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Al-Shurooq School for Blind  
Children

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### Some Past event Photos



## The National Society for the Visually Handicapped Al-Shurooq School for Blind Children

### A New Year With A New Challenge

Like all other regions and districts, Bethlehem with all its institutions suffered recently from the Covid-19 pandemic. Since most of our students are from remote villages and cities, and to ensure their safety, the school preferred to close the boarding house and follow up with the students through an online plan.

Thanks to God, things stabilized, and the students returned to school, but we were much less, either because of Corona, early integration, or other health and educational reasons.

When I took over the school administration, the number of students was nine, and thanks to God, due to hard work within a vigorous recruitment plan, we are now 31 students.

It is a great pleasure and an honor to work for the National Association for the visually handicapped and to be a partner in a great humanitarian mission. I started working with a spirit determined on diligence and achievement, so we reopened the boarding house, enhanced the sensory room, and held many workshops and pieces of training at the rehabilitative, academic, psychological, and social levels.

We also updated strategies to be more intensive and compatible with learning difficulties and Braille, in addition to the devices, tools, and means that have been provided to support the educational process in our school.

Everything we have achieved in the past, everything we are offering to these students, what we are achieving in the present, and all our future plans cannot be achieved without the support, love, and continuous generosity of good people.

**“As we work to create life for others, we naturally  
light our own way”.**

MARY ANNE RADMACHER

Regards,  
School Principal  
Mirna Fliefel



# Commemoration Ceremony For The Late Founder of The School Mother Helen Habib Shehadeh



The National Society for the Visually handicapped / Al-Shorouq School for the Blind hosted a commemoration ceremony for the late founder of the school mother Helen Habib Shehadeh on the second anniversary of her death in the presence of her family, the ministry of Education, and a large crowd of official personalities from the society.

The ceremony included a speech by the Chairman of the administrative board, Dr. Simon Al-Araj, delivered on his behalf by the Vice Chairman of the Board Mr. Elias Jahshan, in which he praised the achievements and works of the late Helen in creating extended generations, and her philosophy of educating people with visual impairments in Palestine, quoting the words of the people who spent many years with her in a booklet in both languages, Arabic and English emphasizing the fulfillment of her humanitarian biography, her work, and her mission after her departure.

## The Special Education Class

The special education class or the multiple disabilities class is one of the programs that fall within the framework of the rehabilitation services provided to children with visual impairments, which aims to help them develop their abilities in terms of various life skills. Many integrated rehabilitation services are given to this class, like Occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech therapy sessions. In addition to self-awareness sessions, in a form of a plan that takes into account the child's privacy and ability.



## Sensory Room

In a sensory room, children gain access to appropriate sensory stimulation, and their bodies learn how to respond appropriately to the stimulation. In a sensory room, children improve their auditory and tactile processing, as well as their fine and gross motor skills. So, Al Shurooq enhanced the role of its sensory room in self-regulating its students' behavior and improving focus by providing new sensory pieces of equipment on a grant from UPA

## A New Braille printer through a grant from LCIF

A memorandum of understanding was signed in September 2022 between Al Shurooq School for Blind children represented by Dr. Simon Al Araj and Lions' Clubs of Palestine represented by Lion Wael Al Shaer as Project Chairperson.

With the presence of Lion Samir Sahhar Zone Chairperson Grant Administrator on behalf of District Governor Lion Boutros Aoun, Lion Sulima Zabaneh GST district coordinator (Project Chairperson), and Lion Nahida Ghattas past LCIF coordinator to supply a Braille printer through a grant from LCIF with a total value of \$48,000.



## Parents- School interconnectedness

The National Society for the Visually handicapped / Al-Shorouq School for the Blind held a meeting for the parents of its students, in which issues of students' academic affairs, education and the role of parents, and the relationship between students and school were raised. The Department of Physiotherapy and Speech Therapy also covered instructions related to students and their development, the impact of the role of parents and their follow-up, and the basics of building successful behavior as inputs to comprehensive rehabilitation.



## A Series of workshops sponsored by UPA within the program of integration into regular schools



The national society for visually handicapped carried out a series of workshops sponsored by UPA within the program of integration into regular schools. The first workshop was held in the context of focus groups targeting students of Al Shorouq who were integrated into schools and their families from all regions to monitor the needs, challenges, and necessary interventions.

While the second workshop was about math teaching techniques, and others related to curriculum adaptation and educational aids.

Lecturers and participants applied experiences and challenges that blind students face in their classes. Thus, they were able to devise valuable educational tools and methods that help the students understand their lessons using different adaptors.

Also, since mothers of Al Shorouq students are effective partners in the educational process of their kids, knowing braille language is a necessity. Thus, the school targeted a group of mothers of blind children and empowered them to support their children during their academic life in school by providing training focusing on the basics of braille language.



# Follow-up Visits

Within the program of field visits and follow-ups for graduate students from Al-Shorouq School which is considered one of our main objectives, and believing in the importance of community integration for people with disabilities as a tool for engaging them in different community environments, the Psychosocial department targets the integrated students into their regular schools and within integrated plans.

According to the students' visual functional reports, the intervention extends to school teachers and the environment. The integration program also monitors the needs and challenges necessary in the environment which must be flexible, healthy, and safe whether at the academic or social level.



## RUN FOR FREEDOM



A group of Al Shurouq students participated in the Palestine International Marathon, the most prominent sports race, under the slogan “Run for Freedom”, at the initiative of the Star of Bethlehem Lions Club, through which the students were able to express their determination to participate in community activities that aim for justice and the noble humanitarian goal. The students attended the activities presented by the local community institutions in a unified marathon atmosphere in the square of the Nativity Church.

# Music is a way to improve verbal and visual skills



A cooperation agreement was signed between The National Society for the visually handicapped/Al-Shorouq School for the Blind and the Edward Said national conservatory of Music, where the students began to learn singing, rhythm, and musical games. Artistically, the school issued its anthem, which will be recorded and sung by a choir composed of a group of students at Al-Shorouq School. Also, some of the students have begun to learn to play the piano under the supervision of volunteer Maria, a friend of the school.

Believing in the need to strengthen and consolidate relations between our school and local community institutions, in the importance of the participatory relationship, and in the role played by the local community with its institutions in achieving the school's mission, the school has participated in several community events and partnerships, as well as organized exchange visits and activities on various occasions.

## Strengthening partnership with the local community



## Christmas

Al Shurouq Students joined the annual YMCA Christmas party in Jerusalem which began with a speech welcoming the guests, followed by Christmas Carols and ended with santa dancing and offering gifts.

*Indeed, we are greatly humbled by the generosity, love and dedication of all our friends who have made it possible. We all, children and staff, say “thank you” to each and every one of you.*