

KinderUSA NEWS

KIDS IN NEED OF DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND RELIEF

Ramadan Farmers Program

In Gaza, 4 marginalized villages that have the highest rates of poverty, food insecurity, and unemployment benefitted from our Ramadan program reaching over 8000 people. Farmers in this region are equally affected from the ongoing, now in its seventh year, blockade with exports of agriculture stifled and a reversal of growth to the region. Further, tools needed to expand and cultivate lands are prevented from entering in addition to limited access to water in sufficient quality and quantity.

Thirty-four small scale farmers contributed to the food basket, working their lands while caring for their own families who, like the local community, lack economic means and remain cruelly vulnerable due to the blockade. Another group that was an integral part of this program and food basket was the women cooperatives, 11 in total, who prepared and filled the baskets for



children and their families with fresh cheese, yogurt, fresh thyme, and pressed dates – (see Women Cooperative article for more PG. 3). Finally, during distribution in the four villages, 20 locals were hired from the community providing them with a small stipend during the month of Ramadan.

Continue on page 6

Message From the

BOARD

This year KinderUSA celebrated its ten year anniversary at a time when global economic hardship and uncertainty has affected so many. Our donors are unwavering in their support of the Palestinian children, and our work which is presented in the following pages.

The programs implemented as evidence in this newsletter all have a central theme – providing a nurturing environment for children to grow and reach their full potential. Working with local community based organizations (CBO), KinderUSA has brought after school tutoring to children in Gaza and a learning center in Ein el-Hilweh camp in Lebanon for children who are craving knowledge. Strong partnerships with CBO's are critical to fulfilling our missions as they have the greatest insight into the needs of their local community and what works best for their children.

The farmer's program and women cooperatives equally contribute to the foundation of the future generation providing farmers and female heads of household both an income and the ability to care for their own families. Strengthening our partners ability to grow and attract external resources to become self-sustaining is an important feature of these programs which are the foundation of our annual Ramadan program.

What unites all of us, donors and staff alike, is our interest in making a difference in the lives of these children. It's not just the humbling financial support that has sustained us over these past ten years, its all of us working together sharing wisdom, friendship, and support. Thank you.



Please visit our website TODAY at

www.kinderusa.org

and **DONATE GENEROUSLY !**

or use the enclosed envelope

so we can fulfill our project goals for 2012!

Women Cooperative in Gaza

KinderUSA Women Cheese Cooperative in Gaza is one of the most active programs that highlights the importance of self-reliance through training and job creation. Impoverished and marginalized female heads of household are trained in the production of white cheese to market in their store front. This is a sustainable KinderUSA project which has continued successfully for two years training women, some who stay with the project and others who go on to find jobs in food preparation.

This year 25 women have learned the trade along with marketing and management skills and the importance of quality control. According to Nehaia, KinderUSA field representative, "the cheese is delicious! I bought some for my family!"

As part of our Ramadan fresh food program, the cheese was an integral part of the food basket along with yogurt, fresh thyme, and pressed dates – all prepared by the cooperative! With a current unemployment rate among women in Gaza at 47% in the first quarter of 2012, this project is greatly needed. This investment each year is less, \$6635. A small amount for a huge return!

Hana's Gift to the children in Gaza!



Once again, our amazingly generous donor has provided the necessary funds to build playgrounds in Gaza. The location is in the Al Nemsawi and Al Amal areas of Khan Younis where safe areas to play are very limited primarily due to financial burdens of the community at large. More than 4000 children will benefit from the installation of the playground, having a safe place to play with new recreational equipment. Hana's family loudly declared to the children in Gaza, "You are not alone!" Thank you Hana!!

Social Development Center

In the Ein el-Helweh camp near Saida, Lebanon, many children do not attend school for various reasons, often finding jobs to help the family or just roaming the streets. The Social Development Center (SDC) funded by KinderUSA for a second year provides these children, aged 6-14, a learning environment where they develop the essential skills to read and write. Many children in the camp did not have the benefit of an educational environment which provides the necessary tools they need to flourish. For the older students, many who attended school but never learned to read and write, SDC assists them in entering a technical trade that will sustain them in adulthood.

