



American Friends of the
Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem
Building Presence – Building Peace

May 2010

25 Old King's Highway North, Suite 13, Darien, Connecticut 06820



Princess Basma graduates its first class Mainstreaming disabled

Greetings!

It's a great joy to share with each of you how proud we are of the student's pictured here. On Sunday, May 30 at 5 p.m. they'll graduate from the Princess Basma School in East Jerusalem. They're the first class to complete 12 grades in this school which mainstreams disabled and able bodied children. Several will go on to university and all will bring the skills and courage they acquired in this remarkable place.

The School, a part of the Princess Basma Centre, is a pioneer in inclusive education and was established in 1987. It started with 17 students and now has over 750 students in K-12. This includes 33 physically disabled, 74 hearing impaired and 6 blind children. The success at Princess Basma School has prompted other Palestinian schools to mainstream their special needs children, giving them a chance to become self-supporting contributors to their communities.

20% of the staff at the Centre is disabled as well. Special needs educators are given employment priority here, allowing them to become role models for students.

Your recent gifts which provided a van, summer camp and desperately needed scholarships have made this possible. Please continue to provide for their futures. Offer your congratulations to these graduates at info@basma-centre.org and offer your prayers for their continued success.

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St. George's Cathedral, East Jerusalem

Basma Graduates Celebrate!



Ahmed is hearing impaired. His two brothers are studying medicine and Ahmed would like to follow them to university. He knows it'll be hard, but he's eager to try. His classmate Mohamad, also 18 and also from Jerusalem, is physically disabled. They've studied together at Princess Basma School where they built confidence and hope. Mohamad plans to study physiotherapy so he can help others gain the same advantage. "Princess Basma School has helped a lot of people," he says. "The teachers care about us."

Ibaa has been at Princess Basma since she was in nursery school. She literally grew with the school: she remembers when it only went to sixth grade. "I worried what would happen to me when I reached seventh grade! I did not want to leave the school, but a class was added each year." She particularly loves extra-curricular activities, trips and summer camp. What she will remember most is the good relationships she has with her teachers. "Teachers are my friends," she said.

Ibba plans to go to university to study business and economics. She's deeply impressed by Princess Basma's success in integrating disabled and able-bodied students. She feels it helps each one prove themselves in ways they never imagined.

We salute these students and hope you'll support the summer camp and scholarship programs so more can benefit from this unique environment.

The Gaza Ambulance lives on, thanks to you



Years ago, generous donors to AFEDJ in Connecticut and elsewhere raised the funds for an ambulance for Ahli Hospital in Gaza. A decade and a war later, it still brings care to those living in squalid conditions. Gaza remains a disaster area, but the ambulance is well maintained. Your gifts matter.

The Rev. Canon Bob Edmunds, Chaplain to the Rt. Rev. Suheil Dawani, Bishop in Jerusalem, visited Gaza with his son Nathaniel last week. They met with Suhaila Tarazi, Director of the hospital as well as the hospital staff. The

Diocese plans to make pastoral visits each month to minister to a weary people. Rev. Edmunds celebrated the Eucharist in the hospital chapel for both staff and patients.

The ambulance remains a symbol of AFEDJ's steadfast hope for the people in Gaza. With your support we can provide more needed equipment and offer the psychosocial care that can mean a return to productive life after trauma and life threatening injury.

Activities and Programs



Churches for Middle East Peace encourages you to attend their annual conference to be held June 13-15 in Washington D.C. Housing is available and you can register at www.cmep.org/2010conference/index.html

Don't forget the generous and creative supporters who share a portion of their proceeds with AFEDJ every time you make a purchase. Importing Peace offers organic fair trade olive oil and thyme from Palestine at www.importpeace.org.

Old Jerusalem restaurant in Chicago welcomes your group and shares a portion of the check with us if you request it.

And Dr. Roger Ajluni's new novel, *Gospel of a Cab Driver* is available at www.gospelofcabdriver.com. Each of these donors has found a way to use their good work to benefit those struggling in the Holy Land. Support their efforts and suggest your own. We welcome your ideas. Our brothers and sisters need to know we care about the future of Christianity in the land of Christ's birth.



The AFEDJ is a nonprofit, non-political 501c3 which helps sustain the humanitarian institutions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem -- schools, hospitals and institutes for the disabled. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. Diocesan institutions foster mutual respect and tolerance in a land torn by turmoil and poverty. Learn more about the work of the AFEDJ or the Diocese of Jerusalem. Visit www.afedj.org to learn about or contribute to any of the important work done in the region.