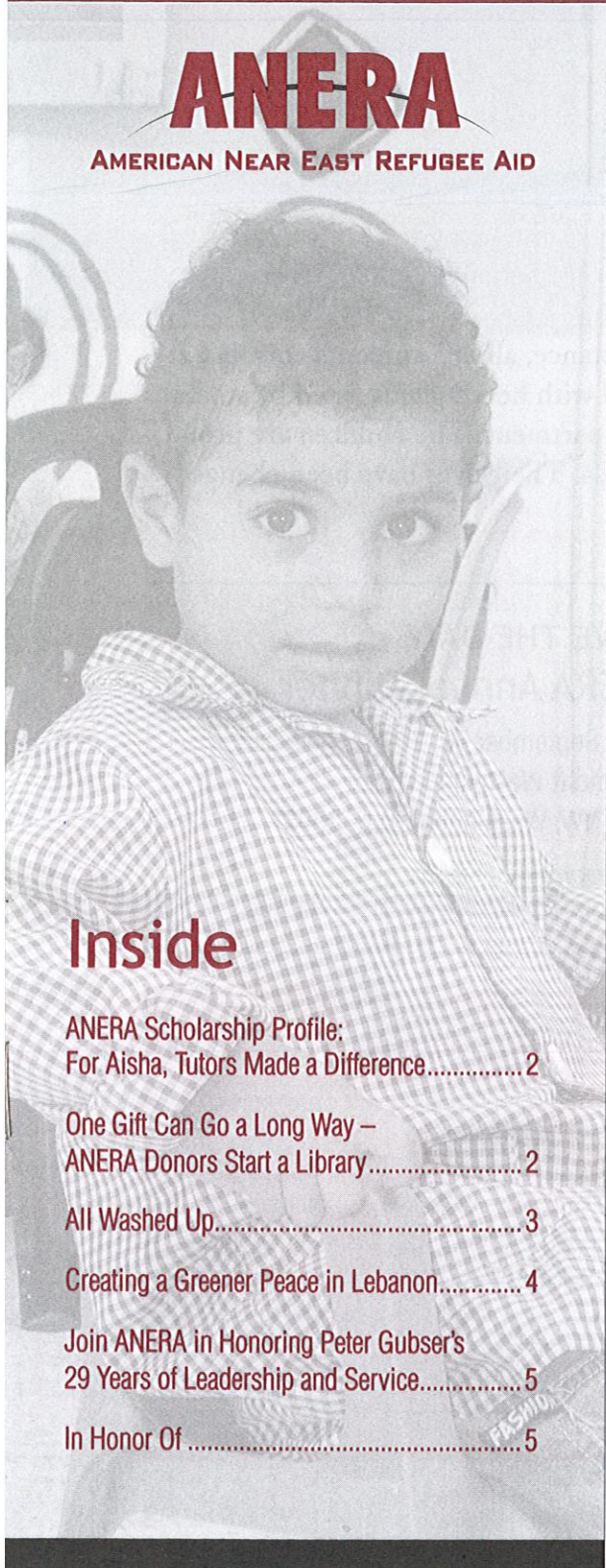


NEWS

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ANERA

AMERICAN NEAR EAST REFUGEE AID



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In Honor Of 5

Sign Language Brings Hope to a Family

GAZA – Having a profoundly deaf child was not easy to accept for members of the Hirtani family. Their initial reaction was shock and disbelief. They had no idea what to do for Israa, their 5 year-old daughter. Their own sense of helplessness about how to handle Israa’s disability and the social stigma it carried added to the family’s discomfort.

“I rejected the diagnosis. I felt so bad and helpless knowing that Israa is deaf. I felt her life was over,” said Mohammed, 32, her father.

When he heard about Atfaluna, a leading school and rehabilitation center for deaf children in Gaza, Mohammed saw a way out of hopelessness. With financial assistance from ANERA’s Scholarship Program, he enrolled Israa in the Early Intervention Program. She began to learn sign language. Other signs of hope quickly followed. Israa, it turns out, is very good at math and science.

“I have learned that Israa isn’t different from any other child. She just needs special care,” her father remarked.

Sido (grandpa) Sami was eager to help in Israa’s rehabilitation. She



Israa with Sido Sami.

spends many weekends and vacations at his house. He has a mini market where he sells her favorite candies. Sido joined the Early Intervention Program at Atfaluna so he could learn how to communicate with his granddaughter. He calls it their “secret language.” “I learned the basic signs so we can talk together. I am now teaching the other grandchildren so they can join in the fun,” he says. “I don’t want her to feel alone.”

