



Holy Child Program

برنامج الطفل المقدس

Beit Sahour – Bethlehem – The Holy Land بيت ساحور - بيت لحم - الأرض

First Quarter Report: August 1, 2017 - October 31, 2017



Director, Iskander Khoury, and Archbishop Anthony Fisher, OP enjoying the garden at HCP



Sasha with one of her many new friends!

Objective 1: To provide a therapeutic environment which fosters not only academic and emotional growth but also a sense of belonging to a larger family.

- This quarter the different international groups who made time to visit with our staff and students powerfully reinforced the students' sense of belonging to a larger community. We were gifted by the visits of friends from Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland and 63 Australians!
- One of the Australian groups was led by Archbishop Anthony Fisher, OP of Sydney, Australia who greeted the children by saying; "Today I am visiting the most beloved ones that God creates". These types of experiences and affirmations challenge the children to view themselves and their situation through a different perspective. It also gives them a sense of being connected and part of a global community, which is a powerful antidote to isolation.
- Part of providing a therapeutic environment this quarter included a visit from their four-legged friend, Sasha. Sasha was in high demand and spread a lot of love to all those she visited. While not a certified therapy dog, Sasha was able to provide unconditional positive regard to everyone she interacted with. She also provided the opportunity to practice gentle touching and positive ways of expressing affection. We hope that Sasha will be able to visit again soon!

- Birthdays are a communal experience at HCP and all get to share in the celebration. Every month there is a party with cake and a small gift for the children born in that month. For some, it is the only celebration of their birthday they have.

Objective 2: To embody and promote a deeper understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church in every aspect of our work with children, families, co-workers and other professionals.

- In addition to our regular religious education, our students had a unique experience of the universal Church. The pilgrim group, "Walking in the Steps of Jesus" from Australia the Holy Child Program and gifted the program with a very special friend, Murray the kangaroo. Murray is named after the first bishop of Sydney. He accompanied the World Youth Day pilgrimage to Poland after first traveling throughout Italy, Rome and Vatican City. He accompanied this group of pilgrims to the Holy Land and is now going to live at the Holy Child Program. Murray was enthusiastically welcomed by the students. The looks of wonder on the children's faces make it is clear how deeply touched they were by this gift. Hopefully, Murray will share some of the salient highlights of his pilgrimage. However, if he is too shy, his presence alone is witness to the Universal Church at work!

Objective 3: To develop and implement individualized educational and therapeutic treatment plans for each child enrolled in our program.

- Dinosaur school (Incredible Years classroom program) began with reviewing the school rules. Activities such as school rules bingo and creating classroom posters with the children modeling the "Give Me Five" rules made the curriculum come alive and thoroughly engaged everyone. As always, the puppets, Wally and Dina Dinosaur were on hand to help teach.
- In preparation for our field trip to the "Safari Park" in Ramat Gan, Israel, science class focused on the different animal habitats they would visit at the zoo. Each classroom prepared a presentation, which they shared with the whole school.



Please hurry up with the pictures so we can eat the cake!



A warm welcome for the newest member of our HCP Family



Wally and Dina meet with the students to talk about school rules



Winged creatures present on winged creatures!



Fish Fascination



Contemplating the tortoises

- Face painting further cemented the learning process, as they had to describe the characteristics of the animal they wanted painted on their face!
- Safari Park was an interactive learning experience for the students, each sharing their interests and knowledge with each other; from map reading to fish identification highlighting their individual strengths and abilities.
- These creative learning opportunities give the students the ability to acquire, synthesize and generalize the information across multiple platforms. Additionally, it allows the teachers to individualize the curriculum for each student, which the traditional method of memorization doesn't. Most important of all is that the children have fun learning! Instead of writing endless lines of Arabic or English, they can practice their letters by forming them from play dough on their desks. For students who have difficulty with handwriting this is a huge boon for them.

Objective 4: To provide clinically appropriate and culturally sensitive parent education, counseling and support services for the families of this region.

