



منى ناصر ومجموعة من طلاب الروضة خلال ورشة حقوق الطفل

برنامج فرح

انشىء هذا البرنامج في العام الدراسي ١٩٩٢/١٩٩٣ بناء على طلب أمهات الأطفال من أجل مساعدتهن في معالجة القضايا التي تواجههن في حياتهن اليومية. سواء كانت على صعيد الأسرة أو الحي أو المجتمع ككل خاصة بعد أن أفرزت السنوات الطويلة للإحتلال الإسرائيلي وبشكل ملحوظ في منطقة القدس ظواهر سلبية أثرت على القيم والعلاقات الأسرية والمجتمعية والتربوية وقد تم تطوير هذا البرنامج في مطلع العام الدراسي ١٩٩٨/١٩٩٧ بدعم من تجمع مؤسسية التعاون لإدارة مشروع المؤسسات الأهلية الفلسطينية ضمن مشروع "تأسيس علاقة متميزة ومستمرتين للدرسة والبيت مبنية على قواعد إيجابية وديمقراطية من أجل تحقيق الشمولية في العملية التربوية". ويتم من خلال هذا المشروع إجراء فحوصات لجميع المقبولين في المدرسة لتحديد قدراتهم التعليمية ومساعدة ذوي الحاجات الخاصة وإرشادهم. هذا وتستمر اللقاءات الشهرية للأمهات مع متخصصين في مواضيع مختلفة ضمن ندوات ومحاضرات وورشات عمل. كما توفر المدرسة المجال للأمهات لتعلم اللغة الفرنسية واستعمال الحاسوب وتشارك الأمهات في النشاطات المحلية للمدرسة كاليوم المفتوح من أجل تجنيد الأموال.






Student/Parent get together at the Rawdat as part of the Farah Program

Farah Program

This program was established during the school year 1993/1994 at the request of the mothers of the school children, in order to help them cope with the many challenges that they face as families and as communities. The long years of the Israeli occupation has had a very negative impact on the Palestinian society, and the mothers find that they have to bear the brunt of this impact. With the support of the Welfare Association Consortium for the Management of the Palestinian NGO Project, Farah program was developed in September 1998 to establish a strong and continuous relationship between home and school, based on a positive and democratic foundation, in order to achieve a comprehensive learning process. All new children admitted to school are tested for dyslexia and other learning difficulties, and a specialist and a counselor help direct the children for remedial work during the summer holidays, and before school starts in September. They also work through lectures, panel discussions and workshops with the mothers who continue to meet once a month and set the priorities for the issues they want to discuss. Courses in French and computer skills are offered to the mothers within this program. It is important to mention that the mothers have been active in local fundraising functions for the school.





to be on her toes when instructions were given. She continues to be indebted to Miss Nasir as she always called her, for all the skills which she learnt both as a teacher and as an administrator. But at the same time it took Salwa quite some time to get over the many shocks that Miss Nasir gave her as she was very frank about expressing her opinion. Although they were no less than thirty years apart in age, Salwa seemed more traditional than Miss Nasir. Yet they were a perfect team at the backbone of Rawdat El-Zuhur, and Salwa always looked forward for that cup of coffee with Miss Nasir every morning when they would discuss a range of issues from private matters to plans for the future of the children and the school. With Salwa she knew the children were in good hands

Anybody who has been touched by Elizabeth Nasir must have stories to tell. Funny, embarrassing, warm, sad, but above all shocking. Like Salwa we as a family used to be just as shocked. When Rev. Naim Ateek started his ministry in Jerusalem and tried to find out why she does not go to church on Sundays, she assured him that she had a large credit of prayers with her Lord. She was brought up in a pastor's home and she had attended chapel daily at the American University of Beirut. When he went to visit her in her last days in hospital he asked her if he could say a prayer. Of course he could, provided it was a short one. During her funeral, Rev. Ateek pointed to the fact that it is through her work with the needy and marginalized that Elizabeth Nasir expressed her faith.

