



Dear friends,

Regardless of the difficult situation that we are living in the Middle East and the Holy Land, we in Caritas Jerusalem always endeavour to continue with our mission.

This month we were able to celebrate the Valentine's Day with our senior citizens, we managed to give financial assistance to tens of needy families who cannot possibly survive without the intervention of Charity Organizations such as ours. In addition, we continued our essential work in Gaza bringing hope, love and care to a people that are constantly struggling with occupation, segregation, unemployment and poverty.

We thank you all for reading our newsletter, for supporting us financially and morally in times of hardship. We cannot do what we do without our local and international partners, colleagues and friends.

Fr. Raed Abusahlia
General Director
Caritas Jerusalem

Gazans: a suffering yet resilient people

I've just returned from consulting community leaders about the possibility of a new project to determine and treat intestinal infestation in 2 to 5 year old children in some of the poorest and most deprived parts of northern Gaza, Isbeth camp in Beit Hanoun and a nearby area known as the Bedouin village. We drove past a lake of raw sewage and buildings destroyed in the 2014 Israeli war on Gaza where people still live in badly damaged homes. We observed the back-breaking work of men with sledge hammers breaking up slabs of concrete from destroyed buildings to extract the embedded steel rods that will be straightened out and reused.





These twisted steel rods will be straightened by a hand-operated machine and re-used.

Yesterday, Ma'an news reported that "A Palestinian child was killed and another seriously injured after an unexploded ordnance detonated in the Jabaliya area of the northern Gaza Strip. Medical sources told Ma'an that five-year-old Suhayb Saqir was killed and his brother Musab, 6, was seriously injured in the explosion." We met children such as these who live in badly damaged areas where there is continued danger from such unexploded ordnances, fallout from Israeli bombs, and unstable buildings.



This little Bedouin girl in traditional dress was on her way home from school.



Clothes hanging out to dry show that people live in these damaged homes.

In past decades Beit Hanoun was known as the bread-basket of Gaza. It was famous for its citrus fruits that were exported to Europe and Middle Eastern countries and water from its underground wells was considered the purest in the region. Sadly, overcrowding, contamination of water sources, and the widespread destruction of agricultural land, factories, and dairy farms during recent wars have reduced it to one of the poorest. Yet, the people are extraordinarily resilient and resourceful.

They retrieve from the rubble anything that can be recycled and begin to rebuild their lives, again and again. I've seen young men use the bombed-out fourth floor of an apartment building to practice gymnastics and body-building, jumping through holes that were once windows and hanging by their arms from exposed beams that looked far from secure.

Such abject poverty combined with resilience and resourcefulness leads me to reflect on what sustains me in my mission to serve these long-suffering people and to learn from them. The answer of course is my Christian faith supported by the small Christian community here and the generosity of Caritas' dedicated, hard-working staff. On February 26th the Christian community celebrated the feast of Saint Porphyrius who became bishop of Gaza in 395AD. The number of Christians in Gaza at that time is said to have been no more than 280 yet now, more than 1,600 years later, there still exists in Gaza a small Christian minority of about 1,200 persons in a population of 1.82 million. With other Gazans Christians endure the hardship of frequent wars, the crippling effects of years of blockade, and high unemployment, while in their lives and liturgical celebrations they bear witness to the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The generosity of our benefactors enables Caritas to extend that witness and to show the compassion and love of Christ to those in need, regardless of religious or political affiliation, through our health care services and other diverse projects throughout the Gaza Strip.



Preparing to celebrate the Stations of the Cross in the Holy Family Catholic Church in Gaza on Friday 26th February 2016.

Photos by Issa Al Alem, Project coordinator, Caritas Jerusalem in Gaza, 27th February 2016
Church photo by Sr. Bridget Tighe FMDM 26th February 2016

Creating Beautiful Smiles in Gaza



Oral hygiene is important to prevent bad breath and dental diseases. Brushing and flossing your teeth regularly may sound easy but for most people in Gaza it is a luxury that they cannot afford.

The daily struggles of the extremely poor, the constraints they grapple with and the challenges they meet simply don't allow them to care about such "trivial matters" as taking care of their children's teeth.



Therefore, Caritas Jerusalem is implementing a dental care awareness campaign combined with the distribution of educational materials, toothbrushes and toothpastes to 500 elementary students in Gaza schools. In addition, our dentist is screening the dental health of the children and those who need further treatments are referred to our medical center in Gaza.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Caritas Singapore for funding this project. We thank them for their friendship and the assistance that they provide to the people that we serve in Palestine. Truly, friends are never too far away.



***Together we can face any challenge
“I want to go back to school”***



This photo is not directly related to the article

Six children were left out of school for three weeks because their parents could not cover their tuition fees. The father is the only breadwinner who works as a cleaner and his income is not enough to cover the basic needs of the family. They used to live in Jerusalem in a rented house but due to accumulated debts they were evicted from their home and

moved to Bethlehem to a much smaller and dilapidated house.

In desperation the mother turned to Caritas Jerusalem for help. The social worker in coordination with other local organizations collected the requested amount for the school tuition fees and got the children back to school.

The Social Services Department is the heart of Caritas Jerusalem. It has been working to assist the needy since 1967. They help the socially disadvantaged from Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Strip. Over the past years, they were able to reach thousands of needy families and cover their bare necessities of life. They are always there to give a helping hand to everyone regardless of their background.

Numerous cases reach the social department seeking financial aid and they do their best in the hope of alleviating some of their burdens.

Caritas Jerusalem would like to take this opportunity to encourage all the local organizations to help and support the needy families.

Valentine's Day celebration

We care about you



On the 14th of February 2016, Caritas Jerusalem's Elderly Day Care Center (EDCC) in Ramallah celebrated Valentine's Day with its senior citizens.



Caritas Jerusalem celebrates this occasion with the elderly every year to give them love, appreciation and gratitude. The EDCC staff prepared a special event by decorating the place, buying red flowers for each and getting a special cake and sweets for the occasion.

Ms. Sharefeh, the EDCC's social worker said "Our aim is to make the elderly live in a warm atmosphere filled with love and warmth."

It was a special day for the elderly who expressed their joy and appreciation to the staff and the center which takes care of them all through the year. The event came to its conclusion by dancing and singing traditional songs together.

The Elderly Day Care Center (EDCC) was established in 1990 to serve the elderly who are left without a breadwinner and without care. It is a place to meet, socialize and spend the long hours of the day. In addition, it offers a healthy and well balanced meal two days a week, especially prepared to meet their nutritional requirements.



A new dental chair for Al Taybeh Caritas medical center



A young couple Mr. Samy Bassam Muaddi and his wife Victoria who are originally from Al Taybeh village near Ramallah but living in USA have donated a new dental chair for Caritas medical center as a Christmas gift.

This new dental chair will facilitate the dentist's work and allow optimal comfort to the patients.



Caritas Jerusalem would like to take this opportunity to thank the Muaddi family for their generous donation.

The Caritas Jerusalem Taybeh Health Center was established in 1997 to provide health services for a population of 18,000 in Taybeh and the surrounding villages. The health center's medical team treats about 500 patients a month.

How can you help?

Support our activities

Your support is essential to provide long-term assistance to our beneficiaries.

Please see below our bank details to make a donation:

Bank Name: Arab Bank

Swift Code: ARABPS 22110

Account number: 457793/0/510 USD

Credit Account: Caritas Jerusalem

Branch No: 9110

At Arab Bank in Al-Ram

P.O.Box: 2445-Al-Ram