



Spring 2025

100 Years of Service in Jerusalem

A century! From 1925 to 2025 the Spafford Children's Center (SCC) has flourished as the city around it changed governance from the British Mandate to the State of Israel. When the Spaffords, Whitings, and others came to the Holy Land from Chicago in 1881, it was part of the Ottoman Empire. They settled in a building on the wall of the Old City, between the Damascus and Herod's Gates. That building is now the SCC. After a move to the former home of a pasha (now the American Colony Hotel) the families continued their work aiding their community.

Although needs have changed, the essential spirit of the SCC as a center of excellence and innovation remains the same. Several of the great-grandchildren of the original families, plus dedicated Palestinians and other committed individuals serve on the SCC Board of Directors. The turbulent situation in the Middle East

requires the SCC to be adaptable in meeting the challenges facing Palestinian families in East Jerusalem. New techniques in treating trauma; teaching Arabic, English, and math to children with learning challenges; and offering speech and occupational therapies have been incorporated into the services to help children and parents cope with the restrictive occupation.

The hymn, written by Horatio Spafford, in 1873, after the deaths of his four daughters in a shipwreck, has inspired generations to join the mission of the SCC in service:

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul*



Above: Dr. Jantien Dajani examining a baby, circa 2010

Lower left: pack train outside Damascus Gate, circa 1919; lower right, nurses and babies at the Spafford Baby Hospital, circa 1930s



Does your child suffer from a speech delay or difficulty?

The SCC Facebook page asked Palestinian parents in Jerusalem who come to the SCC this important question. Improving speech can increase self-esteem, reduce frustration, and allow the child to express his or her thoughts, emotions, and ideas clearly.



At the SCC, speech therapists help children strengthen jaw muscles through personalized exercises, encourage reading out loud, and work on breathing, swallowing, and voice exercises. They may also play games, read poems, and use picture books to stimulate language development. The qualified speech therapists at SCC model correct sounds and syllables to help the child learn how to make specific sounds.

Your donation pays for supplies and therapists so Palestinian children can get the help they need.

Trauma Treatment with Puppets



Traumatic experiences are often not visible on the surface. They can lie dormant inside a child, later emerging as anger. The **Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Program** at the SCC serves children through individual and group sessions provided by a trauma specialist, social worker, and psychologist.

Here boys use puppets to talk with each other using a construction game as a backdrop. The trauma specialist is posing questions and asking the boys to think how they can 'construct' a new way of thinking about what happened to them.

Please support SCC as generously as you can through GlobalGiving at <https://goto.gg/31839> or use the envelope that came with your newsletter.

Thank you for your continued support,

The Rev. Matthew Dayton-Welch, *Chair*

Wendy Whiting Blome, PhD, *Secretary/Treasurer*

