



# مؤسسة الاراضي المقدسة للصم / السلط The Holy Land Institute for the Deaf

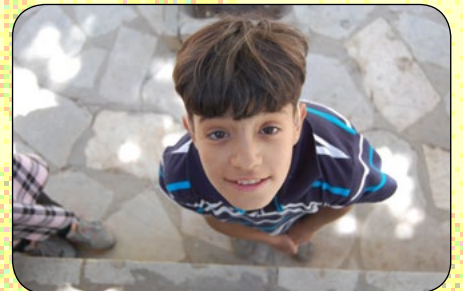
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Summer 2016



Let your light so shine...



Deafinitely connected - God provides

# INVISIBLE HEROS



**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**

Gospel of Mathew 5:16

Summer 2016

Dear Friends

The theme for this Newsletter is "hidden heroes".

Reading this letter quite a few of them will come to your attention. Co-workers who are good at whatever they are doing and, especially, 'who are faithful'; who are there just when you need them and who usually are the ones to complain the least; who are happy and contented, loathing the limelight while they prefer to go quietly about their work.

We have a great team of people who are leaders and carry responsibility for the Institute, staff and children, but without those workers, volunteers and helpers the whole institute would collapse. I'll mention one more: Right now I miss Salah, one of the dormitory supervisors who also takes care of small repairs and usually has one of the weaker students to help him and to 'teach' him. He grew up in school and is Deaf. As a child Salah lost one eye and in the other eye he has Usher syndrome (night-blindness and tunnel vision) which eventually may well make him blind. But he is happy, 'we need him and he needs us'.



Sometimes I think that we make life more complicated than it needs to be. It is written: "let your light so shine...", without mentioning anything about theology and testimony, about sin, guilt and shame. Light doesn't talk much, it just "is", even (or especially) when you don't say anything. That is why children often are such a wonderful blessing - light in darkness, with their uncomplicated and simple trust and confidence that "our heavenly Father knows best...".

Is that why the Kingdom of God belongs to the children? "If you don't become like one of these..." Jesus said. And I am sure that he knew what he was talking about.

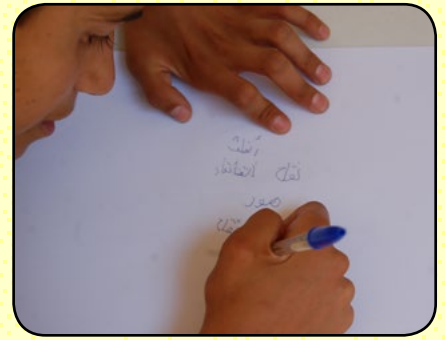
With warm regards, on behalf of staff and children

**Brother Andrew**



## How will these hands learn to speak?

**Manal, Issa** and **Asala**, three siblings from Amman, have a neurological disorder, which causes their limbs to be bent in a manner similar to gout. All three are deaf. Sign language is becoming increasingly difficult for them, as the condition is still worsening. Although they are having real difficulties, the deaf around them are still able to understand them. But, there is hope: The written word! In winter, Issa was still writing in the wrong direction of writing, but, now he is developing a huge fascination with writing. Now, he even writes in the correct direction. And it is music to the eyes (so to speak) to see how readily he absorbs new words, like fresh air after the rain. Whether through the pen, on tablet or on the touchscreen keyboard, he finds a way to tell us what is on his "fingertips".



## Learning assistance

Three tireless staff members have signed up to assist our students with their learning. **Hiba, Jamil** and the deaf **Alaa**. Daily they are busy helping the children with their homework, as well as assisting the children with their revision during examination time. They encourage the children to go beyond their comfort zone, and to make the most of their time, in order to understand the

learning material in the best way possible. Alaa has just finished a university degree, and is keen to continue studying. We are looking for a grant and an appropriate institution which trains in child healthcare and care for persons with disabilities.

## Fadile's Masters

**Fadile**, the deaf Deputy Principal of the school, has completed a Master's degree in Special Education, which she had undertaken alongside her work. We congratulate her with her successful completion of the course. This, of course, serves as an example to the students, that deaf students can find success in academics like everybody else.



