



Holy Child Program

برنامج الطفل المقدس

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

Fourth Quarter Report: May 1 – August 31, 2018



Unwinding at the Benedictine Monastery in Tabgha, Hooray!



Mass for our benefactors at the Benedictine Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes

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.

- The trip to Tabgha is the culmination of the school year. During this three day trip staff and students bond at a deep level. We truly are family as we eat, sleep, pray and adventure together! When the time finally arrives, students board the bus, cross the checkpoint into Israel and journey 3 hours north to the Sea of Galilee. When we arrive, we are warmly welcomed by the Benedictine monks and their enthusiastic volunteers. As soon as sleeping arrangements are settled, the children rush to play in the cool stream that runs through the campground. The first day is spent swimming, visiting the beach and getting settled. A delicious barbecue is prepared by HCP chefs, Yousef and Iskander. As dusk settles, everyone gathers in the shelter by the beach for a bonfire.
- This year we were fortunate enough to be able to have the bus and driver for the entire trip instead of just dropping us off and picking us up. This enabled us to take the students many more places. The second day began with Mass in the Benedictine Church of The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. Here we prayed in gratitude for the intentions of all our benefactors, without whom these trips would not be possible. Activities after Mass included visiting the church of the Primacy of St. Peter and sailing on the Sea of Galilee.

- On our third day we left Tabgha for Hamat Gader Hot Springs. Located near the Jordanian border, this was our first time visiting these famous hot springs. Hamat Gader is Israel's largest and oldest spa complex built originally by the Romans over 1,800 years ago. Hamat Gader nature reserve is also home to some two hundred crocodiles from all over the world, as well as a mini-safari, which houses large and small animals. If that wasn't enough, there is the petting zoo! Our students spent the day swimming in the therapeutic mineral pools and visiting with the different animals. It was hard to leave but it was a wonderful conclusion to our three-day adventure.
- It is important to note that these trips would never happen without the assistance of many Israelis who worked hard on behalf of our children by obtaining permission for them to visit Israel. This assistance and our welcome in Israel forges bonds we hope will be sustained in the future. Experiences such as these help expand our childrens' perception of their environment and worldview.

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.

- On our 3-day trip to Tabgha, the students visited and prayed in a number of holy sites where Jesus preached. We stayed at the beautiful Benedictine monastery built near the site where Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed five thousand. We visited the Mount of Beatitudes and the church of the Primacy of St. Peter in Capernaum. We sailed in the "Jesus" boat on the Sea of Galilee as Jesus did with his disciples. The "Jesus" boat is a modern day replica of the type of boats the disciples would have used for fishing. At night we gathered round a campfire on the Sea of Galilee as the disciples would have gathered with Jesus. Religious education doesn't get much better than this! While each site we visited was explained in terms of its significance, the transformative piece was for each of the students to be able to physically immerse themselves in experience; smelling the same scents of the sea and land, listening to the same birds calling and trees rustling, walking the same paths the disciples may have walked. For staff and students, this was a magical trip and one that is greatly anticipated every year



Enjoying a different type of mineral water in the hot springs of Hamat Gader



Sailing in the "Jesus Boat" on the Sea of Galilee



Night time campfires by the beach



Summer students are welcomed to Dina Dinosaur school by Wally



Hard at work on art projects



Girls just want to have fun!

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

- By the end of the school year in May, every student has a plan for next year, whether they are returning to HCP or graduating to a new program. The summer program is offered to prospective students and for children needing an in depth assessment of their strengths and needs. It began the first week of June and it is a time of intense assessment, an accelerated Dina Dinosaur school program, art projects and lots of fun! The end of the program culminates in lots of water play. We take a field trip to a near by pool and host water games back at HCP such as "slip and slide", paddle pools and lots of bubble blowing.
- This year nine students attended the two-week summer program. At the end of this two-week period teachers determine which students we will admit for the 2018-2019 school year. This year was not as traumatic as other years where we have had double or triple the number of students per opening. Regardless of who gets accepted, all of the children have a wonderful time. Fortunately, we were able to accept seven of the nine applicants for next fall.