- Our parent education, counseling programs are highly valued and well attended by our parents.
- During this quarter we held one parent meeting at the beginning of this quarter to help orient new parents and emphasize the partnership between HCP and the parents.
- Our school social worker made four home visits to the new families enrolled in HCP this year. These visits are critical for understanding family dynamics and provide opportunities for practicing in situ the new skills the mothers are learning in the Incredible Years Parenting program.
- During one home visit a mother shared how thrilled she and her husband were with their child's progress in the program. The mother said; "My husband and I were so excited about Nicola getting a certificate of excellence that he copied it and sent it to the extended family as an SMS with the text; Here is the proof that he can do it!" It is gratifying to see the parent's enthusiasm and sense of hopefulness as they

as they and their children experience these small successes!

- In addition to providing six family therapy sessions this quarter, we had intakes for seven families who are hoping to place their children with us for next year.
- Mothers groups restarted and we had 10 group sessions during this period. One of the mothers in group delivered a baby girl during this period and the whole group celebrated by visiting her at home. Such visits demonstrate the bonding and support occurring between these women. We continue to receive repeated requests from the mothers who have completed the program to start an advanced group for them. Although many stay in touch with each other, they say they miss the discussions and support.

Objective 5: To provide our staff with continuing education opportunities as well as regular support and supervision to further their professional development and increase job satisfaction.

- This fall the teachers requested that we restart the Incredible Years Teacher Training program. They said they felt they had mastered a basic level of the program but wanted to further their knowledge and skill base and that there was much more to learn. As a result, time is spent every Tuesday reviewing the Teacher Training program.
- In addition to the ongoing teacher training program, the staff was fortunate to receive a workshop provided by Ergosoma trainers from Germany and Switzerland. The workshop focused on ways to manage and reduce stress through a variety of practical techniques. Current studies in neurobiology demonstrate the negative impact stress has on our physical health. Learning ways to reduce stress and improve the quality of daily life certainly enhances job satisfaction!

Objective 6: To ensure a successful integration for our graduates in their next educational placement.

- Last quarter eight students graduated. Four of the students were from SOS Children's Village in



Fall Parents Meeting



Iskander leading Incredible Years Teacher Training program with HCP staff



Ergosoma workshop with teachers



Give Me Five School Rules by Students



No, they aren't movie stars, but it feels like it when our graduates come to visit us!



Students hard at work on their health unit

Bethlehem and were reunited with their families of origin upon their graduation from HCP. Unfortunately, we have no information on how they are doing and are unable to contact them due to confidentiality issues. Of the four remaining graduates, three of them have been able to smoothly transition to their new placements and are doing very well. The remaining student had a difficult transition but with a change in school and medication management, is currently doing very well according to his parents and his school.

- At the beginning of the school year, the staff identified six students who they thought were ready to graduate from HCP at the end of this school year. In order to ensure a successful transition, we began preparing and planning with the parents what the next steps should be. We were able to have our first "discharge" planning session with three of the six families this quarter.
- An indication of the attachment our graduates have with us is the number of visits and Facebook posts we receive from them. It is always gratifying to learn that they are doing well and deeply touching when they visit on their days off and help around the school. This quarter, we had several such visits from new and old graduates!

Objective 7: To collaborate and coordinate with other organizations and/or treatment providers involved in the education and treatment of children and families.

- As part of our curriculum, we assess the physical as well as academic and emotional needs of all of our students. We are grateful to our local professionals in healthcare who partner with us to provide the services on site for our children. This quarter nine of our students received preliminary hearing evaluations. Three of the nine were referred for further evaluation. Our school social worker notified the parents and will help them follow up on the recommendations.

- As a result of an extraordinarily generous gift of 35 iPads from Australian educators who visited HCP, we were able to start a “learning through technology” program for our students. With a visit from the Bethlehem Ministry of Education and Partners for Sustainable Development Co. we were able to configure the iPads so they could be used in the classrooms, accessing the electronic curriculum of the Palestinian Ministry of Education. This is an exciting development for our program as it increases the range of being able to individualize the curriculum for each student. It is particularly helpful with non-verbal and learning disabled students in providing them with alternative ways to engage and respond to the curriculum.



The gathering of “technicians”



Thank you to all our friends and benefactors, it has been a great quarter!