



Holy Child Program

برنامج الطفل المقدس

Second Quarter Report: November 1, 2017 - January 31, 2018



Deacon Ryan & Lady Wynsday visiting with some of their group



Harvesting Olives

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 we were incredibly blessed by visits by several groups of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher and their wives , two groups from Australia, a group from Seattle, Washington and a group from Aleimar, a non-profit organization that provides scholarships to some of our students. We are deeply appreciative of donors and funding organizations who are able to visit our program. Their on site presence is a tangible witness that the children and families of this region are not forgotten by the international community and it fosters gratitude and hopefulness, which is important for building healthy relationships.
- Picking olives is one of our most enjoyed Friday activities. It is an important activity for Palestinians, one with deep cultural roots. Traditionally children would be excused from school to help their families harvest the olives. Families would labor together perhaps for several days depending on the harvest, eating and resting in the shade of the trees. Today, this occurs less frequently, but it is still a tradition practiced at HCP, although we typically finish harvesting our olives in half a day! A delicious lunch was provided for the students afterwards!

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.

- This time of year is so rich in church celebrations!
On All Saints day students draw the name of a saint from a basket and then prepare a presentation on that saint which they will share with the entire school. We try to include as many local saints from the region, to highlight our unique heritage. It is an activity much enjoyed by the students!
- All Souls day is an intimate experience with special prayers in the memorial rosebush garden for all the beloved of our friends, children, families, and staff. A candle is lit and placed in front of every rosebush named after someone. It is a powerful sense of communion and community.
- It goes without saying that Christmas is a big deal when you are in Bethlehem! Students enter into the spirit by re-enacting the Nativity story. It is performed during a special Mass which is offered for the intentions of all our benefactors. The Mass is held in the grotto at Shepherds Field in Beit Sahour. It is a solemn and joyous occasion. This year World Vision sponsored a Christmas lunch for the students and staff after Mass.
- The children also prepare for Christmas by creating ornaments with their pictures to decorate the school tree. A stocking is hung for every child and staff member, which they will take home with them. Despite a busy schedule, Santa was able to visit Holy Child Program and gifted each child with something special. This is a unique experience for some of our Muslim children, who may never have understood what Christmas was about or been so enthusiastically included before.

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

- As part of our behavior plan, students are able to earn points individually and collectively for their classroom for achieving identified target behaviors. When a class has collected enough points they are entitled to a field trip! This quarter 2 classes earned a trip to Bumble Bee, a nearby center with bouncy rooms and other activities.



All Saints Day Presentations



All Souls Day- Prayers in the memorial rose garden



Nativity Play in the Grotto of Shepherd's Field



Trimming the Christmas Tree



Jumping for joy at Bumble Bee fun center!



Watching the olives go into the press



Liquid gold, otherwise known as olive oil

- Not only did the students have a fantastic time, the owner told our director that HCP students were the best behaved children of all the schools who had visited Bumble Bee! He said HCP student would always be welcome!
- Following up on the Friday activity of harvesting olives, the whole school took a field trip to the nearby olive press as part of their science unit. We observed the process from start to finish. From the washing of the olives to the flowing output of olive oil!
- Linking these experiential activities to their science curriculum demonstrates practical applications of what they are learning to real life. What is a centrifuge? Why must it be built with certain materials? What types of chemical processes are occurring as the olives are being pressed? Why is it better to process the olives immediately? These types of questions prompt the students to consider and analyze the information rather than memorizing the steps.
- Thanksgiving is not only a delicious celebration, it is a therapeutic one as well. Students study the heritage of Thanksgiving and focus on giving thanks for all that they have received this year. It is an opportunity to practice gratitude. It is not hard to be grateful for the delicious feast prepared by master chef, Iskander and many staff members! Endorphins and tryptophan are abundant after the celebration!