Sido makes frequent visits to the Atfaluna school to draw and color pictures with Israa. Her parents also come to monitor the progress of their daughter and to keep up with her growing vocabulary. Like many other children at the school, Israa is now energetic and looks forward to the

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Scholarship Program Profile: For Aisha, Tutors Made a Difference



The West Bank is still recovering from a widespread civil strike that interrupted the school year for a period of three months in the fall. With ANERA's help, the Dar El-Yateem Orphanage in Tulkarem offered

special lessons to compensate for lost school days.

Aisha, a seventeen year-old ANERA Scholarship Program student, was happy for the extra sessions. She comes from a small village. Because her father is handicapped, Aisha's mother faced impossible financial constraints and decided to place Aisha in Dar El-Yateem.

Aisha loves her studies and works hard to improve. With the encouragement of her teachers, she learned to use the computer lab and library. Established with a grant from ANERA ten years ago, it has grown into a multi-faceted learning center. During the school closures this fall, Aisha worked closely with a tutor to build her skills in math and English, particularly difficult subjects for her to master. She was rewarded with good marks on her mid-year exams.

Dar El-Yateem will continue providing specialized tutoring to ensure students progress academically and make up for class time missed when the school year is disrupted by local events, which happens frequently.

For more information about how you can help a student at Dar El-Yateem Orphanage or one of our other Scholarship Program Schools, contact Cindy Ajamian, Scholarship Program Coordinator, at (202) 842-2766, ext. 13 or cajajian@anera.org.

One Gift Can Go a Long Way

ANERA Donors Start a Library

TULKAREM, WEST BANK – When students at Dar El-Yateem (House of Orphans) began to struggle with their studies during the school closures in the West Bank this fall, they looked for other ways and places to continue to learn until the schools opened again.

Fortunately for them, a donation given in February 1997 by long-time ANERA supporters Aref and Barbara Jabr had paved the way to a solution. Their generous gift to help the school – given ten years ago after they visited Dar El-Yateem – provided a combined library and learning center. The gift then multiplied. Other ANERA donors were inspired to give. In the ensuing years, the Center was equipped with more books, study resources, computers, and Internet access. “Having a computer lab at Dar El-Yateem has changed everything” commented Dar El-Yateem President, Laila Tayeh. “We are now able to ensure that the students use the computers for educational purposes, as well as games that are fun.”

Recently, Aref and Barbara gave yet another gift to supplement Dar El-Yateem's library and learning center with needed educational materials. “We hope our gift will encourage others to provide support for the students at Dar El-Yateem,” they commented to ANERA staff.

Dar El-Yateem, an ANERA Scholarship Program institution, provides a home for over 200 orphaned boys and girls throughout the West Bank. During normal days, the children attend local schools in the town of Tulkarem. The library and learning center, made possible by the Jabrs, provide a safe haven for students and offer them an environment where they can continue to learn at the orphanage during tumultuous times when they can't get to school.



L-R: Jabrs with students; Jabrs at gate of Dar El Yateem, 1997.

All Washed Up

NABLUS, WEST BANK – It goes without saying that water is a vital necessity that many take for granted. Water is needed for cooking, cleaning, washing, drinking – for life.

Just ask Abdul Jabbar Shayeb, the head of Ijnisinya village council in the Nablus district. Its 550 residents were without water when its old pump broke down.

“We depend on spring water that collects in a tank at a low point in the village. We pump that water into our network. A few months ago, the 30 year-old pump broke down and could not be fixed. We couldn’t afford to buy a new one and could not live without water. A neighboring village kindly lent us their spare pump. But this was only a temporary solution,” explained Mr. Shayeb.

Households in some isolated villages in the West Bank still rely on a combination of rainwater collected in cisterns and water pumped from natural springs. And when the system stops working, it affects everyone immediately. Using U.S. government-funding, ANERA is implementing an emergency water and sanitation program to ensure villagers continued access to potable water.

With ANERA’s help, the villagers in Ijnisinya replaced the broken pump with a new one. “We are so relieved and grateful for this assistance,” recounts Mr. Shayeb. He continued, “With a brand new pump people’s lives are back to normal. This will benefit every single person in the village for a long time.”

Umm Omar (mother of Omar), whose village received similar assistance, echoed Mr. Shayeb’s sentiments. “Everyone needs clean and reliable water every day. With our water supply restored, my life is so much easier and I am happier. For this, I am very grateful.”

Sign Language Brings Hope to a Family

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speech classes she regularly attends. The results have been dramatic. Now she communicates easily and expressively with her parents and siblings.

Hope lights the path to success, and the story of Israa is an example of how one child’s rehabilitation can rehabilitate a whole family. “We are proud of

Israa and believe she has a bright future. Many thanks to Atfaluna and to ANERA for helping our daughter and so many other deaf children,” comments Israa’s father.

