

ANERA

AMERICAN NEAR EAST REFUGEE AID

FOUNDED 1968

Newsletter

Number 136 Spring 2002

Lebanon Crossings *by Paula McNicholas*

Commitment to assisting an extraordinarily diverse group of people...this is a common characteristic of the programs supported by ANERA in Lebanon. And on this, my first visit to Lebanon, I saw community building over and over again.

The 4.3 million people who live in Lebanon are, to say the least, diverse. Aside from Lebanese, one finds other communities: Syrians, Palestinians, Kurds and more. And the Lebanese themselves are a rich mosaic: Sunni and Shiite Muslims, Druzes, and a variety of Christian groups—Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic and American Orthodox,

just to name the larger communities. Yet, all the communities here are working in their own ways to help Lebanon recover from years of civil war and continuing economic hardship. The people I met respect Lebanon's diversity and are engaged in dialogues to build a unified effort to support Lebanon's reconstruction and future prosperity.

The current economic situation in Lebanon is critical. Poverty levels, at 28%, are very high. Even after 13 years of peace, the war in Lebanon (1975 to 1989) is the primary cause of today's poverty. People were displaced, infrastructure destroyed, production and productivity dropped, private investment curtailed, and wages plummeted. With headlines drawing international aid elsewhere, Lebanon struggles to recover with very limited resources.

This limitation places a great deal of responsibility on communities and social service institutions to overcome obstacles and meet basic human needs. Yet ANERA's partners in Lebanon are inspiring examples of people's grassroots initiatives to create positive change and improve lives.

Everything is possible at Al-Kafaat and everyone is welcomed regardless of origin or religion. In 1957, Nadeem and Lily Shwayri established Al-Kafaat which today serves over

continued on page 2

AmeriCares and The Olayan Group Honored for Humanitarian Work

AmeriCares and The Olayan Group were honored by ANERA at our 2001 Annual Dinner in Washington on January 25, 2002. Over 240 people attended the dinner at which AmeriCares and The Olayan Group were honored for their contributions to ANERA's mission of reducing poverty and relieving suffering in the Middle East.

Peter Gubser, president of ANERA, lauded AmeriCares for providing more than 300,000 pounds of critically needed medicines and medical supplies to ANERA programs in Gaza and the West Bank. Upon accepting the award Rachel Granger, AmeriCares' vice president of international programs, noted, "AmeriCares' medical assistance will be sent to the

continued on page 3

Paula McNicholas/ANERA



Al-Kafaat provides a safe environment catering to the children's special needs and providing a feeling of ownership and success.

Inside

- ANERA's Peace Plan 3
- West Bank Field Update 3
- In Memory of
Nicholas Thacher 3
- 2002 Annual Fund Update 4

4,500 mentally and physically disabled children and adults from throughout Lebanon. Students attend academic and vocational classes, take physical and occupational therapy, and work to improve the future. The focus of the curriculum is to strengthen them individually and as part of the larger community. Walking around I saw children in wheelchairs being pushed by their friends instead of adult caregivers. The children take care of each other — results of community building are readily apparent.

Founded by Jeannie Safa in 1960, Institut de Reeducation Audio-Phonetique (IRAP) provided refugees with emergency aid during the civil war. Today it serves hearing impaired people and helps poor women become independent and self-sufficient. Focused on eliminating poverty, and strengthening and improving their communities, their

work is entirely community initiated and driven.

After the war, many families were left without any means of economic support. Because young children were not in school, women had little opportunity to earn money to support their families. Understanding that women were capable of producing quality handcrafts, IRAP developed a cottage industry enabling women to earn incomes while continuing to care for their children at home.

The Association for the Development of Palestinian Camps began work in 1969. To help women and youth living in the refugee camps from becoming more marginalized and isolated from the rest of society the Association manages an embroidery project. Creating and selling beautifully embroidered products gives women a sense of pride, illustrates their rich cultural heritage and provides income

Paula McNicholas/ANERA



Samira creates merchandise like cushions and coasters from traditional patterns for the Association for the Development of Palestinian Camps.

to support their families. ANERA has also supported the Association's pre-school program and provided a substantial grant to start a revolving loan fund for small businesses.