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

- Beginning in May parents become very involved helping their children enrolled in other schools prepare for exams. These time constraints make it very difficult to attend any groups. Fortunately for HCP parents, end of the year exams are spaced over the last month and are given during the school day. This is much less stressful for the students and families. The end of the year frenzy for our families with children in other schools necessitates finishing groups by the end of April.
- In addition to not holding any mothers groups no family counseling sessions were scheduled.

- Typically during this quarter we would have a number of counseling sessions with the families of graduating students. However, this year we began discharge planning with the eight graduating families in the beginning of the school year. Placements and discharge plans were in place before we left for Tabgha. This made for a more relaxed end of the year for all involved! During this quarter we had five assessments for potential students.

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 quarter our staff was invited to visit the world renowned Israel Museum in Jerusalem. We were overwhelmed by the warm welcome we received from the Israel Museum. Our staff said, "They made us feel especially welcome!" We also felt we needed at least four days to get through the museum and were bitterly disappointed we only had one full day. We had a quick historical overview beginning with the ancient Egyptian display and ultimately ending up at an exhibit of fashion throughout ages. Our staff were honored to meet with the director of the Israel Museum, Dr. Bruno. We discussed arranging a field trip for our students to come for a daylong field trip. For most of the staff it was their first visit to the museum and all of them vowed to return. We all felt it was a truly amazing learning experience!
- Our Staff celebrate the end of school year by gathering together for a special dinner. We are extraordinarily blessed with a gifted team of professionals, without which there would be no Holy Child Program. It is important to celebrate their work and their extraordinary commitment to the Program. It is what makes our program special.
- This was observed by the head of the volunteers at the Benedictine Monastery in Tabgha. He said; "It strikes me again and again, how much this team loves the[se] kids and [how] committed they are." He is absolutely correct, our students are greatly loved.



Our guide at the Israel Museum



Meeting with the Israel Museum staff



Staff celebrating the end of the school year at a nearby restaurant!



***Congratulations to our graduates,
now let's eat the cake!***



***Students being coached on
how to do push ups correctly***



***Nursing Students prepare delicious &
nutritious snacks for us.***

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

- This year eight students graduated from the Holy Child Program. Four will be attending government school in the fall, one will attend a special needs program, one is enrolled in a vocational program and one student is returning to the United States and is enrolled in a special education program. The remaining student is still undecided whether he will return to government school or start in a vocational program. A place is reserved for him in both places until he chooses which he will attend. Graduation is often a joyous as well as sad occasion. This year one of the graduating students was in tears because he didn't want to leave HCP. Eventually he was consoled enough to join his fellow graduates in eating cake!

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 we enjoyed a visit from a guest from Seattle, Washington who is a professional physical fitness trainer. Not only did he help out each day by vacuuming, cleaning the classrooms and washing dishes, he gave an in-service for our students on physical fitness. It was very much a "hands on" experience to ensure that the students maintained the correct form in their workouts thus avoiding any potential injuries. Few of our students exercise and many lack any kind of core strength. We hope to be able to incorporate a regular physical fitness routine into our daily schedule in the future.
- We also received a visit from a group of nurses from Bethlehem University Nursing program. The nurses gave a wonderful presentation on healthy nutrition and the food pyramid. Best of all, they prepared healthy snacks for everyone. Our students not only enjoyed the food but the games and dancing afterwards, which were

designed as fun activities to get the children to exercise. It is heartening to know that there is a growing awareness of the importance of healthy nutrition and exercise. Both are powerful antidotes in combatting a stressful environment! As part of their program the student nurses had the students complete questionnaires on their eating and exercise habits. As they left, the nurses were extremely complimentary on how well behaved and polite our children were! Hooray for Dina Dinosaur school, our students are obviously using the skills they learned!!



Practicing proper hand washing



Thank you all for another great year at the Holy Child Program!