This is a small school with an even smaller budget, \$36,000, that produces tremendous results. See Zahra's story opposite page. Thirty-seven children attended SDC this year, receiving meals, books, instruction, and an environment where they feel welcomed.

This project with your funding, represents a cost-effective investment for the future of children with a benefit for society as a whole.

Zahra: former student from SDC



Zahra comes from a very impoverished, uneducated family and has remained committed to her studies managing the tremendous obstacles camp life entails in Ein el-Hilweh. This year she will complete her Baccalaureate 2 and then go to university financed by benefactors. Zahra surprised us all when she came to the Social Development Center (SDC) in Ein el-Hilweh camp asking permission to give a tour of the center to the organization that intends to grant her a scholarship to further her studies. Zahra considers it important for everyone to know where she started learning, who helped her, and who encouraged her to continue her education. She also wanted to show them the library where she borrowed books to read and assist in her studies. Zahra is a model for the other students who attend SDC and we are extremely proud of her!!

Tutoring in Gaza

Most schools in the Gaza Strip operate on a double shift just in order to meet the needs of students who face overcrowded classrooms, challenging the capability of the most seasoned instructor. With the large number of students in each class it is very difficult for students to participate in the classroom or to even fully comprehend their lessons. Consequently, educational standards are deteriorating under the strain of poverty, unstable circumstances, chronic underfunding and the introduction of the new Palestinian curriculum.

The KinderUSA tutoring project has worked successfully to bridge the gaps for students in core subjects they are failing: Arabic, Math, and English. Students from the local university are



paid a small stipend to tutor along with one instructor who coordinates the curriculum for overly anxious children 5 days a week after school. This is the third year our program has been implemented, with overwhelming participation each year. Last year, students waited in line to sign up, forcing us to expand the program from 3 days a week to 5. In addition to tutoring, children are provided snacks which for many in this impoverished region is certainly an added benefit, "they gave me a meal, but when I remembered my younger brother I decided not to eat it and keep it, until I come back home and give it to him".

For less than \$5000 a semester, an investment for the future, we are keeping children excited about learning and staying in school!





Ramadan Farmers Program

Continued from page 1

For most of these laborers, this was the first opportunity to work in a number of years. Each family received fresh dairy, including eggs, fresh live poultry, and a number of fresh vegetables and fruit including but not limited to tomatoes, eggplants, cucumbers, potatoes, squash, molkheyia, in addition to olive oil.

"This is the first time to have our kitchen filled with food since my husband died over a year ago", said Hana, a mother

with no income raising 9 children, 5 of her own and 4 belonging to her sister. "The children can now have a real meal!"

This program carries through to the end of the year as many families in Gaza are food insecure and worse off than they were in the 1990s. KinderUSA has infused over \$125,000 in Gaza alone for this program with your steadfast support. Thank you.



Eid al Fitr Celebrations

North of Tripoli, the Nahr el-Bared camp is home to 25,000 Palestinians, less than half of the population who once lived there prior to the 2007 conflict between Lebanese Armed Forces and a previously unknown group. For the past four years, KinderUSA in partnership with Palestinian Youth & Children Institute (PCYI) have implemented a 3 day festival for more than 5000 children living in the camp recognizing Eid al Fitr. KinderUSA believes that along with much needed educational and developmental programs, all children should be provided the opportunity to laugh and have fun! For ninety cents a child,



\$4500, children watched theatrical plays, received gifts, had treats, and general fun thanks to YOU!

Youth Theater

For a second year, KinderUSA supports Yes Theater whose goal is to include drama, theatre, and creative activities in the lives of young people in Palestine, so that they can find their individual voice and sense of self. Plays are written and produced by the young performers, using the tool of drama as a means of expression, critical thinking, and imaginatively presenting problems they face growing up under occupation. Throughout the year, the young performers conduct workshops and plays for both their parents and peers overcoming fears and anxiety with a team spirit! In partnership with War



Child and Sida, KinderUSA has infused \$10,000 for this year-long project.



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