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

- Our school social worker made 8 home visits to families this quarter. She was able to complete the visits for all new students and the remainder were visits to address issues the parents requested assistance in dealing with or follow up on medical issues. Often families will come to HCP for counseling sessions but frequently the mothers will ask for the social worker to come to their home as most of them have other children they have to care for.
- During this quarter there were seven mothers' groups held and one of the groups, *The Group of Hope*, completed the Incredible Years

program! They are already asking for us to start the Incredible Years Advanced Parenting program!

- In addition to providing five family therapy sessions this quarter, we had intakes for six families who are hoping to place their children with us for next year. It is hard to tell parents we have no current openings, especially if we are unable to connect them with appropriate services in the interim.
- As previously mentioned, volunteers from Grupo Aleimar from Milan, Italy visited our program. Aleimar generously awarded seven families scholarships to attend HCP this year. As part of their program, they meet with the families they are sponsoring. Each family brought a gift or a card expressing their gratitude for all that Aleimar had done for them. The parents shared what their children's experiences were like in other schools and said HCP had changed their lives. For many of the families it was an emotional and heartfelt expression of gratitude for what Aleimar had done for them.

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.

- Teachers participated in eight sessions of the Incredible Years Teacher Training program. Feedback from them indicated that all of them found the group helpful. They noted the structured activities were particularly helpful as they were immediately incorporated into the students' individualized treatment plans. Each week the teachers would report back on their homework and were excited to share their success in applying the skills in their classroom.

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

- We received updates on our four graduates from SOS Children's Village in Bethlehem. The SOS social worker reported that they are doing well behaviorally but struggling academically.



Aleimar volunteer, Roberta, receiving gifts from two of the mothers



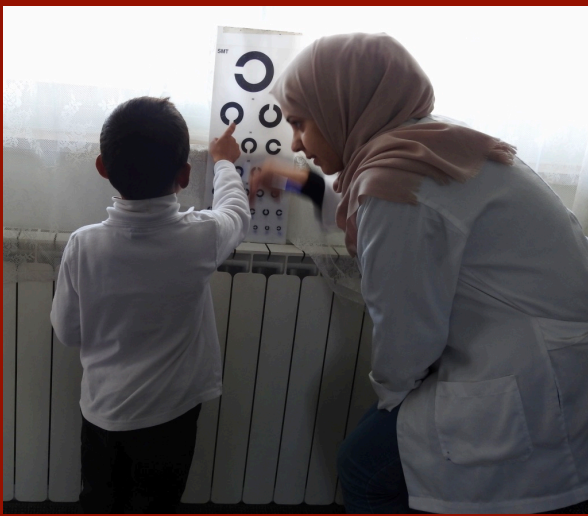
Aleimar visitors with grateful parents!



Two of our former graduates visiting HCP



Dental screenings by "Beit Al Nour"



Vision Screening by House of Light



Two of the Norwegian students enjoying the Christmas Lunch!

While not optimal, it is understandable that the graduates may be struggling to adjust from a classroom size of 5 to one with 32-35 students. Unfortunately, we are not able to offer any assistance to their families of origin because we have no information regarding who and where they are.

- The remaining four graduates from last year continue to do well in their current placements.
- It is always gratifying to have our older graduates visit HCP. This quarter, two of our former graduates returned to visit and help out with our Friday programs.

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

- This quarter a dental screening was provided to all of our students by "Beit Al Nour". Seven students received the "Perfect Teeth" award and a small gift to accompany it!
- In November, House of Light did their annual vision screening for us. We were surprised by the increase in children needing to wear glasses. Fourteen out of thirty-five students now wear glasses. We will continue to monitor this trend to determine if there are underlying issues that we are unaware of.
- We had three students from the University of Stavanger's School of Social Work in Stavanger, Norway, intern at the HCP this quarter. They attended mothers' group, went on home visits with our school social worker, and helped in the classrooms. The Norwegians shared how different our program was from every other organization they visited while they were in Bethlehem and how much they enjoyed their time with us!