Lebanon is in the midst of a modernization that is readily recognizable. But underneath the veneer of urban renewal and business vitality, is the hard fact that a record number of those living in Lebanon are unemployed and the former middle class has all but disappeared. There are rich and there are poor. For the poor, life is hard and getting harder.

Based in a refurbished school in the Bab Tebbaneh quarter of Tripoli in Northern Lebanon, an area with a high incidence of child labor, the Literacy Campaign for Working Children provides education — and hope — for working children. Here, working children study and learn in small classes of fifteen students, gaining skills in reading, writing and arithmetic. They also learn about child labor laws and the civil rights of minors that will help them protect themselves from unscrupulous employers. Instead of working with dangerous heavy machinery, these students work through an approved curriculum twice a week for three hours a night.

Each of ANERA's local partners and their projects started with a small group of very dedicated volunteers

continued on page 4

In Honor of...

Lillian Abdou • Aziz Abdul-Rahim • Lila Abdul-Rahim • Walid Abdul-Rahim • Lana Ab-Sahyun • Zarina Agee • All my children and grands • Blair Apperson • Said & Salime Asfour • Victor Said Asfour • Hana Ashwari • Hanan Ashwari • Jean Edson Atallah • Folke Bernadotte • Nabila Breir • Rev. Mark B. Brown • Charlotte Frost Byrd • Karen Cayci • Josephine Chidiac • a Colleague's birthday • Tom & Gerry Cuite • John Davis • Margie Earl • Mr. & Mrs. Simon Estfan • Kenneth C. Felsted • Dale Glendening • Alicia Gonzalez • Anna Green • W. G. Greenslade • Henry Haddad • Michael Haddad • Dr. Raymond G. Haddad • Ms. Alice Hardin • Raymond A. Hare • Mr. & Mrs. Calvin Holland • Mr. & Mrs. Stan Holland • Hope & Peace • Kitterland Hozie • Justice • Walter E. Kelley • Mrs. Elizabeth Keylon • Tai Yodonawa Kilby • Pales Kiniam • C. William Kontos • Sally & Tom Mallison • Eleanor Mansour • Lori Mansour • Mrs. Ellen Maudsley • Mr. & Mrs. Robert McBride • Frances Modi • Nabil Mohammed • Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Moorman • My parents • Lizze Nassin • Mr. & Mrs. Greg Neal • Fredrik C. Norberg • Palestinian Children • Palestinian Victims of Violence • Palestinians Who Suffer • Parents • Peacemakers • David Peacock Jr. • the People of Palestine • Marsaret Cochran Phillis • Our grandchildren • the Poor Kids • R. Pulfry • Maxwell Rosnticht • Patriarch Sabba • George N. Saffouri • Dr. Wadi I. Sawabini • Ellie Schnitzer • Shehhey Y. Smith • William & Pauline Spofford • Romain & Ted Swedenburg • Nick Thacher • Mr. & Mrs. Charles Trice • Kyle Wilson • 9/11 victims

In Memory of Nicholas Thacher

We are deeply saddened by the death of Ambassador Nicholas Thacher, a wonderful friend and supporter of ANERA. Ambassador Thacher served on ANERA's Board of Directors and numerous committees from 1997 until the present. He lent us his knowledge of the Middle East, his keen understanding of philanthropy, and his terrific partnership. He brought many new supporters into ANERA's midst.

After serving in World War II, Ambassador Thacher joined the U.S. State Department. He was U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1970-73. Returning to San Francisco, he worked as Vice President, International Department of Wells Fargo Bank, and taught at Stanford University. He served as president of the World Affairs Council of Northern California and on the boards of several organizations concerned with the Middle East.

Ambassador Thacher will be remembered for his many contributions to U.S.-Middle East relations, his dignity and generosity, the sparkle in his eye, and for his great sensibility, tenacity and commitment in working to make the world a better place. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife Jean-Louise and his family. ❁

Stocks Appreciated!

