



# AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM

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Fall 2011

## PRINCESS BASMA CENTRE LEADS THE WAY FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Saba has autism. At four years old, she's unable to speak or communicate, cannot look out for herself and has never hugged her mother. A disabled child impacts the family in many ways. The expenses and emotional toll grind them down, but a social stigma often follows them as well. And because Saba's Palestinian, there's only one program that can address her needs.

The Princess Basma Centre for Disabled Children in East Jerusalem has the first and only program to assess and address the needs of autistic Palestinian children in the region. As in other parts of the world, the number of children identified with this debilitating condition is rising. Until last year, there was no hope if you lived in the Holy Land. But once again, Director Betty Majaj and her team of talented and determined therapists led the way. They traveled to Europe and brought in experts to find the best programs and learn the best techniques. Now the Princess Basma Centre is the hub of an interfaith center of excellence, teaching and encouraging others in an emerging field.

The Centre cares for those with a range of disabilities including deaf and blind children, those with cerebral palsy and other physical challenges, and children and adults with mental delays or brain trauma. Many are mainstreamed into the on-campus school with children without these challenges. This provides unique opportunities to talk about and model respect for differences and tolerance. The staff takes every opportunity to encourage families of every faith heritage to support and learn from each other.

A residential program for mothers and infants teaches techniques to relieve stress, increase motor skills and optimize potential. A sheltered workshop teaches carpentry, basket work and self-reliance.

But the needs are staggering. The hydrotherapy pool, critical to those with cramped muscles and limited mobility, stands empty



because of the high cost of maintaining it. The large building that houses all the facilities cost \$700 a week to heat last February. Books, prosthetic devices, leg braces, cochlear implants, glasses, food, medication, teacher training – you get the pictures. And the latest problem: if USAID funding is cut, as has been voted by the US Congress, the program that reaches out to 30 locations in rural areas will have to be cut. How can we let this happen?

The lives of the able bodied are difficult enough in this volatile and hostile environment. Imagine living with a major disability in addition. Help us help these children to live lives of purpose and achievement. It's possible with your gift.



# VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL IN RAMALLAH TEACHES IMPORTANT LESSONS TO VOLUNTEERS AS WELL AS STUDENTS

*By Joanna Springer, AFEDJ Missioner, Amherst, Mass.*

There were times, during the two months I spent this summer at the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center in Ramallah, when I would pause to tune in to my surroundings. I would hear the drumming from the music program going on upstairs. Trainers from the Palestinian Circus School were competing for space with Save the Children in the downstairs classrooms. The secretary would be ordering lunch for 30 police officers attending a month-long nutrition course. Drowning out everything else would be the drilling, shaking, and banging from the renovations going on in the Hotel School training kitchen. This is besides the daily stream of teachers, students, parents, and graduates coming to the office.

I had heard from friends that Palestinians would welcome my solidarity in the form of voluntary work. My background in education, writing, and native English would be useful, but I wanted to build a human-to-human connection between Americans and people from the Middle East. American policies have a huge impact on the lives of Middle Easterners, but so few Americans have met an Arab or even a Muslim. I knew that by going in person I would bring my community here in the US closer to the community I worked with in Ramallah. Members of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship at my church, Grace Episcopal in Amherst, Massachusetts, connected me with people in Ramallah. It was through them that the ETVTC first saw my CV and told me they could use my help as a short term volunteer.

Every day I was impressed by the patience and unflinching thoughtfulness of the director, Giovanni Anbar, and his three full-time staff who manage all this activity. The small team coordinates technology education for 420 students from five different schools,

along with the Hotel School which is a two-year vocational training program for 60 eleventh and twelfth graders. Day in and day out, I watched the staff focusing on each individual in turn who came into the office; I learned about the personal investment they make in nurturing and providing guidance to young Palestinians.

Ahmad enrolled in the Hotel School's first graduating class in 2008. He believes that the most important thing he learned at the Hotel School was to love what he does. The teachers and the staff taught him and his classmates about life. Ahmad told me the teachers were like teammates with the students, even friends. I learned, however, that the teachers were frustrated at the beginning by the students' motivational and behavioral challenges. When they saw how the students had changed by the end of the first year, however, the teachers knew the effort was worth it. The students had gelled into a dedicated team.

The open hearts of the staff had an impact on me as well. As I was leaving Palestine, I realized that it wasn't the realities of occupation that had sunk into my heart, but rather a warm attachment to the people I had met. My gesture of solidarity in choosing to come to Palestine had been accepted, and I had been welcomed. I carried away the deep satisfaction of shared labor that built a bridge right over the stonewalling and indifference of my elected representatives toward Palestinian rights, and made a concrete contribution to a stronger and more unified Palestinian society. Finally, I was blessed above and beyond what I could give by the gracious hearts and manners of the people I worked with, befriended, was hosted by... and even those I simply shared the streets with.