Fadileh was celebrated.

## Invisible heros

At the start of the day, as the night shift in the deafblind dorms enter the final hours of their duties, and those on night duty in the girls' dorms wake up the first girls, the first volunteers and staff members begin to do the work that no one sees. All of them are our invisible heroes. Think of **Nicola**, he is the first of the support staff waiting daily at 6am on a bench by the school gate. In just a few minutes he will begin with his breakfast preparations and with morning cleaning tasks, so that the school is ready for a new day. Every morning, with a radiant, sun-like smile on his face, he greets me with a loud, "Sabah el-Kheir" – May the day be good. The well-practiced reply is then, " Sabah el-Ward", may his morning have the fragrance of roses.

Shortly after that, the women begin doing the huge amounts of laundry which needs washing daily. By midday the laundry should be dry, so that the children can tidy their freshly-washed clothes in their wardrobes and drawers.

At 6:30 the Deaf youth from the dorms of the boardinghouse begin to help the deafblind get ready with their morning preparations.

**Ramadan**, the Egyptian co-worker who is responsible for maintenance is also already awake. As he is used to from his homeland he begins his work in the cool hours of the early morning; whether the task involves him rerouting wiring, or repairing a faucet.

In JOFEH, the school-bus driver **Abu Rania** is awake too, so that he can pick up the children and workers from the surrounding villages on time, to deliver them to the centres in Jofeh and Kreimeh in the Jordan Valley.

Even the drivers at the Institute who sometimes have to drive to the airport at night to pick up guests and workers, belong to these "invisible heroes".

This is in their honour.



▲ Ramadan



◀ Nicola





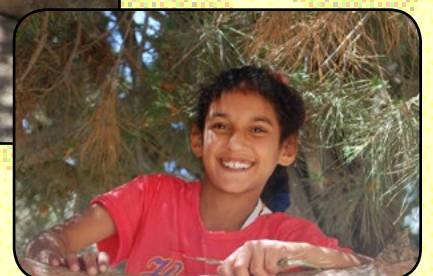
## A new child is on the way

Beginnings can be difficult. Imagine being left in a strange, foreign place. You don't speak the language and there is hardly anyone among the many new people around you who are able to communicate with you to explain for what purpose, and for how long, you must stay. That is exactly what happens when a child first arrives here at the school. The parents drop them off and go, leaving the child to find their bearings in a strange new world. The child does not know that once a month the children are reunited with their family for the weekend. Nor does the child understand that their parents will return. On top of that there is the usual challenge of becoming acquainted with the school's rules and routines. Even so, it is still incredibly impressive how many students pick up the basics of sign language within a few days.

**Ibrahim** and **Kunuut**, two siblings who came to us recently are living proof of this. Homesickness and frustration made the pair cry constantly for the first two days. They resisted entering the school building with hands and feet. Step by step, though, they learn that we are trying to teach them how to communicate. Already, after just a few short weeks they have made new friends with whom they can plot their first pranks. Once again, the invisible heroes, this time in the form of deaf friends, make all the difference. Everyone begins in reception class, where the fundamentals of sign language are taught using a play-based teaching method. After this, the students are divided according to age, educational status and ability, into the appropriate class.



Newcomers.





## Standing on his own two feet

**Mohammed** (7 years old), who is deafblind, has found a new form of locomotion. He can now walk independently! His mother cried with joy the first time her son walked towards her unaided. For someone else this might be unremarkable. But, for Mohammed this opens up a new world for him to discover, a world which previously extended only as far as his arms could reach. Don't we learn to walk mainly by watching others? Mohammed had no such examples, having never had use of his eyes. He appears to be enjoying the experience, and he can be seen smiling broadly as he wanders across the school grounds with his small, still unsteady, faltering steps. We are thankful for the teaching team (both deaf and non-deaf), and for their hard work. But also to **Fathme** (15), **Ghadeer** (20) and **Moad** (12), who have been practicing with Mohammed every day. These also belong to the hidden heroes.



