



## THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

The National Library For The Blind  
AL-SHURROOQ SCHOOL FOR BLIND CHILDREN

Newsletter Winter 2015/2016

### Letter from the Chairman of the NSFVH

At this time of the year it is good to reflect on the past and the future of the National Society for the Visually Handicapped (NSFVH) and its School,



Al-Shurooq. Personally, it is an honor to serve as the Chairman of the Board for more than three years. During these years, the NSFVH was able to reconstruct and rehabilitate its task force and prepare them to be able to serve efficiently. This was done by injecting new blood coupled with workshops and special training sessions for all. This work was reflected in the increased number of students from 17 to 30. It is the first time that the school accepts students with multiple disabilities who need special care hence the necessity of new trained staff. Two new rooms were added to accommodate the increased number of students. The local community with lots of friends and organizations around the World were present to support the expansion in the activities as reflected in this newsletter and the previous ones. Lately, four of the integrated high school graduates were accepted at Bethlehem University and the NSFVH took the decision to accommodate them.

To be able to carry out our mission "to improve the quality of life of the blind and visually impaired, and to facilitate their integration into the local community by promoting and enhancing their cultural, educational, social and economic standards", we look towards the future. How can we continue in improving our services? How can we attain sustainability?

We believe in continuous improvement and thus we are in a process of developing our services in more areas such as the use of new technology, mobility, music, special education and a resource center. We are also working to establish income generating projects to provide some income and create jobs for the blind and visually impaired people. To cut some expenses, we are looking into installing photo voltaic cells to reduce our electricity bill. We also signed an agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs to buy services from our school.

Finally, I would like to thank all partners, supporters and friends for their generous contribution/help and advice. Without them, we wouldn't be able to function.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or the Organization with your concerns, comments, or suggestions for how to improve or develop our services. We also thank you for sharing this newsletter with your friends and your social network.

Simon Alaraj (saraj@birzeit.edu or info@nsfvh.org)

### Parent-Teacher Meeting

Al-Shurooq school holds a monthly meeting for teachers and parents with the aim of keeping a sustainable relation between the school and parents. The first meeting was held in September to introduce the terms and conditions of the school, to discuss educational issues and obstacles facing visually impaired children. In an open discussion, the social worker offered consulting service and gave advice to the parents. The meeting ended up with best wishes for Al-Adha Eid and presents were distributed to children and their parents.



Staff, parents, and students

### Introductory Course in Braille System for Parents

Learning to read and write in Braille is one of the most important skills that each parent of children with visual impairment needs. This skill will strengthen the bond between parents and visually impaired children in a unique way, and provide parents with the opportunity to lead their children toward successful lives by following their school assignments and reading with their children when they are at home. Participation of parents will encourage children to read and learn more effectively.



Writing in Braille workshop

## Follow-up Visits to Integrated Students

Despite the burden of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and checkpoints all around, Al-Shurooq School pursues its follow-up program for integrated students in local schools in districts to support them and meet their needs. Frequently, the social worker visits our integrated students, and meets the staff members of their schools to ease their educational process by discussing ways of communicating with visually impaired or blind students, giving details of their current health condition, and checking their needs in order to find a sponsor or manage to get financial support for them.



The social worker visiting Mazen in his school

## Installation of Assistive Devices in Classes

Alongside the curriculum, our school aims to continually provide services and recent use of assistive technology to develop the skills of the children and facilitate the learning process. Classrooms are equipped with assistive technology, a reader with a digital magnifying device connected with LCD screen, to help visually impaired children read a book or a text clearly. The students are doing great with the presence of this technology and have demonstrated better results than in previous years.

We would like to extend out, thanks to Siniora Food for the donation of the LCD's, and for Rev. Jim Davidson for providing the readers.



