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ANERA 25 years of service Newsletter

American Near East Refugee Aid

Number 111 Fall 1995

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME



Nasser Mohammad

As close as brothers, these two orphaned boys play together outside the doors of Dar El-Yateem.

ANERA ADDS TULKAREM ORPHANAGE TO SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

ANERA is pleased to welcome Dar Al-Yateem Al-Arabi (House of Orphans) to its Scholarship Program later this fall. The orphanage and school is located in the small West Bank town of Tulkarem. Along with the other five ANERA-supported schools, the participation of Dar Al-Yateem in the Scholarship Program will enable ANERA to reach even more orphaned, handicapped and poor children in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

Directors and teachers from all the West Bank schools report an increase in the number of children and families needing help. In this society, extended

family or close friends are the preferred guardians for poor or orphaned children. But the extensive family breakdown in the West Bank caused by years of occupation and intifada often makes this less possible. The high rate of unemployment and increasing economic problems in the region worsen the problem. Orphanages are sometimes the only option. But the few orphanages that do exist in the area are overburdened and rely almost entirely on charitable donations.

Established in 1961 by the local Arab Orphan's Society, the original concept behind Dar Al-Yateem was to offer

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LOCAL STUDENTS RAISE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

On a hot spring day in Washington, D.C. most children would be found in a swimming pool or at a park, but not the newest members of ANERA's Scholarship Program. Ranging in age from 9-14, the five members of the Save Our World Club organized a series of unique events this spring to raise money for needy Palestinian children through ANERA's Scholarship Program.

The five club members, Eve and Ida Sawyer, Julie and Michael Lenard, and Emily Turner, raised \$277.76 for ANERA. Their generous contribution provided scholarships for students at Atfaluna School for the Deaf in Gaza and at the Dar El-Tifl School in East Jerusalem, with the remaining \$77.76 being given to ANERA's Educational Development Fund.

The May fundraiser was a sequel to a similar one the children held last summer in which the money went toward sponsoring an Ethiopian child through another charity. "The children looked into many humanitarian and child sponsorship organizations before deciding on

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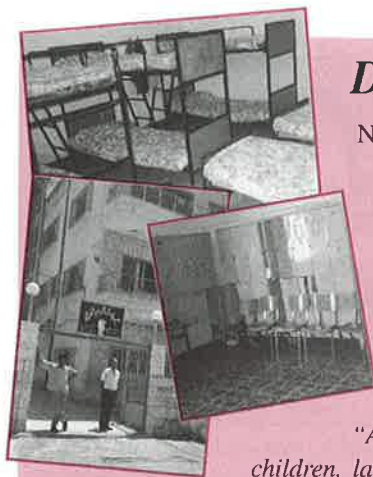
Tulkarem Orphanage from page 1

basic care for orphaned children in the community. As the number of children without parents in the West Bank grew, members of the community pulled together to provide desperately needed support and guidance. According to Ms. Suzanne Awwad, the school's director, "life will always be difficult for an orphan in the West Bank. Without a mother or father, or both, we knew we had to work together as a community to provide special care and security for the child's future."

Today, the orphanage cares for approximately 100 orphaned boys between the ages of 6 and 18. Sadly, there is not enough room for any more children. The boys live together in crowded dormitories at the Center with a director who serves as a teacher and parent. The Arab Orphans Society employs 43 full time staff, 12 of whom are social workers, to work with Dar Al-Yateem and the many other community programs administered at the Center. But the level of support does not stop there. The orphanage also provides – to the extent of its abilities – scholarships to help its students attend college or vocational training programs. The school has provided over 250 scholarships over the past 30 years for its students, some of whom have gone on to become university graduates, doctors, and engineers.

Dar Al-Yateem also adds special touches to make sure that the orphans develop self-esteem and feel secure as they mature through adolescence into adulthood. For instance, each child receives a small amount of pocket money, when available, to spend as they wish so that they feel more like their peers. After graduation, the school continues to provide moral support through follow up visits to all of the orphans' cities or villages. When possible, graduates return to the school as mentors to their younger "brothers".