*Joanna Springer is joined by Giovanni Anbar, Director of the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center, Hanandi ALHussari, Secretary, Im Anas of the custodial staff and Nizar Kassees, Director of the Hotel School*

## OVERVIEW

2010 was another growth year for AFEDJ. Gifts from donors increased about 11% which allowed us to provide just under \$400,000 in grants to the Diocese of Jerusalem **and** significantly expand our educational work in the US. We're deeply grateful to the growing number of donors who provided scholarship aid and compassionate healthcare to those struggling in the Holy Land. The important combination of faithful support and new gifts means that more families in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon can find hope and connection to their Christian family around the world.

## ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS



*The Rt. Rev. Suheil Dawani speaks at Virginia Theological Seminary in February*

AFEDJ hosted a benefit luncheon at the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria in February for the Rt. Rev. Suheil Dawani, Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem. Bishop Suheil expressed his gratitude to donors and spoke of the dwindling number of Christians in the region, the difficult economic situation they face and his hope for peace and reconciliation. And he urged support for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Based on the expressed needs of the Diocese, AFEDJ's Board discussed possible support for capital projects in addition to program support. We revised our Mission Statement to include an option to support building projects in the Diocese which would then result in expanded service delivery.

Cultivation events were held in Dallas, Baltimore, New York and Chicago. We attended Diocesan Conventions in San Diego, Connecticut, Virginia, Los Angeles and a dozen other Dioceses thanks to the important work of our Missioners. Our goal is to continue to increase visibility and expand the number of people who know about AFEDJ and the work of the institutions in the Diocese.

Anne Lynn, Executive Director, again visited the institutions of the Diocese of Jerusalem to directly discuss and observe needs, to insure donor funds were used as intended and to develop closer relationships with the individual Directors. She visited the Schneller School, the Bishop School, Ahilyah School for Girls, St. Saviour School and Arab Episcopal School and the Jofeh Center, all in Jordan. In addition, she attended an art training workshop which included 16 teachers from schools throughout the Diocese. The ArtReach program uses artistic expression to help children whose lives are impacted by violence. Teachers could then bring

those techniques back to their students.

We held our first Missioners' Workshop which brought together 15 Missioners in the New York area. They loved meeting each other, sharing ideas, and learning about new resources to bring back to their congregations and communities. AFEDJ's work is enriched by the commitment of these 200 "on the ground" volunteers who help us with opportunities and local interests across this country. Another Workshop was held in Washington, DC with 20 Missioners. LA and Philadelphia are planned for 2011. Watch for one in your area.

St. Nicholas Day was celebrated by an increased number of parishes, resulting in gifts large and small being shared with AFEDJ. Mite boxes, pageants, hymns, cards and costumes created an atmosphere where the story of the real St. Nicholas and his ministry to needy children in the Holy Land could be shared and connected to the needy today. This is a fun, intergenerational way to put the Christ back in Christmas while educating children and their families about the realities on the ground in a volatile region.

## DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM

The Bishop School for Boys in Amman was completely renovated and upgraded with new furniture and an expanded library. St. George's School in East Jerusalem is also undergoing a substantial renovation, with a science room and expanded library added in the lower school and classroom upgrades in the upper school. Because of travel restrictions and limited incomes, many forego needed medical treatment for conditions which can then become permanent disabilities. To address this, the Rt. Rev. Suheil Dawani made an outpatient clinic in Ramallah a high priority. Construction is under way and funds are being raised to equip the facility. They expect to provide compassionate, high quality care by the end of 2011.

A community center is under construction at St. Paul's Church in Shefa Amr in the Galilee. It will be a home to summer camp, community celebrations and musical performances, bringing residents of all faith traditions together. Funding from many AFEDJ donors helped make this a reality.

Under very difficult conditions, Ahli Hospital in Gaza continues to provide for the physical and emotional needs of an extremely needy population. While it may be out of the headlines, the hospital is still offering free care and dealing with shortages of both basic necessities and medication needed for chronic illnesses.

We pray for all the Diocesan institutions, the Bishop and his self-sacrificing staff and particularly for the families who suffer under economic and political hardship.