This combination of love, warmth, frankness, determination and dedication is what made Lizzy Nasir a remarkable person. Her courage to stand up for what she believed in against all odds and to fight for what was right makes her unforgettable. Unlike many of her age she was willing to experiment and try new things both in the field of social work and in education. She encouraged the young people to

do something worthwhile with themselves. She was very particular about choosing her teachers and board members. She wanted to ensure the continuity of the organization with the same caring spirit for the children. And one day in 1986 she came to the meeting and announced that she was retiring because "enough is enough". "Now it is your turn, the younger people to take over." Certainly it is not the norm for heads of organizations or even heads of states in the Arab World, to retire by their own will. The slogan for such offices is usually "until death do us part". But that is Lizzy Nasir, always thinking of the unthinkable. Even though I was her niece, that was not necessarily a criteria to carry on after her. But the board realized I was the most involved at that time and it was with everybody's blessing and support that I was chosen to carry on the legacy of Rawdat El-Zuhur after her retirement.

A pageant put up by the teachers and school children was a surprise for her retirement ceremony; much more meaningful than a memorial service after death. She heard and saw what she meant to her friends, colleagues, students, teachers and board members. Each one of them gave a special testimony on that day. Amongst them was a friend who happened to be in town and knew Lizzy from the early thirties after she came back from the University. She uncovered that part of history which we did not know about. Her social life in Tiberias as a modern young teacher, playing tennis and going to dancing parties. At the end of the ceremony she was very moved and had tears in her eyes. She stood amongst the Principal and the staff thanking them and showing them off. "See how pleasant they are." To her, being pleasant was the first criteria for being employed at Rawdat El-Zuhur.

Almost a year after her retirement, and exactly on April 2, 1987 Elizabeth Nasir passed away leaving behind the legacy of Rawdat El-Zuhur which will always keep her memory alive.



the streets of Jerusalem. But all her friends used to tease her that she put an end to retail begging and turned around to do wholesale begging herself. She was seeking funds continuously and writing letters from the early hours of the morning to be able to carry on with her project.

What Elizabeth Nasir has done with those girls was remarkable: She gave them enough skills to enable them to regain their dignity by working in institutions or as housewives. She was always proud of them and would show them off by saying “my girls go like hot cakes”. I remember her telling me that the only time she ever terminated the services of a teacher is that when that teacher referred to the girls as [street girls] She immediately ordered her to pack and go.

In the aftermath of the Israeli occupation in 1967, Rawdat El-Zuhur was developed into a coeducational elementary school and kindergarten. As the school grew, the founding spirit continued to grow and prevail with the same enthusiasm for caring and sharing. And music, folk dancing and art continue to be integrated into the school curriculum. The spirit of Elizabeth Nasir still hovers over the school, and we all feel that if she were to see what is going on she would be very pleased. On the whole Elizabeth Nasir was considered to be a jolly person and very sociable. She enjoyed good company, good food, smoking and drinking coffee. But very often she was hard to please. She demanded perfection and a high standard of performance. Salwa Zananiri, the School Principal who trained under Elizabeth Nasir cannot but remember how much she needed





searching for them in hovels and caves that were part of the landscape, and where penniless families took refuge. To be able to get more information on such cases Aunt Lizzy spent time at coffee shops. Passers by were shocked to see a woman at places which were frequented by men only. But Lizzy Nasir was known to be avant guard and could not be bothered about the gossip of the society when she set out to achieve what she believed in for public welfare. And that is why she was able to seek the help of the taxi drivers and laborers in those coffee shops to lead her to the hang outs of the destitute girls. Years after Aunt Lizzy had passed away, I met a guard at one of the buildings in Jerusalem. “Bless her soul,” he said; she was the patron of all of us poor people.”

The home started with twenty five girls, and the name Rawdat El-Zuhur (Garden of Flowers) was carefully chosen by Elizabeth Nasir. She wanted a name that would reflect the spirit of the place without putting a stigma to the background of destitution. A real garden of happy girls blooming like flowers and radiating with joy and love that she provided with the help of music and dancing. In 1955, Elizabeth Nasir was awarded a special certificate from the National Recreation Association of the USA for “Enriching the Human Spirit through Recreation.” Andy Killgore who was the American Consul in Jerusalem during the fifties wrote in a document that was released in the early nineties that Lizzy, as far as it can be determined, can take credit for the fact that no beggar girls are found on

