JORDAN

***"I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see."***

Hymn: Amazing Grace

Sight is more than optical acuity. Sight is education, wisdom, and dreams of a promising future. The



Holy Land Institute for the Deaf (HLID), a diocesan institution under the long time leadership of Brother Andrew deCarpentier, is the promise of a future to many in the Jordan Valley. Salah is one of the students. He does not stand out in the crowd as a great success, until one hears his story.

Nearly 18 years ago, Salah was born as the 10th child in a very poor family and was later followed by one more little sister. His grandparents came as refugees from Gaza and settled in the Jordan Valley. His father is legally blind and did not get help to be able to support his family.

Increasing the hardship on this poor, refugee family, Salah, as well as his older siblings Musa and Noura, suffer from Usher Syndrome, a genetic condition which manifests itself at birth by profound deafness and later by a progressive narrowing of the field of vision and night blindness. Sometimes blindness follows as well. Salah and his siblings suffer from a severe form of the Syndrome, and Salah can only see with one eye as he lost vision in the other.

Though prospects for his future were bleak, Salah initially went to a school in his village where he managed poorly in spite of support from the Institute. A volunteer of HLID's outreach program came to the valley a few hours a week specifically to assist some deaf children in Salah's school. It was not enough for Salah.

His older deaf brother Musa was a student at the Institute for a number of years previously, where he learned carpentry and metalwork. Concerned for his youngest brother, he asked HLID to accept

Salah into our program, promising to provide his brother's pocket money from his own earnings. That was seven years ago.

Initially, it looked as though Salah would not be able to manage the intensive education at HLID. He lacked many of the skills required at his age level and struggled with Sign Language due to his low vision. But Salah had the good example and support of his older brother and made a brave effort to catch up. Now, he is a good student of class 7. Furthermore, Salah is a leader in the boarding house, where he is one of the senior students with responsibility for younger students. Salah has a very friendly and caring relationship with them, and is always willing to help whenever it is needed.

Salah is very happy that he can now start vocational training classes. He dreams of being able to provide for himself and contribute to his community in a couple of years. In spite of his visual impairment, Salah loves to draw. One of his works is a sketch of the new vocational training building for the girls with the dreamy hills of Gilead in the background.



ARAB EVANGELICAL SCHOOL – WEST BANK

MABROUK/CONGRATULATIONS:

The Arab Evangelical School in Ramallah: “An oasis for learning, peaceful expectation and preparation for productive future lives in Palestine.” (Excerpts from the school summer newsletter)

The Arab Evangelical School in Ramallah, under the leadership of Mr. Iyad Rafidi, has been chosen by the Amideast in Palestine to participate in a ‘Model Schools Network’. This is a four year program designed to train teachers from all participating schools to become trainers for teachers from other schools, focusing on modern methods of teaching sciences, English language, and Math.

We also proudly announce that a group of 11th grade students from the Arab Evangelical School in Ramallah have been chosen to represent Palestine in a competition for the best “Student Company”. The “Student Company” program is one in which students are trained by professionals and given guidance on how to produce, budget, and market goods for sale. Our students won the honor of representing Palestine by competing with other area schools. The final competition for groups around the Arab world is in Lebanon this year.



ST. GEORGE'S COLLEGE - JERUSALEM

Dean of St. George's College takes the "show on the road" to New Zealand

At the invitations of Bishop David Moxon, Bishop of Waikato, Archdeacon Pat Muxlow, of the Diocese of Wellington and Professor Andrew Bradstock of the University of Otago, Rev. Dr. Stephen Need, Dean of St. George's College, Jerusalem and his wife, Jill, spent three weeks in New Zealand in July.



Dr. Stephen Need lecturing at Diocese of Waikato Study Day, with Bishop Moxon, NZ, to the right

Stephen led a 3 day Clergy Conference for the Diocese of Wellington in Maesterson on "The Seven Ecumenical Councils, their Relevance in Today's Church". Though initially thought by some to be a "dry" subject, Stephen skillfully introduced the controversies that sparked the Councils centuries before, giving rise to much insightful discussion among the 120+ participants. Bishop Tom Brown of Wellington felt the conference was one of the best the Diocese as ever had.

A Study Day on the same subject was conducted with equal success at Hamilton's Houchen House, a retreat center of the Diocese of Waikato. The final invitation was to give an Open Lecture on "The Disappearing Christians of the Holy Land" for the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Otago in Dunedin. A look into the history and diversity of the Christians of the Holy Land as well as the impact of past and present conflicts on the Christian communities was interesting and well received by the 40 + attendees.

Between these speaking engagements and several preaching opportunities, Stephen and Jill spoke to smaller groups sponsored by local College alumni/ae throughout the country about the Diocese of Jerusalem, the College and its programs and what it is like to live in the Land of the Holy One.

Though it was winter time, Stephen and Jill felt they saw and learned much about this beautiful country. "So many people introduced us to their country through sharing their homes and lives with us. We saw New Zealand through people's eyes and plan to go back someday to explore further its vast natural wonders."



TEXTBOOK STUDY – “A PORTRAYAL OF THE OTHER”

Jerusalem, August 6 – Bishop Suheil Dawani, accompanied by the Rev'd Shehadeh Shehadeh, chairman of the Diocesan Department of Peace and Reconciliation, and the Rev'd Robert Edmunds, Chaplain to the Bishop, was present for the kick off event for a study of Palestinian and Israeli school books, sponsored by the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land. The event was held at the American Colony Hotel and was well attended by members of the Council, educators, researchers and members of the diplomatic community.

The text book study, entitled "Portrayal of the Other", will analyze books from grades 1 to 12 with two independent research teams. One team is a United States team that does computerized analyses of texts. The other team is a joint Palestinian-Israeli team that will employ Palestinian and Israeli researchers fluent in both Arabic and Hebrew to analyze the texts. A Scientific Advisory Panel consisting of European, American, Palestinian and Israeli experts in school book analysis, history and education will oversee all aspects of the work. One hundred books from each community will be analyzed. The project is funded by a grant from the United States Department of State. Final results of the project are anticipated by August of 2010.

The Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land (CRIHL) is a local inter-religious body, formed of the official religious institutions of the Holy Land; the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the Heads of the Local Churches in the Holy Land, the Sharia Courts and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Waqf) of the Palestinian National Authority.

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The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, a diocese of the worldwide Anglican Communion, extends over five countries, including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel, within the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. There are 27 parishes that minister to the needs of their communities, centered on the Cathedral Church of St. George the Martyr in Jerusalem. The church supports 33 institutions, which include hospitals, clinics, kindergartens and schools, vocational training programs, as well as institutions for the deaf, the disabled and the elderly, reaching out to interfaith neighbors in mutual respect and cooperation.