With ANERA’s assistance, all 285 students enrolled at Atfaluna were provided with hearing aids fitted by staff at Atfaluna’s audiology department. The children are proud of their new hearing aids. Their lives have been changed for the better.



L-R: Israa with her mom and dad in class.

SAVE THE DATE 2007 ANERA Annual Dinner

Friday, September 28, 2007
The Fairmont Washington, D.C.
2401 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037

For more information, check the ANERA website in the coming weeks. www.anera.org

Send us your email address!

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Creating a Greener Peace in Lebanon

Lebanon has long been celebrated as the land of milk and honey, a picturesque slice of heaven on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. Defined by its long coastline and quaint mountain villages in the interior, Lebanon draws visitors year after year to enjoy its natural beauty and rich history. In South Lebanon this scenic landscape has repeatedly been scarred by war and turmoil. The once dense pine forests and rolling hills of olive and fruit trees have become unwitting victims of the Middle East conflict.

During the war last summer, hundreds of acres of forest were lost to fires and several thousand acres of agricultural land were littered with cluster bombs and unexploded ordnances. For the people of South Lebanon the devastation of homes, schools, and infrastructure was further compounded by the danger of these ordnances, keeping them from setting foot in their fields and forests. Fortunately, the UN has declared that the clearance of unexploded ordnances and mines will remain a priority. Areas around some villages are expected to be completely cleared by December 2007.

Addressing environmental damage is an important issue on the recovery agenda. But for

many years environmental recovery has been a critical concern. Half of the area of Lebanon is unfit for agriculture. Excessive clearing, overgrazing, urban development, fires, and pests threaten Lebanese forests.

“Trees are part of our culture and daily life... many people in the village depend on agriculture and forestry to live,” commented Mr. Nasser, a landowner and farmer in the village of Fardis.

ANERA, with its local partner, the Association for Forests, Development, and Conservation (AFDC), is working with local communities to help them protect and manage their environment. AFDC’s Reforestation Program establishes and trains volunteer units in local communities to fight forest fires, maintain protected areas, run environmental education in the community and help with reforestation projects. “We help in digging the holes, and planting and irrigating the trees during summer, and then we take responsibility for keeping them alive and well,” remarked volunteer Hadi Slika.

Working with schools is an important part of the program. Environment clubs, national contests to bring schools across the country together, and extra-curricular materials to help science teachers all educate the younger generation whose future is at stake.

ANERA first assisted AFDC by providing an excavator for land reclamation work in the Arqoub region. The excavator saves time and money, allowing workers to plant more than a hundred trees a day. Now, with support from ANERA and other donors, the AFDC is building a new nursery in the village of Mimes to produce about 70,000 saplings per year. One year’s production will be enough to replant the 280 acres of forest lost in last summer’s war in the cluster of villages around Fardis.

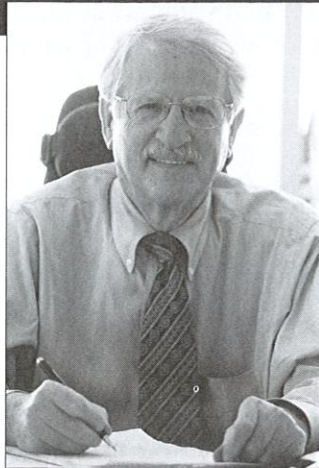
ANERA’s vision is to bring the war-scarred hills of South Lebanon back to life, restoring their natural beauty for the next generation.



© Mounir Bu Ghanem

Bill Corcoran, President of ANERA, joins in the planting on his recent trip to Lebanon.

Join ANERA in honoring Peter Gubser's 29 years of leadership and service!



PETER GUBSER...
the personification
of ANERA: capable,
practical, enthusiastic,
supportive of new
ideas and willing to
make them happen

Peter Gubser, former President and CEO, recently retired after 29 years of dedication to ANERA. Under Peter's steadfast and unwavering leadership, ANERA grew to be one of the leading humanitarian organizations delivering both emergency and development assistance to people in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon and Jordan.

The ANERA Board of Directors is honoring Peter by pledging its financial support so that ANERA can continue to bring opportunity and hope to more families and communities in the Middle East.

Please join us in recognizing Peter's 29 years of leadership! Your gift along with those of other ANERA supporters will sustain and bring to fruition dozens of ANERA projects in health care, education and economic development.

Please make a contribution today in Peter's honor.

YES! I would like to recognize Peter's 29 years of exemplary leadership and dedication to ANERA by giving a gift in his honor.

\$29 \$290 \$2900 Other \$ _____

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Date (mo/day/year) (/ /)

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AMERICAN NEAR EAST REFUGEE AID

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