



Fall 2024

Treating Situational and Historic Trauma

A park outing was interrupted by Israeli settlers calling the Palestinian youth from the Spafford Children's Center (SCC) foul names; the campers and their counselors moved to a different area and discussed the need to ignore the taunts to preserve their self-respect. This is just one example of traumatic events Palestinians experience daily in East Jerusalem. Also important are the effects of 'historic trauma', defined as collective trauma experienced by a group across generations. The consequences of both situational and historic trauma are seen in the reactions of the children, youth, and parents who seek services at the SCC. Through its **Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Program** the SCC provides targeted services to create a healing environment.



An SCC staff member, Yazan, who has university training in trauma treatment, works directly with children and youth helping them develop a 'language' to talk about and understand what they have experienced. The trauma the children have suffered is often resistant to interventions, and requires long term therapy based in an enduring relationship with the trauma specialist. Yazan is gifted in his ability to connect with young people through art, games, group activities, and one-on-one sessions. The program also engages the SCC social worker, Raneen, to help the parents and psychologist, Haya, to test

the children and recommend other SCC services like academic tutoring or speech and occupational therapies. One parent said, "Before coming to SCC, my child was withdrawn and afraid to speak about his feelings. Thanks to Yazan and the team, he has learned to express himself and is starting to heal. We are so grateful."

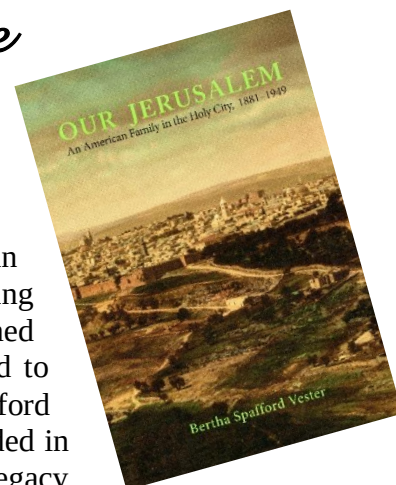
Recognizing the long-term nature of historic trauma, the SCC programs include activities to enhance the feeling of pride in being Palestinian and coming from a culture that is rich in the arts, sciences, agriculture, and family traditions. During their trip to the park, the youth prepared 'Sajiyeh', a Palestinian dish, carefully cooking the pieces of chicken, cardamon, coriander, and vegetables. Traditional food helps preserve the sense of culture as does learning 'Debkah', a Palestinian dance that brings joy and celebration to events at SCC.



Our Jerusalem: A Family Legacy of Service



The book Our Jerusalem, written by Bertha Spafford Vester in 1950, recounts the journey Americans from Chicago made to Jerusalem in 1881. She tells of the growing community that welcomed Swedes and others dedicated to service and faith. The Spafford Children's Center was founded in 1925 and serves as a living legacy



to the commitment made a century ago. AFSCC has copies of the latest edition of this fascinating book available for \$35 including postage in the US. To order, send your name, address, and a check to: AFSCC, 5500 Prytania St, #337, New Orleans, LA 70115. Supplies are limited.

Leadership Camp for Youth

Being a teenager in Jerusalem is not a time of carefree adventures. Their lives are constrained by the restrictions imposed by authorities, and their families keep them close to protect them from searches, interrogations, and possible violence. The SCC is a safe place for learning, healing, and exploration. During a Leadership camp for 14 to 18-year-olds, the youth visited the village of Khirbet al-Saadiya, played games that demanded teamwork, learned new skills in the computer lab, created arts and crafts, and on the final day demonstrated their skills by playing the violin, reciting poems, reading their essays, and performing traditional Palestinian dances.

The Spafford youth are the Leaders of Tomorrow.

Thank you for your continued support,

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

Wendy Whiting Blome, PhD, **Secretary/Treasurer**