Bader using assistive technology to see the text book clearly



The teacher displaying images of the text book using the assistive technology

## Mrs. Helena Shehadeh

The mother and founder of Al-Shurooq School for Blind Children, Mrs. Helena Shehadeh was pleasantly surprised by the unexpected visit of staff members and students to congratulate her for returning home after a long hospital stay and to celebrate her birthday. She was so happy to have all staff and students in her home. She showed her affection and love for the children, she asked about every single student to make sure that they are doing well at school.

May Almighty God bless her with good health and a long life.



Al-Shurooq children are singing for Mrs. Helena

## Training Course at German Jordan University

To improve independent living and social inclusion for our visually impaired students, the school principal Ms. Ruba Aburdeineh along with the social worker Ms. Wafa Ghaiada joined the Training of Trainers in Orientation & Mobility and Activities of Daily Living For Students with Visual Impairment program in the Vision Training Center of the German Jordanian University in Amman. The program that started in November 2015 will last for two years ending in June 2017. It is divided into 4 courses with the duration of two weeks for each course. During the implementation of the courses there would be monitoring and support visits for school of trainers.



Ms. Ruba and Ms. Wafa at a mobility training and orientation session





Ms. Ruba using the white cane

### International Festival of Blind Musicians in Tunisia

Al-Shurooq School for Blind children received an invitation from Ibsar Association for five members to participate in The International Festival of Blind Musicians in Tunisia from the third to the fifth of December 2015. The invitation included the school principal Ms. Ruba Aburdeineh and the social worker Ms. Wafa Ghaiada, Mrs Intisar Abu Sneneh, a former student and Arabic teacher, and the integrated blind student George Thalgieh with his mother. Throughout the three days, the school principal and the social worker attended a conference about the rights of disabled people from 9 am until 1 pm and later they had been attending the festival. On the first day of the festival, George recited a poem by the famous Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish as well as a composed poem of his own to honor Tunisia. On the second day, our participants had 45 minutes of performance of national songs to portray the tragic situation of Palestine in which George Played on the Arabic Zither, Qanun a string instrument. In the concluding day, George performed another piece of music. This experience was the most rewarding one; our school is now recognized by Tunisian councils, everyone was astonished at our achievements, and the staff is pleased about their success.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Ibsar for their warm hospitality throughout our stay in Tunisia.



Intisar at the International Festival of Blind Musicians



Award Intisar and George for their performance



In Tunisia



## The Annual Faculty and Staff Dinner

The annual staff dinner was held on January 5, 2016 celebrating Christmas and new year. The meeting provides them with an opportunity to know each other more, introduce issues that need improvement to be discussed later by the staff, and enjoy a nice sit-down Christmas dinner.



Christmas Dinner

## Holy Season of Christmas:

On the Sunday twentieth of December, it was the annual YMCA Christmas Party in Jerusalem. The party began with a speech welcoming the guests to the party followed by Christmas Carols, and finally came Santa who was the highlight of the party; the children were so excited about meeting Santa Claus. We would like to say a huge thank you to YMCA Jerusalem who organized such a fantastic event. We also highly appreciate their efforts in getting us permits to enter the check points toward Jerusalem. Everyone was so glad for having this opportunity of being in Jerusalem after a very long time.



Christmas in Jerusalem



Christmas in Jerusalem



## Establishment of a Resource Room

We acknowledge that for a variety of reasons, our school still needs improvements to better services for our beneficiaries. A resource room will be added to our school for visually impaired students equipped with all their needs of Braille Perkins, Braille paper, readers, and other essential equipment. The establishment of the room will be implemented with the support of The McCabe Educational Trust. We sincerely appreciate the hard work of McCabe, we are grateful for their generous support.

[www.nsfvh.org](http://www.nsfvh.org)

## Fundraising for a Sensory Room

A sensory room provides a calming atmosphere for visually impaired children, that help to improve eye condition, develop language skills and improve their mental development. We already have a space, but we need your support to equip the room with sensory elements to make the service available for our children. Your generous donation is greatly valued.

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Al-Shurooq School for Blind Children