Gifts of appreciated stock to ANERA continue to be crucial for our work and have major tax advantages for our donors. For details on giving stock, please contact Nina Dodge or Cyril Bindah at (202) 347-2558.

West Bank Field Update

In the first days of the intifada, The Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC) worked to ensure basic medical services were continuously provided in a situation of mounting violence. In response to the increased pressure of closures, UPMRC organized eight mobile clinics to reach 1,500 patients a day and provides free services in areas under tight closure or curfew.

UPMRC's efforts include distributing delivery kits and training health workers to assist pregnant women. Comprehensive first aid training programs and free medical and rehabilitation services

prepare people and communities to address health and development problems arising from prolonged closure. (From *Fifteen Months – Intifada, Closures and Palestinian Economic Crisis*, World Bank, March 2002).

Over the years ANERA has partnered with UPMRC on a variety of projects. Recently ANERA facilitated a shipment of crutches and wheelchairs to be loaned to injured patients. These items were collected by the Palestinian American Women's Association in Washington, DC. ANERA helped pay the cost of packing, shipping and delivery of these vital items. ❁

Humanitarian, continued from page 2



(L to R) Peter Gubser, ANERA; Rachel Granger, AmeriCares; Celina de Sola, AmeriCares; Richard Hobson, The Olayan Group; and Les Janka, ANERA.

Middle East as long as the people of the region need help. AmeriCares and ANERA are proud to be working with each other to meet the challenges of improving the health and lives of needy people in these countries.”

The Olayan Group, said Gubser, “has not only been a long-time supporter of ANERA in its own right, but has served as an example, lead-

continued on page 4

ANERA's Peace Plan

Help people in need:

- have access to education, employment and health care
- increase their own abilities to live a good life

Help ANERA:

- reduce administrative costs
- plan for future projects

Help yourself:

- by giving automatically
- by making the world a better place for all of us.

Use the coupon or visit our website to start helping today!

Yes, I want to join ANERA's Peace Plan.

Here is my monthly gift of:

\$100 \$50 \$25 \$10

I authorize the transfer of the amount above from my account each month. A record of each contribution will appear on my statement and serve as my receipt. I understand that I may stop my contribution at any time, by contacting ANERA at 1522 K St., NW, Suite 202, Washington, DC 20005-1270, (202) 347-2558, or my bank.

Signature _____

Date _____

I have enclosed a check for my first monthly contribution, made payable to ANERA.

I want these donations to be on my credit cards.

2002 Annual Fund Update

The continuing support of ANERA's donors this spring will make it possible to meet our 2002 Annual Fund goal of \$1.2 million. Through ANERA's Annual Fund and our Palestinian Emergency Fund we are increasing support to meet both emergency and long-term economic, educational and health needs in the region in this year of increased hardship.

Crossings, continued from page 2

who desired to help others in need. They have all struggled through difficult times and grown to be among the most respected programs in their communities. Lebanon has been part of ANERA's focus since our founding in 1968 — the year of our first project in Lebanon. ANERA is proud to be affiliated with—each of these—well-respected and effective local organizations which are struggling to endure difficult times and continue providing their invaluable services. Our future work together will be built on these relationships so that necessary and high-quality services will continue to be available to people in need in Lebanon. ❁



Rob Moent/ANERA

At a food distribution point in Gaza a Palestinian woman and child receive powdered milk and oil.

Humanitarian, continued from page 3

ing other corporations and individuals to join our efforts.”

Richard Hobson, vice president for corporate communications at Olayan America Corporation, received the award on behalf of the company. Hobson remarked on ANERA's “consistent record in efficiently delivering meaningful humanitarian assistance to the people of Palestine. It remains the Olayan Group's fervent hope,” continued Hobson, “that a permanent, just and humane solution will be found to the conflict there and that ANERA will one day find that its mission, begun more than three decades ago, has been fulfilled.” ❁

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FOUNDED 1968

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