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ANERA 25 years of service Newsletter

American Near East Refugee Aid

Number 115 Winter 1997



Archbishop Of Canterbury To Inaugurate Medical Library

Gaza—The Archbishop of Canterbury will inaugurate the Gaza Ahli Arab Hospital's new Medical Library in March. The event will take place on the hospital's grounds, along with the dedication of the hospital's chapel.

Just back from the Gaza Strip, volunteer consultants Marjorie Stallman and Linda Hergenrather are very pleased with what they found there: the first medical library in the Gaza Strip was ready to get rolling. The generosity of ANERA donors, and hard work of our staff, Medical Committee and volunteers had paid off. The core collection of U.S. and British medical texts, developed and delivered by ANERA with the support of our donors, was in place. The first phase of the computer system was ready to be installed. Marjorie, a medical librarian, and Linda, a computer specialist, spent two weeks cataloging

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In the final scene of the film *Haifa*, Palestinian director Rashid Mashrawi stages a dramatic demonstration between two groups of refugees meant to represent the differing hopes and aspirations that residents of a Palestinian refugee camp hold for the peace process. A small group of older camp leaders silently carries a coffin stacked with olive branches down one street, signifying the death of the dream to return to pre-1948 Palestine. In the square large groups of children, young men and women, community leaders and recent prisoners wave flags and carry pictures of Arafat. The message? They want peace, but will resort to militancy if their refugee status is not resolved.

The refugees' future will be at the heart of a settlement between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), but it has been relegated to final status negotiations of the peace process. While the PNA has been gradually assuming control of Gaza and West Bank towns, the crucial issues of refugees' right of return, reparations and resettlement

so far have been discussed only in the Oslo multilateral working group on refugees. The fate of the more than 700,000 refugees living in Gaza, like that of the other 2½ million Palestinians registered as refugees in the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, is in limbo.

Renewing our Mission: The "R" in ANERA Stands for Refugee

ANERA was created in 1968 to help the second great wave of Palestinians displaced by the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. As UNRWA expanded services to the second generation of refugees, ANERA began to focus more on local West Bank and Gaza Palestinians who still retained their land, property or businesses and who were trying to cope with life under Israeli military occupation. ANERA also maintained small grants to refugee committees.

Since the 1993 Oslo Accords, UNRWA has gradually been turning over unused buildings and facilities, and offering training and technical support to camp resident committees as a pre-

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lude to the day when their fate will be determined. The Maghazi Camp Committee for Rehabilitation took over one of these facilities, and three years later ANERA has opened there an Educational Enhancement Center for Children. This was made possible by a "natural fit" partnership with the Maghazi Committee and the Pearl S. Buck Foundation.

The focus of our combined efforts is directed toward educating and training refugee youth in after-school programs. ANERA sees this as an area of great need, and one in which we can make a real difference. In sum, we are investing in the future rather than maintaining the status quo through the improvement of camp infrastructure or the delivery of day-to-day services.

Helping Maghazi's Children Look to the Future

Schools in the Maghazi Refugee Camp (population 17,000) share common problems with other Gaza educational institutions. Due to a lack of facilities, children must attend in two or even



Maghazi Camp Committee

Ibrahim, 11, wants to be a doctor. Meanwhile, he reads a lot and plays soccer. He is also an aficionado of the Maghazi Education Enhancement Center. His parents, a laborer and a housewife, have to make do with \$2,000 a year. But they firmly believe in education for their four children.

three shifts—and study in classes of fifty or sixty. Libraries and laboratories are non-existent. There are no public sports grounds, or movie theaters in all of Gaza. Twenty-eight years of occupation, coupled with severe disruptions of the *intifada* (a time of school closings and strikes, when many teachers and students went

to prison), have created a legacy of unresolved trauma for children.

Maghazi parents envisioned a place for their children to go before or after school. In the spring of 1996 ANERA helped make this a reality by delivering seven computers, a toy and book library, and funds to upgrade several unused rooms for ongoing classes and training. The Pearl S. Buck Foundation is providing follow-up funds to the project for the next three years through their child sponsorship program.

The camp committee has already put the equipment to good use, alternating the children's lessons with business training classes for women as an income-generating program. The toy and book library items are carefully loaned so that hundreds of children can enjoy them at any given time. We hope that this project will bring not only computers and technology to Maghazi, but people—donors, staff and their project ideas—that will provide a window to the world for children, volunteers and residents alike. ■

By Paula Stinson



Next Phase: Rafah Camp



One of ANERA's goals is to raise \$300,000 in 1997 to develop Educational Enhancement Centers in five more camps. Our next partner will be Rafah Camp, located on the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt.

Rafah lies in a historically pivotal location, at a point of sharp transition between desert and sown land, along the coastal road which has traditionally connected Africa and Asia. In 1967 the Israeli conquest of the Sinai temporarily united the parts of Rafah which were located on both sides of the border. Ironically the Camp David Accords proved to be a disaster for Rafah, as an impassable fence suddenly was erected along the international bor-

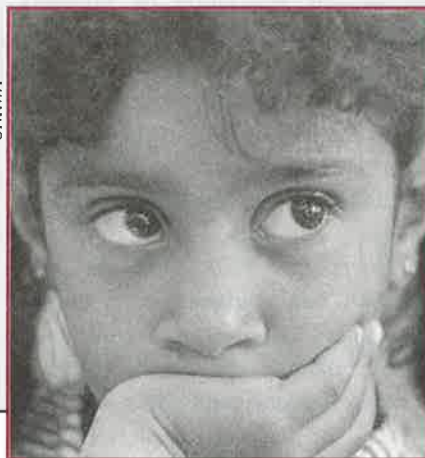
der, separating workers from their jobs, and even family members from each other. A visit to Rafah still shows this scar, with families along the "Shouting Wall" seeking to maintain some form of contact.

