



Spring 2024

Leading with Hope and Strength

By Ms. Shahd Souri, MA, CEO, Spafford Children's Center

On behalf of the Spafford Children's Center in Jerusalem's Old City, we send greetings and good wishes for a peaceful 2024. Your support has been a beacon of light to us at this time of renewed hostility in our region. We are navigating through very challenging times so it is heartening to know that you appreciate and acknowledge our work here at the Spafford Center. Currently the greatest need is to sustain our educational and therapeutic programs, including the Trauma Treatment Program funded primarily by AFSCC. These programs directly impact the lives of our local community in East Jerusalem, especially the vulnerable and marginalized. The future of our region has never looked so bleak and the community we serve has never been in a more precarious position. Please keep the Spafford Children's Center in your thoughts and prayers. Together we can make a positive impact.



Remembering the Mothers

By Wendy Whiting Blome, PhD, Chair, SCC and Secretary/Treasurer, AFSCC Boards of Directors



Minus the COVID years, I have visited the Spafford Children's Center (SCC) twice a year for over 20 years. As a descendent of the founding families of the SCC, I toured the facility many times as a child and an adult.

In recent months I have been thinking about the difficult task Palestinian mothers have interpreting the current events to their children and keeping them safe in the midst of turmoil. Several years ago, I was invited to an SCC Mother's Group of ten women and a social worker facilitator. The conversation was in Arabic, but the emotions were clear. The woman next to me began to sob, wiping her face with her scarf. I put my arm around her and she sank into my shoulder. I tried to say

soothing things which, of course, she didn't understand. The social worker told me she was crying because a 'good mother protects her children and she couldn't shield her children from the police and the searches. I'm not a good mother'. The other mothers rallied to support her and the session ended with laughter and hugs.

The SCC continues to hold groups to help mothers process their trauma so that they can support their families. At the SCC the health of the family is paramount because every child deserves the chance to grow up in a safe space feeling hope and belonging.

Mingle & Enjoy the Mezza

If you will be in *New York City on April 11 at 6:30 p.m.* please join us for a festive evening of wonderful food and learning about the vital work of the *Spafford Children's Center* (SCC). Please share this QR code or send the enclosed invitation to friends who live in or around NYC. The Church of the Epiphany is a lovely setting for this event—centrally located on East 74th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues.



If you can't attend, but would like to make a donation please go to the secure **GlobalGiving** page at <https://goto.gg/31839> or **PayPal** at www.spaffordcenter.org or send a check to: AFSCC, 5500 Prytania St, #337, New Orleans, LA 70115.

The *American Friends of the Spafford Children's Center* (AFSCC) is an all-volunteer organization and our few expenses are paid by contributions from Board Members. That means that all of the \$50 or \$100 or \$500 you donate goes to provide educational, therapeutic, and recreational services at the SCC.

Trauma Affects Children and Parents



The 7-year-old girl trembled when she saw the policeman; the 4-year-old boy hid in the folds of his mother's skirt when he heard the shouting and angry voices. These Palestinian children live in a volatile environment and regularly experience traumatic triggers. At the Spafford Children's Center the Trauma Treatment team of a trauma specialist, social worker, and psychologist work not only with the child, but also with parents to structure a response to traumatic episodes. SCC teachers are also trained to

recognize trauma reactions to ensure that their approach to the child acknowledges the effects of trauma on learning, retention of material taught, and emotional reactions to success and struggle in the learning journey.

Thank you for your support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Matt Dayton-Welch".

The Rev. Matthew Dayton-Welch, *Chair*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wendy Whiting Blome".

Wendy Whiting Blome, PhD, *Secretary/Treasurer*

