

American Friends of the Spafford Children's Center

Spring 2021



Each Child is Special

When children are upset, they can't always put their feelings into words. Sometimes the sadness or the anger bubbles up in them until it comes out in tears or screams. At the Spafford Children's Center, the psychologist, teachers, recreation specialist, and social worker understand the strong emotions trauma can evoke. The professionals work together with the parents to understand the experiences of the child and to design a plan addressing his or her educational, therapeutic, and recreational needs. Each child is special and deserves individualized care.



Drama and Art Help Children Cope

Living in communities where the military and police are often present, Palestinian children have seen scary things. They need a safe place to talk about their feelings and to put them into words, art, or drama. In the top picture children are rehearsing taking on different roles as part of an improvised play. To the left children and the SCC Activities Director toss balloons and learn a few principles of science like why rubbing balloons makes them stick to their shirts. The picture (below left) shows the creative results that come from combining children, paper, and paint. This girl's proud smile says it all. It is hard to see behind the masks, but earnest work and progress is being made in the occupational therapy session and the Arabic class (pictured below center and right).





Catching up and Catching on

Palestinian students have missed a year of classes in their regular schools due to the pandemic. SCC has been closed, by order of the local authorities, three times in the last year, most recently during December 2020 and January 2021. The meager online courses offered by the schools were only available to families with WiFi connections and computers which left out many families who regularly come to SCC. With schools out of reach and SCC closed, children missed valuable educational time. So, as soon as it could open SCC initiated a new program to help children catch up. They doubled the number of sessions for each child in Arabic, English, and math. Learning with only one or two other students the children made amazing progress.

In just two months SCC staff conducted more than 150 case studies with parents and children to assess the needs of the children. Then the academic strengths and challenges of each child were evaluated and a complete plan including academics, speech and occupational therapy, counseling, and recreational activities was created. Every week new children are being registered and the number of children receiving services since SCC re-opened is now over 250! And most children are attending multiple classes and activities. More children are waiting, but SCC needs funds in order to add teachers and classes.



Having Fun at the Spafford!

At SCC having fun is always part of the plan—letting kids be kids. “Fun Days” at SCC feature being silly with balloons, or jumping through hoops, or giggling so much it is hard to carry a cupful of water across the courtyard in a game to see which team can fill a bucket first. Whatever the activity the SCC staff are watchful to ensure that each child is included, has fun, and feels good about coming to Spafford.

Please send a tax-deductible contribution using
Global Giving at <https://goto.gg/31839> or
PayPal at www.spaffordcenter.org or
 by **check** to our **new** address:

American Friends of the Spafford Children’s Center
 5500 Prytania Street #337
 New Orleans, LA 70115

With Best Wishes,

The Rev. Canon Matthew Dayton-Welch, Chair

Wendy Whiting Blome, PhD, Secretary/Treasurer