The school has made great strides in recent years to also reach out to boys and girls in the surrounding communities. A new pilot project was recently introduced to help delinquent children between the ages of 9 and 18. A full time psychologist, on staff for the orphans, also offers an advanced outreach program based on



Despite obvious needs...

Nasser Mohammad, a university student from Washington, D.C., has volunteered with ANERA since May of this year. During a recent trip to the Middle East, he visited Dar Al-Yateem in the company of Ghada Rabah, ANERA's education specialist in Jerusalem, to make arrangements for ANERA's involvement with the school. He reports the following:

"As I climbed the stairway I was overwhelmed by children, laughing and playfully chasing one another in the midst of a graduation reception. However, after having returned a short while later from a meeting in the school director's office, I was shocked that the building, missing the children, food and activity, more closely resembled an orphanage abandoned years ago. As I looked around I noticed the library's stock was scarce, the walls drab, the lockers literally falling apart. The orphans' bedrooms were crowded with old beds covered by torn sheets. These are the conditions of the orphans who live here – this is their home. Then I was told of the long waiting list, and was saddened to realize that these were the lucky ones.

But when I saw past material things, I was immediately struck by the organization's attention to detail and thoroughness. What impressed me the most was simply the staff's deep and unconditional belief in and love for the children. This sort of devotion translates into an atmosphere in which the orphans treat each other as family. The children there don't just lighten up the old building, they are in fact the life of the orphanage. Talkative and happy, they were always ready to pose for a picture. The orphanage's staff, through much perseverance, have accomplished the task of giving a loving home to orphans with the hope of a better future. This promises to be a fulfilling addition to ANERA's scholarship program."

— Nasser Mohammad

intensive counselling to the many non-resident children who come to the orphanage.

These measures, however, do not come without cost and there is little, if any, money to spare. The staff is extremely devoted to their work but there is only so much they can do with their limited resources. Therefore, although Dar Al-Yateem has succeeded in providing the basics — love and care, clothing, food, medical and educational services — there is so much more to do. If additional funding does become available, the school hopes to update the library, repair and refurbish the playground equipment, and build additional dormitory space so that more orphans can enroll in the program.

In addition to private donations and volunteer assistance, the school holds fundraising parties and sports events to supplement their budget. At times, the organization rents its auditorium (the size of an average American living room) for weddings or other social

events. By sponsoring these activities, Dar Al-Yateem not only helps support itself, it also provides much needed services to the community.

ANERA also provides assistance to other projects for the care and education of Palestinian orphans. These include The Mercy Association for Children in Gaza, The Spafford Children's Center and the Dar El-Tifl girls' school and orphanage, both in Jerusalem. These and other educational programs and projects for children depend heavily on the generous support of people like you to maintain their current services. With your help, we hope to continue to assist these and other worthy organizations. ❏

Scholarship Information

If you would like to provide a one-year scholarship for a child at Dar Al-Yateem or any of the other five schools in the ANERA scholarship program, please use the coupon on page 3.

Local Students from page 1

ANERA, and they organized all the activities themselves," says Kem Sawyer, Eve and Ida's mother. "One of the reasons they chose ANERA was that they were impressed with the low administrative costs compared to other charities."

Eve Sawyer, the club's president, says she read about the scholarship program in the newsletter and wrote a letter requesting more information. "I liked ANERA's program because it was more personal and we got a lot of stuff on the person we were helping." After learning about the program, Eve and her friend and partner, Julie Lenard, wanted to have a bigger and better fundraiser this year in order to sponsor as many children as they could.

