



Holy Child Program

برنامج الطفل المقدس

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

Third Quarter Report: February 1 – April 30, 2018



***A dedicated student helps
plant a special fig tree***



***Iskander walks with student and our own
HCP graduate leads the horse!***

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.

- We had an interesting group of visitors during this reporting period. Two Japanese medical students who briefly interned with us, three Chinese guests, a group from the United States, and a Swiss group.
- The priest who accompanied the Swiss group has been a frequent visitor and stalwart friend to HCP over the past twenty years. Several years ago a fig tree was planted in HCP's memorial garden in memory of his brother. Unfortunately, the fig tree did not survive. However during his visit this year, we insisted we plant another fig tree. One of the students prepared the site and helped plant the tree!
- Opportunities like these enable the students to feel they are part of a greater community. They have a sense of being able to serve others and being part of a worldwide family by caring for the memorial trees or roses.
- This quarter, students whose classrooms earned enough points, took a field trip to visit the Garbi's Arabian horses in Bethlehem. Each student got to ride around the ring and then visit with the horses. Arabian horses are a great source of pride in this region and we are so grateful to the Garbi family for providing these therapeutic experiences for our students.

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.

- Due to Ministry of Educations regulations, HCP's religious education program had to be restructured to comply with governmental directives regarding instruction of the Quor'an. Every school in Palestine is required by law to teach the Quor'an. While it was difficult to segregate students for religion education, we chose to see this as an opportunity to develop a program that was even better than before.
- Beginning this quarter, Muslim and Christian students are now instructed in their faith separately. Muslim students follow the approved government curriculum and the Christian students receive instruction in the Catholic faith, both the Latin and Orthodox. However, each day during the general assembly, students share with each other what they are learning about their faith and pray together. This not only reinforces what they are learning, it opens the door for discussion among them.
- The restructuring process turned out to be fortuitous. We found that many of the Christian students were lacking in fundamental concepts and we could now address these in a more comprehensive manner.
- A major focus of our religious education program is to have our students experience the religious sites of this region in conjunction with what they are studying. These experiences make what they are learning so much more real and present to them!
- Holy Week and Easter are uniquely celebrated at HCP. The children and staff participate in the liturgy by re-enacting each day of the Holy Week sequence. Beginning on Palm Sunday we process around the school with palms decorated with flowers from our garden. Holy Thursday, our director, Iskander, washes the feet of each student. Good Friday is commemorated with the students making their own Stations of the Cross and then solemnly processing around the property stopping to pray each station in a different spot.
- Easter of course is celebrated with coloring eggs and a massive egg hunt!



Hosanna in the Highest and our Palm Sunday procession begins!



Iskander washing the students feet on Holy Thursday



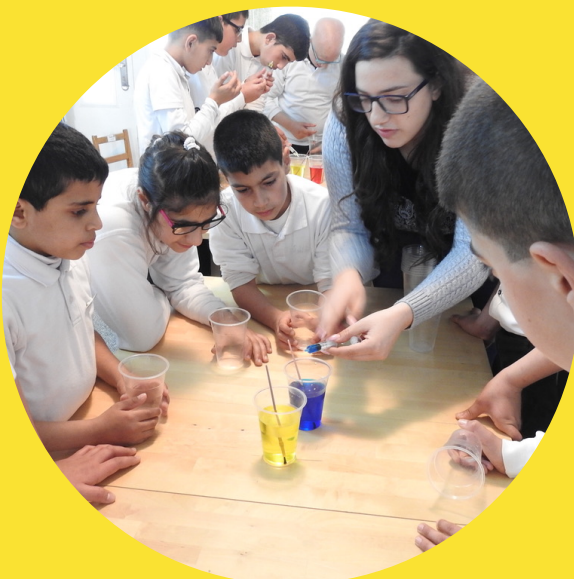
Stations of the Cross procession



Mass with Fr. Imad at Shepherds' Field



A proud student showing his badge of achievement



Miss Mirna from Bethlehem University showing the students how to mix colors

- During the last week of March Father Imad, OFM from Bethlehem, gave a one day spiritual retreat for the entire HCP staff. The retreat included a beautiful mass held in the grotto chapel at the Shepherds' Field in Best Sahour. The entire staff shared how much they appreciated Father Imad and this day of spiritual reflection and prayer.