*The Rev. Hanna Dalleh inspects the brand new waiting room in St. Andrew's Clinic in Ramallah*

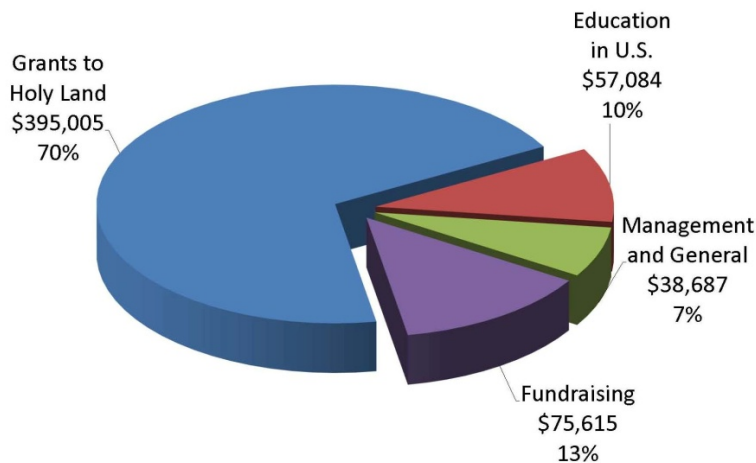
## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 2010, total revenue from individuals, congregations and organizations totaled just under \$640,000, an 11% increase over 2009 in a difficult economy. Just under \$400,000 was distributed to the Diocese of Jerusalem and directly to the institutions supported by AFEDJ. In addition, \$55,000 supported educational efforts in the US, making the work of the Diocese better known. Thanks to our Missioners, visits to Diocesan Conventions, newsletters and online communications, we continue to expand our reach.

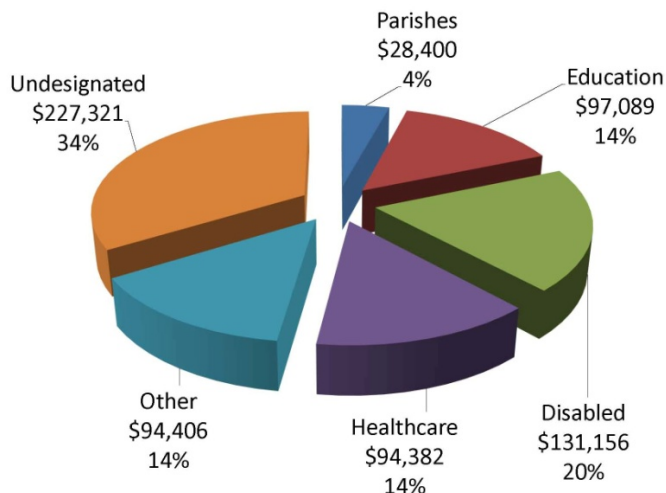
2010 overhead expenses totaled \$114,800 for printing, postage and the part time administrative staff. AFEDJ's percentage of overhead to revenue at 20% indicates an efficient organization. This information is confirmed by audit.

AFEDJ continues to grow in reputation and size. The result is increased support for the 14 schools, 2 full service hospitals, 4 outpatient clinics, 4 institutes for the disabled, homes for the elderly and guesthouses owned and operated by the Diocese. It is a privilege to serve our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land.

## EXPENDITURES



## HOW GIFTS WERE DESIGNATED



Ray Suarez, Senior Correspondent for PBS NewsHour spoke at an AFEDJ event at St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia in October. He discussed *Jerusalem: Center of the World*, the documentary he narrated for PBS as well as his observations as a journalist and Episcopalian. The event was co-sponsored by Philadelphia Theological Institute and the Middle East Study Group of St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Mr. Suarez was introduced by former Presiding Bishop the Rt. Rev. Frank Griswold. The event was held in conjunction with an AFEDJ Board meeting.

## SURVIVING THE WALL

by Dr. Ali Qleibo, 2009, \$30.

Preface by The Rev. Canon John Peterson

Given the title, *Surviving the Wall* looks as if it should be a political plea. It isn't. In the midst of the politics and fear in Palestine, we can forget that what we call the Holy Land has been holy since prehistoric times to waves of people who cherished it for what it brought forth. The subtitle, *The Formation of Modern Palestinian Cultural Identity*, more closely matches the content. The Land and its physical and spiritual connection to generations of families is what's on offer here. And it will turn your understanding of regional history, religious ritual and intent on its ear.

The ebb and flow of the seasons, traditions of close-knit families, the centrality of food and hospitality, origins of holy days or festivals all unfold through interviews with modern families. These provide a glimpse of the layered, complex society that is formed from a visceral relationship to place, and the spirit of the place. Why are unusual rock formations revered or feared? How have Palestinians survived the successive invasions of their land? We glimpse the strength and recognize the resolve. Certainly more than enough to survive a wall.

The book can be ordered through John Peterson at [jjpeterson@cathedral.org](mailto:jjpeterson@cathedral.org)

- Anne Lynn



## Endurance, Fortitude, Steadfastness, Perseverance

*But if we hope for what we do not see,  
we wait for it with patience.* Romans 8:25

“Patience” in this context, as translated from the Greek, means endurance, fortitude, steadfastness and perseverance.

It seems as if Israel and Palestine are always on the cusp of peace negotiations. At about this time last year, the world was waiting to see if the Israeli government would continue the moratorium on settlement expansion. Israel did not stop building and there were no negotiations.