Mohammed

## The Deafblind unit goes on a School trip

A part of the Deafblind unit made a trip to the Wadi Shita, a shallow streambed, inviting for a nice bath. For the Deafblind water has a strong effect on their senses. **Mareen**, who is deafblind, stayed in the water until the teachers took her out of it, because of the cold. But Mareen didn't agree to that at all. So they let her take another bath and her world was again in order. **Anas** was very excited about all the pebble stones in the riverbed and had great fun throwing them through the air. **Rahme**, who was very quiet on the way to the wadi, blossomed when she first touched the water. On the way home she was a different child. **Kawthar** didn't want to leave anymore because she loves water more than anything. Hannes, a volunteer carefully carried her out of the water to get her into the bus back to Salt. Children and Staff enjoyed this trip to the fullest.



Mareen and...



...Kawthar enjoying.



## Ordination of Jamil

**Jamil**, who comes from Palestine, has been helping us out in many ways for almost a year. He was made a Deacon in February. He travelled to Jerusalem for the ceremony which was presided over by the Archbishop. He will continue to serve at the school, in the church community in Salt and in the Episcopal Church office in Amman. We congratulate him warmly.



Jamil (3rd from the right)

## GENERAL NEWS

### AKI (Allah Kariem - International) Meeting

Between 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> of April, the support associations of the HLID met here for a conference. There were around 20 guests from England, Holland, Switzerland, Germany and Japan, along with Jordanian partners. They have been promoting the institute for years. They stay in touch with our supporters, give presentations, make the mentoring scheme possible and advocate and raise awareness for the Institute and it's work in their respective countries. Alongside tours through the various departments and programs of the Institute, they were able to come together and share experiences and discuss strategy for the future of the Institute and for the all-important fundraising. All who came gave their time and spared no expense in order to make it to the conference. We owe them a huge thank-you. Without them, the Institute would cease to exist.



The participants of the AKI meeting 2016.

## Samir's visit to Iraq and Kurdistan

This spring season **Samir** travelled to Iraq and Kurdistan. In Iraq he was able to train 17 teachers for the Deaf for two weeks. They were from 6 different Deaf schools in the area of Bagdad. There are major changes ahead for the Deaf schools in Iraq. Soon they will be under new authority of the municipalities and not under the Ministry of Labour as before. After this time in Bagdad Samir taught 19 teachers for the Deaf in the Syrian Refugee camps Domiz 1 and 2 in Kurdistan. According to Samir the working conditions of all the teachers in Kurdistan became very difficult. Their salaries were cut by 50% because of the economic development which depends much on current oil prices. However, Samir is full of hope for the work with the Deaf in the region.



Samir (3rd f.t.r.) is teaching a lesson.

## SIGNLANGUAGE



## Conference for Sign-language interpreters in Amman

On 20th and 21st April, a big conference for sign-language interpreters from across the region took place in Amman. The sign-language team from the institute was invited to take part. The head of the team, **Ahlam**, interpreter **Julia** and the deputy leader of the deafblind department **Asma**, held presentations. **Br. Andrew** was present during proceedings. The quality of both presentations by the institute seems to have caught the Education Minister's attention as they were among the best of the conference. He invited Brother Andrew to his office in order to discuss special measures to adapt the official school exams to the needs of deaf students in such a way that their disability is taken into account in the process of awarding grades. This is the same government minister who sent a deputy minister to be present at the HLID graduation celebrations this year.



Ahlam is giving a presentation.



## Changes to the building

There has been construction work in the house behind the boarding house. Until now, volunteers and workers such as **Asma** and **Tamara** lived there. Now it is being renovated to become a guest house. There will be new winding stairs all the way from the groundfloor to the top; two rooms were enlarged, and the room arrangements were changed. Also all the water and sanitary installations were redone.

On the roof of the boys' boarding house and the kitchen is the so-called "honeymoon suite". It was named after Brother Andrew's niece and her husband, spent their honeymoon there. The apartment was refurbished. **Brother Andrew**, who had the apartment adjacent to the boys' boarding house, is going to move to the redone apartment on the roof. His old flat is going to be used as night shift accommodation for those who work during the night at the boys' boarding house. Also, deacon **Jamil** is going to move in so that he has an apartment off his own. Both projects were drawn up by **Yohanna**, the volunteer engineer from Korea. He doesn't only draw but often you can see him on the construction site where he lends a hand and carries cement bags to the upper floor.



