



Winter 2023

The Trauma Is Viral

By The Rev. Matthew Dayton-Welch, AFSCC Board Chair

About 12 years ago in a previous career with the US State Department, I reported on the phenomenon of Palestinian children who served time in Israeli prisons. Hundreds of children—some as young as 12—would be arrested, tried, sentenced, and serve prison time. Those in the West Bank processed through military prisons with little access to fair trials. The charges were always similar, usually rock throwing near soldiers, and because a trial could drag out detention well beyond a year, every child I met pleaded guilty to expedite their detention. Trials with guilty pleas often lasted no longer than two minutes.

Each child I met through my work returned to their community traumatized. Their parents lamented the deep pain and emotional disorientation these children now knew, and that trauma permeated out into the community, among their peers. Together they held the deep weight of an occupation which cheapens Palestinian identity.

Such trauma is viral. While the children served by the SCC don't know the pain of airstrikes and drone attacks, they do hold its pain. That pain is reinforced by the ongoing security tensions around the Old City where some Palestinians are dying in unexamined police incidents.

The work at the SCC gives voice to those made silent by this trauma. It affords psychological grounding and the means to form emotional stability through art, play, and psychotherapy. It provides a respite from the conflict within its thick stone walls. It begets a sense of belonging for children in a city that so often tells them they don't belong.

The work of the SCC won't resolve the present conflict, but I can't imagine any lasting peace without it, because any resolution where children still cannot hope won't be peace at all.

Below: View from the SCC roof of the Dome of the Rock (left), Lutheran Church of the Redeemer (middle), and St. Savior Church (right) near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.



Drawing by SCC child from several years ago



Many Ways to Support SCC

There are many ways to support the work of the Spafford Children's Center in Jerusalem (SCC). We always appreciate, and depend upon, your regular contributions through check, Paypal, and GlobalGiving. In addition, the American Friends of the Spafford Children's Center (AFSCC) has benefited from generous bequests by people who have included us in their estate planning in order to support the work of SCC. Some have arranged in advance for their obituary to direct memorial gifts at the time of their death to the AFSCC. In recent years, many older adults with Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) who must take Required Minimum Distributions annually have taken advantage of the IRS rule allowing them to have their financial advisor distribute funds directly to charities (like AFSCC) to shield these donations from Federal Income Tax. Finally, more and more people are working with their financial advisors to create and use a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) to support preferred charitable causes. If this may be a possibility for you, please contact your advisor to learn more.

Partnering to Support Community Resilience

By Shahd Souri, MA, CEO of the Spafford Children's Center

Community resilience is at the heart of Spafford Children's Center's mission in the Old City of Jerusalem. Community resilience is defined as community members coming together to utilize available resources to respond to and recover from adverse situations. Partnering with other organizations in the Old City during the ongoing conflict in Jerusalem, SCC is not only promoting community resilience, but also enhancing safety for all beneficiaries and staff. The partner organizations are actively working to establish a support group composed of community-chosen individuals, further bolstering the security and well-being of those living and working in this challenging environment.

Your donation goes directly to support the **Spafford Children's Center** in East Jerusalem. AFSCC is an all-volunteer organization and our few expenses are paid by contributions from Board Members. 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. Matthew Dayton-Welch, *Chair*



Wendy Whiting Blome, PhD, *Secretary/Treasurer*



The walls of the SCC in the Old City of Jerusalem; sign of the SCC as seen from the ramparts walk.