The world anticipated the UN General Assembly meeting where Palestine requested recognition as a state by the Security Council. We have now moved past that moment, and a peace process is still just a distant hope.

Since we *do* hope for what we do not see, how are we to wait for it with patience? I like all of the translations from the Greek: fortitude, endurance, steadfastness and perseverance. They call to mind the spirits of our sisters and brothers in the Holy Land.

This fall, I have the privilege of leading a pilgrimage to see both the holy sites and the holy work of the Diocese. I know that I will once again be awed and humbled by the patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness and perseverance of our brothers and sisters – qualities that have been shaped for generations in the fires of suffering.

A spirit of hope also characterizes the mission and actions of the AFEDJ. Through God’s grace, and with your support, we persevere and stand with our church in the Holy Land and with their Bishop, Suheil Dawani. We remember them in our prayers and send all of the financial aid we possibly can to support and strengthen their humanitarian work of healing, teaching and reconciling.

I very much hope that the work of AFEDJ inspires you to make a contribution, in an amount appropriate for you. Please pray for the various humanitarian efforts described here. Through our united efforts as AFEDJ we accept the challenge to be people of patience and perseverance and to live into a hope we cannot yet see.

Phoebe W. Griswold  
President, Board of Directors



## MISSIONER PROFILE THE REV. SUSAN THON, BETHESDA MD

Author Cynthia Ozick wrote, “A visitor passes through a place. The place passes through the pilgrim.” I am still inhabited by the landscapes, sights, sounds, sensations, people and conversations that filled my pilgrimage in the Holy Land. My interior landscape has been reshaped and expanded to make room for the sense of presence in places made holy by centuries of prayer and remembrance. Juxtapose this with visions of young soldiers with automatic weapons slung over their shoulders, on the streets, in the bus station, at checkpoints; of separation fences and the beginnings of the wall cutting through Jerusalem; of a newly rebuilt home sure to be bulldozed again in short order.

Along with these images are those of a hospital for severely disabled children – Christians, Muslims and Jews – only a few of whom could walk, talk or control their bodies in any way, all lovingly cared for by staff and international volunteers. This is a bright spot where people are simply human beings in a land so full of division. We saw patience, hope and resilience every day among people living under severe constraints, Jews, Christians and Muslims each trying to find a way to peace with justice.

In 2003, I went on pilgrimage as part of a sabbatical. My purpose was to experience and learn about the physical, political, social and religious setting of the biblical narrative; to meet the people of Israel and Palestine; to get a sense of the life and ministry of the Church, particularly the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem; and to gain a deeper understanding of the present day political reality. The framework of my time there was a course at St. George’s College.

The experience continues to be lived out in a variety of ways in the years since – including running a marathon (my first) to raise money for St. Luke’s Hospital, Nablus; a quiet day and adult forum on “Jerusalem, the heart of the world;” interfaith relationships with a neighboring synagogue and Islamic weekend school; Advent and St. Nicholas Day parish giving to AFEDJ; a Lenten adult education series on pursuing peace with justice in the Holy Land; and a prayer vigil on Capitol Hill during Prime Minister Netanyahu’s recent address to the U.S. Congress. We are in the planning stages of a parish pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine, with an eye toward exploring the possibility of a relationship with a parish or school there.

I became an AFEDJ Missioner as a way to stay connected with the people and the Diocese. I hope to contribute to sustaining life and hope in the Church there by continuing to raise awareness here. The path of deepening and broadening relationship and support with our sisters and brothers in the Diocese of Jerusalem continues.



*Missioner Rev. Susan Thon with her family in Bethesda Maryland*



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

### *Did you know...*

that the Diocese of Jerusalem covers  
5 countries and provides pastoral  
care and humanitarian aid  
through:

- 23 parishes
- 14 schools
- 2 full service hospitals
- 4 outpatient clinics
- 4 guesthouses
- 4 institutes for the disabled
- 2 homes for the elderly



*Support this important work today.*

## Celebrate St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 4

Connect the spirit of the  
real St. Nicholas, patron  
saint of needy children,  
with needy children in  
the Holy Land today.

Visit [www.afedj.org](http://www.afedj.org)  
and click St. Nicholas  
Day to find free and  
low cost mite boxes,  
alternative Christmas  
gifts, pageants, cookie  
recipes, costume  
patterns, games and  
ideas for making your  
celebration a fun day for all.



*Lorraine Reeder, AFEDJ Board member, offered brochures and newsletters to participants at the Connecticut Diocesan Convention, Oct. 21. All materials including the banner and a raffle prize are available to anyone who would like to reserve and staff a display at their Diocesan Convention or other gathering that brings together people interested in the issues of the Holy Land. AFEDJ will attend 12 conventions and several national meetings this year thanks to help from our Missioners and other volunteers around the country. Let us know if you'd like to join this important effort.*