Rafah has an exceptionally large proportion of refugees and settled Bedouin. At present, the

Rafah area has a population of about 120,000, of whom 70,000 live in the various refugee quarters in the center of the city.

The Educational Enhancement Center will be located in the main refugee camp area. ANERA has helped the local Rafah Committee for several years with modest grants. Since then the committee has completed a house-to-house survey which shows a surprisingly high prevalence of children with disabilities. The Rafah Camp Committee sees the Center as being especially desirable in Rafah, whose youth are about as far as they can be from potential employment, entertainment and educational enrichment. ■

UNRWA



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the collection, setting up the computer system, and training a medical librarian and hospital staff in the use and maintenance of the library.

The library building, completed with a grant from the European Union, is located at Ahli Arab Hospital, one of many educational and medical institutions in the Middle East administered by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. In the current turmoil, resources are spread thin. Only a year ago, the Jerusalem Diocese called on its friends for help in transforming their empty new building into an active library. ANERA responded.

The computer system, in its current first phase, provides word processing capability, CD-ROM capacity, and the ability to perform administrative and library-specific tasks. It is equipped for networking, for when the Medical Library can add more computers.

Now Gaza's more than 2,000 health-care providers, confined to the Gaza Strip, will be able to refresh and develop their knowledge and skills on an on-going basis. Medical students can use the library to prepare for internation-

al competency exams. Moreover, the library will hold regular workshops and lectures on crucial public health issues. It will also create better cooperation within Gaza's health community, and among its six hospitals and 100 clinics.

ANERA's Medical Committee is now raising funds for the next phase of the library's development. Our goal is to create a core collection of medical journal subscriptions and indexes, both printed and on CD-ROM. This will enable health-care specialists to gain access to resources beyond the Gaza Strip borders. Finally, we will help to provide further specialized training for the new medical librarian in coordination with the American University of Beirut medical staff. ■

Thanks to ANERA Board member Margy Werling for her contribution to this article.

A VISION OF HOPE

We wish to extend our special thanks to Ms. Elaine Lubbers for her most generous memorial gift in honor of her mother Kathryn Huenink Lubbers, a mission-minded woman who taught primary school and raised eight children in Wisconsin. Elaine Lubbers' gift was made in lieu of a bequest, from the proceeds of property she sold. Her particular concern is to help Palestinian children who will need special assistance in facing the difficulties of the years to come.

For information about special gift opportunities through ANERA, please contact Nina Dodge, Director, Major Gifts, tel. (202) 347-2558, e-mail "ndodge@mail.anera.org".

A Tour of the Middle East

Long-time ANERA Board member Don Kruse, a retired foreign service officer who served as Consul in Jerusalem, is leading a tour to the Middle East from May 4 - 17, 1997. This Bible Lands Pilgrimage is sponsored by the National Presbyterian Church and is open to all. Participants will visit biblical sites in and around Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the

Galilee, and will meet with Christians living in Israel and Palestine, and with Palestinian and Israeli leaders to discuss issues concerning justice and peace. Participants will have the opportunity to visit ANERA projects.

If you are interested, contact Don Kruse at: 902 Carole Court, Vienna, VA 22180. Tel. (703) 242-0854. ■

Scholarship Information

If you would like to provide a one-year scholarship at one of the six schools in the ANERA scholarship program, please use the coupon below.



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

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| _____ \$10,000 and above: Founders | _____ \$500 to \$999: Sustainers |
| _____ \$5,000 to \$9,999: Builders | _____ \$250 to \$499: Creators |
| _____ \$2,500 to \$4,999: Benefactors | _____ \$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 (FY97). Further recognition opportunities exist for large, special project gifts.

_____ I have remembered ANERA in my will

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

Name: _____

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City, State, Zip _____

- 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.

G4.19

ANERA's Peace Plan: Looking Ahead

Through ANERA's monthly giving program, ANERA's Peace Plan, you can be a part of the solution to the currently troubled peace efforts in the Middle East. If you can contribute a modest monthly donation, please consider joining our electronic giving program. Your ongoing commitment will provide a steady, year-round stream of resources to support peace through ANERA's economic and community development, education, and health programs.

Here's how you can join. Decide how much you would like to contribute. Then send us the

coupon and your check for your first monthly gift. We take care of the rest. Each month your bank will automatically deduct the amount from your account and send it to ANERA. Donations will be clearly listed on your bank statement. Of course you are under no obligation. You can choose to change or cancel your donation at any time.

Not only does the plan make donating to ANERA quick and easy, it also helps to lower ANERA's administrative overhead costs.

You will be amazed at the difference a personal commitment like this can make. ■

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

Here is my monthly gift of: \$54 \$36 \$27 \$14 \$10 Other \$ _____

I authorize my bank to transfer the amount above from my account each month. A record of each contribution will appear on my bank 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. 

In Honor of...

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TRANSITIONS

Best wishes to **Traci Little** who left her position as ANERA's Director of Communications and Scholarship Program to work with CitiBank's Global Financial Services in New York. Traci was replaced in September by **Loretta Bondi**, a graduate of Rome University and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and a former journalist with *Corriere della Sera* and other major Italian publications.

ANERA

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