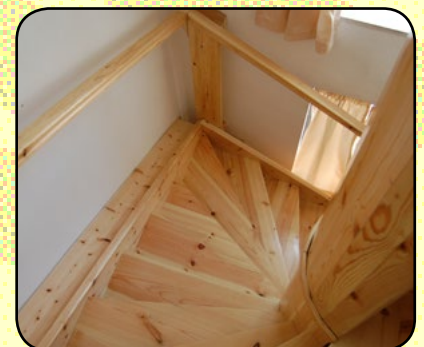
The new guesthouse.

## Collaboration between Yohanna and Ayed

The stairs in Asma's house were built by a Swiss carpenter many years ago. They are too beautiful to be thrown away and were taken down piece by piece. Another masterpiece was created in their place. **Yohanna** had designed difficult winding stairs for the new guesthouse. It turned out to be a hard nut to crack for our deaf carpenter **Ayed**. Every step of the stairs had a different angle. A creative duo: our carpenter - whose sign language skills are rather weak, and Yohanna - who has no experience with working on construction sites and who is still new in sign language. Nevertheless, they found a way to achieve the objective. They both had some sleepless nights thinking through the next steps in the work progress. They also belong to our hidden heroes.



Ayed (2nd f. t. r.)



## New vocational training in the old hospital

During the last months the renovation works in preparation of the opening of the new Dine & Sign Restaurant were almost completed. A new bathroom with two additional toilets was built near the garden terrace. Inside the main building of the hospital two rooms were combined where the main kitchen will be. Now we are anxiously waiting for the approval of funds to pay for the equipment and furniture. Once the kitchen is installed, the new Vocational



Sign upon entry.

Training in Hospitality can start with the training of up to 7 students. The programme will provide basic but professional training in cooking, baking and customer service as well as general housekeeping and management. The



The roof terrace of the new restaurant.

training focuses on young people among whom deaf and handicapped people will be preferred. The big challenge at the moment is to find an experienced trainer who will take on the task of establishing and developing this new programme. In addition to the new restaurant, we also plan to establish Art classes at the Old Hospital. There are many children in the neighbourhood, but affordable art and music classes are not yet available. Lo-

cal children as well as children of the Institute would benefit from exploring and learning about painting, music or sculpting and would find new ways of expressing themselves. Here too we are looking for gifted and motivated teachers. It would be wonderful if the restaurant and art classes could start up soon.

After so many years, the Old Hospital would finally have a function again in the service of the local community.



## New vocational training unit in Kreimeh

After the summer we hope to start with a new vocational training programme in Kreimeh. Two shipping containers stand in an area which is marked out with wire-netting fence. These containers are going to accommodate a metal and a carpentry workshop. They are covered by a sun roof that we mentioned in the last newsletter, it provides extra shelter for the outdoor area as well as the training area. Maher, a former student and later a volunteer carpenter at the Jofeh centre, spent the last year in Salt training as a metal worker. We hope to train another deaf young man for the carpentry or metal workshop. We plan to appoint Maher as responsible person for both workshops and maintenance in Jofeh and Kreimeh. He is going to start a simplified vocational training programme in Kreimeh.



The new metal- and woodworkshop.



Maher(I.) is working on the sun roof.

## GENERAL NEWS

### The end of the school year

Traditionally we celebrate the graduation ceremony in the last week before the long summer holidays. The secretaries general of the ministry of education, **Mr. Sami Saleita** and of the Higher Council for Disabilities, **Mr. Abdelhalim Daradkeh** were this year's guests of honour. They took part in handing out the certificates and brought their congratulations. The students contributed a variety of creative performances and made the ceremony very unique. The last Saturday before the end of the year we had a huge barbecue. All the students were looking forward to a comfy get together and tasty food while sitting around a large bonfire. Time to share memories of the past year, dancing traditional Dabkeh dances and students thanking the staff of the institute with little presents. Young and old were satisfied to the fullest.



The guests of honour with graduates.

