



Spring 2023

Tension in Jerusalem, Calm at the SCC

The mood in Jerusalem is tense. The Palestinian children served by the Spafford Children's Center (SCC) are noticing the guns carried by police units and civilians. These children, like all children, are keen observers of their environments. They are aware of increased security and limitations on where their families can safely go and what neighborhoods they can visit. So, when they arrive at the SCC the feeling of calm is pervasive. They know they can relax to learn and have fun. Just that sense of safety is therapeutic for children who have seen more in their communities than young eyes should witness.

The *American Friends of the Spafford Children's Center* funds the SCC *Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Program* that is helping children who have experienced trauma in the home, going to and from school, or in the wider community. Working with a trained trauma specialist, a social worker, and a psychologist, children and adolescents are beginning the process of recovering from traumatic events that have interrupted their family lives, education, and relationships with peers.

Salma is 11 years old; she has two younger sisters and lives with her parents in a very small home in the Old City of Jerusalem. Light struggles to illuminate the two rooms through the door and only one window. Salma has speech and language delays. She has witnessed frightening events in the streets as police arrest young men. She has been bullied by her classmates for her halting speech and is refusing to go to school. The SCC psychologist assessed Salma and recommended that she receive a coordinated plan of trauma treatment, speech therapy, and math instruction plus social work services to help her mother understand how to support Salma and her sisters at home. All these services were available to Salma and her mother at SCC.

The trauma specialist began immediately to build a relationship with Salma and her mother by using puppets through which she could act out her feelings without speaking. Once she felt more comfortable, she began to speak as she worked with clay to create figures of the people who had scared her. She spoke to the clay sculptures and the trauma specialist helped her articulate her fears. Slowly as the sessions progressed, she began to laugh with other children and returned to school more confident as she is now at grade level in math thanks to the SCC tutoring she received. Now Salma had started attending English classes at SCC. The work is ongoing, but Salma and her mother are pleased with the progress.



Nouns, Verbs, Prepositions...Oh My!

At home Palestinian children learn Levantine Arabic, the spoken dialect dominant throughout Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Books, newspapers, and textbooks, however, are written in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). It is important for students wanting to pursue advanced education to be proficient in MSA. The words, grammar rules, and structures can be different so children need to concentrate on reading and writing it correctly.

At the Spafford Children's Center teachers skilled in teaching Arabic help children and youth master the intricacies of the language in small classes using worksheets, flash cards, stories, wall hangings, and white boards....anything to capture the attention and interest of the students as they learn.



Happiness through Art and Expression

A blank sheet of paper can be intimidating—what to paint, how to draw? At the Spafford Children's Center creativity in all its forms is encouraged. Look at this girl's face. She is happy, calm, and pleased with the pretty flowers she is painting. The SCC was the first place she ever held a paint brush and received instruction on how to mix the watercolors and apply them to the paper. She learned quickly and soon will have a beautiful painting to take home or to hang on the SCC hallways for all the parents and children to see. Your donations not only help support the teacher, but also buy paper, paints, brushes, and all the supplies needed to run an art program worthy of her smile.



Please send a tax-deductible contribution in the envelope provided with the newsletter or go to the secure **GlobalGiving** page at <https://goto.gg/31839> or donate through **PayPal** at www.spaffordcenter.org.

Thank you for your support,

The Rev. Canon Matthew Dayton-Welch, *Chair*

Wendy Whiting Blome, PhD, *Secretary/Treasurer*