During the 1994 and 1995 fundraisers, the children sold cookies, crafts, and a variety of other home-made items. They all worked together in publicizing the event. After two successful years, these young, and savvy, fundraisers decided to form the club and bring in additional members. Eve, Julie, Ida, and Michael remained responsible for making clay jewelry, painting post cards, and creating other assorted items. They all helped by hanging posters throughout the city in preparation for the big event. Ida, who made the multicolored jewelry (a huge success), said that "It



Kem Sawyer

From left: Ida Sawyer, Emily Turner, Eve Sawyer, and Michael Lenard in front of Wingmasters restaurant in Washington, D.C. Julie Lenard not pictured.

took about two months to make all of the different earrings, necklaces and bracelets that we sold."

Then on the day of the sale they set up two large card tables outside the Cleveland Park Metro station to display their items along with a sign that stated where the money was going. Then they were open for business. Wingmasters, a local restaurant, noticed a group of people crowded around the children's tables and after investigating decided to donate soft drinks for the children to sell.

At the end of the day the club had raised almost three hundred dollars. Eve says the club plans to have another sale

next year. "We hope to use the money to keep sponsoring the same children we sponsored this year." Until then, these thoughtful children are spending part of their summer vacations volunteering at local soup kitchens. They hope that their efforts will in some small way "save our world." ■

How To Get Involved

We hope that you are as inspired by Save our World's concern and ingenuity as we are. If you know of any unique fundraisers, or if you have any creative ideas you would like to share, we would love to hear from you.



YES, I want to help ANERA's projects in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Lebanon

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 and above: Founders | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 to \$999: Sustainers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 to \$9,999: Builders | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 to \$499: Creators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 to \$4,999: Benefactors | <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to learn more about funding a special project through ANERA. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 to \$2,499: Sponsors | |

Contributions of \$250 or more to this year's Annual Fund will be recognized by category in ANERA's Annual Report (FY96). Further recognition opportunities exist for large, special project gifts.

- General Programs
- Gaza/West Bank Fund
- Lebanon Relief
- Scholarship:

I would like to provide a one year scholarship (\$100 per child) for a:

- Palestinian child
- Lebanese child
- School where need is greatest

Sponsors receive a photo of the child and letters from the child's school during the year.

\$200 \$100 \$75 \$50 \$35 \$25 Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

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ANERA's 1996 Annual Fund Under Way

ANERA's Annual Fund allows us to continue and to expand our social and economic programs in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Lebanon. Thanks to all of you who have helped this year's fund get off to a good start. With your continued support we can meet our Fund goal of \$500,000 by the end of our fiscal year, in May 1996.



Friends in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area can now contribute to ANERA through the United Way of the National Capital Area workplace giving campaign. Look for us under International Service Agencies (ISA) #0307. Consult your place of employment today to see if you are eligible!

FOR OUR INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

Please send your donations using an international money order or in U.S. dollars. Banks charge ANERA an average of \$40 to convert and process your check, regardless of how much you donate. We would all rather spend that money for projects!

Please Consider Including ANERA in Your Will or Living Trust. Contact Nina Dodge, Director, Major Gifts for further information.

ANERA has recently received donations in honor and memory of the following:

In Honor of . . .

ADK (an international Sorority of Women's Educators) ■ Mary Gubser ■ Charlotte Frost Byrd ■ Dr. and Mrs. A. Jihan ■

In Memory of . . .

Thelma Bindah ■ Vibert Bindah, Jr. ■ Frank Gossler ■ Liston F. Hills ■ Heinz and Else Kappes ■ Malcolm Kerr ■ Ronald D. McLaurian ■ Thomas J. Moore ■ Loretta D.S. O'Neill ■ Tanya Pinkowitz ■ Norma S. Perry ■ Joe Rapa ■ Joe Rapa Jr. ■

ANERA

The ANERA Newsletter is published quarterly by American Near East Refugee Aid, 1522 K St., NW, Ste., 202, Washington, DC 20005, Tel. 202-347-2558. Fax 202-682-1637

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Photos: Kem Sawyer, Save the Children, Nasser Mohammad

Design: Omnigraphics Digital Studio

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ISSN 1966-3584



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Nonprofit Organization
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