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

- During this period students earned a badge in Dinosaur school for completing the unit on problem solving. Next up is the unit on anger management with Tiny Turtle!
- Our student Intern from Bethlehem University School of Education gave a science and art workshop for our students. They began by learning how to mix primary colors to create new secondary and complementary colors. Afterwards they mixed their colors with glitter to create individual snowflakes.
- The big field trip this quarter was an all day hike to the village of Battir with a Palestinian nature specialist! Our guide pointed out the local flora and fauna to us, teaching students about the local environment. Once we reached the village of Battir we visited the Roman pool, which is still operational, but not in use, 2,000 years later! Battir is famous for its pure spring water and the vegetables grown in their village. Students also visited the handicraft museum in Battir. An interesting fact about Battir is that it is the only city in this region that does not have a separation wall with Israel. All the residents of Battir signed a covenant with the Israeli government stating they would never commit an act of aggression against the State of Israel. As a result, the farmers are allowed full access to all their lands and water. Students contemplated this as they watched Israeli trains pass by Battir.

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

- Only one family therapy session was scheduled during this quarter. We have noticed over the past several years, a marked decline in family sessions during the third quarter. Our untested hypothesis is that by third quarter the mothers have acquired, and are successfully implementing, many of the skills they have learned in the Incredible Years Parenting program. Further testing of this hypothesis needs to be conducted, so stay tuned.
- The school social worker made four home visits during this period. One of the visits was to a student who was hospitalized in Hebron. We are fortunate that our social worker is also a registered nurse with an extensive clinical background. She is able to help triage services in situations like these.
- During this period there were eleven sessions of the IY mothers' parenting program and we started a new Incredible Years parenting group with seven mothers. This is the fifth cohort of mothers to start the parenting program!
- In addition to group sessions, the group leaders made seven home visits to mothers in the parenting groups. The mothers requested these visits to assess how the skills and strategies they learned in group were being implemented at home with their families. These visits also resulted in a lot of brainstorming and feedback from the mothers. It was also an opportunity to get to know the mothers in a fuller context. Being invited into someone's home is an intimate gesture, especially when asking for feedback! Needless to say the visits always included some delicious food!

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.

- We held five Incredible Years Teacher Training sessions during this period. Teachers continue to report that they are "grateful" for the training and that they are using many more of the skills as a result of the role-plays, group discussion and homework activities.
- Trainers from Ergosoma Germany returned to HCP and offered a follow up workshop to the



Hiking into Battir with our nature guide



Pausing to study the plants



After a long hike, a delicious lunch was had by all



Viewing the Roman Pools in Battir



iPads up and ready for action during the Ministry of Education IT department training



A most delicious luncheon provided by one of our graduates!



Students and Faculty visiting from Nablus Open University

one they gave in the fall. Additionally, those who were interested could receive an individual session, which focused on the reduction of physiological stress. Given the environmental stress of this region, this was a tremendous gift for our staff.

- In March, the Ministry of Education IT department in Ramallah sent three trainers to HCP to provide our teachers with an in-service on how to use the iPads we have with the Ministry of Education curriculum. online

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

- One of our graduates returned to visit us this quarter and his grateful family provided lunch for the entire school! The family offered the meal in thanksgiving for all their son accomplished at HCP and that he continues to do well in his current placement!

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

We had a number of different organizations visit us this quarter

- Of particular note was a visit from the Special Education Department from Nablus Open University. One of the students from the Open University attended the Autism parenting groups HCP ran at Ah Najah University in Nablus from February 2016 to April 2017. She visited HCP with all the other parents in the Autism group in May 2017. Evidently she was so impressed with our program she urged the special education department from Nablus Open University to take a field trip to HCP.
- A bus with 20 students, several faculty members and the head of the special education department arrived at the end of March and brought sweets for everyone! The students and faculty visited the classrooms, spoke with our teachers and spent several hours learning about our program. Dr. Amjad Al Saah, head of the special education department, thanked HCP for our "hospitality,

our "hospitality, willingness to cooperate and welcoming their second year students." He then presented us with a special plaque expressing their gratitude.

- When the time to leave came, many of the visitors expressed their regret that they had to return to Nablus. They shared they were "surprised to learn that there was a school like HCP in Palestine, and now that they had found us, they didn't want to leave!" We hope that there will be opportunities for further exchanges with HCP in the future!
- Three employees of the National Bank of Palestine gave a presentation to HCP students on money management principles. As part of a government initiative to educate its citizens in money management, the government chooses a Palestinian bank to visit all of the schools in the West Bank to give a short educational presentation to the students. Each year a different bank is chosen to visit the schools, thereby exposing the students to a number of different local banks.
- The two managers and presenter from the National Bank of Palestine told us they were astonished by our students. They said they had presented at every school in the Bethlehem region and none of the students from any of the schools asked questions like ours.
- This is the second time we have had one of the presenting banks say this to us. Two years ago, the Manager from the Bank of Palestine said he has never been asked such difficult questions and that he didn't even know the answers to some of them!
- Experiences like these are particularly gratifying because they demonstrate the ability of our students to engage in critical thinking!



Iskander receiving the plaque!



Students questioning, contemplating and listening to the National Bank of Palestine's presentation, while two bank managers (in back) observe our students with great interest!