

The McCabe Educational Trust

supporting children in Bethany



Jeel al-Amal Boys Home

Jeel al-Amal (Generation of Hope) School and Boys Home was founded by Basil Sahhar in the village of Bethany to the east of Jerusalem. Today, there are more than 300 children in the primary school and 100 boys living in the Boys Home. A visit to Bethany now requires a lengthy detour around the new Israeli security wall. When this wall is completed, Bethany will be separated from Jerusalem and pilgrims may no longer be able to visit. McCabe parties who do make the journey are made very welcome and the McCabe Educational Trust helps maintain relationships with visitors who would like to get involved in a practical way.



The boys come from Jerusalem and from towns and villages in the Palestinian territories. Many are orphans or have endured terrible domestic problems. While there is little material wealth, the love and devotion of the staff are reflected in the perfect manners and sunny dispositions of the children. Some older boys go on to further education at secondary schools and get jobs which would have been impossible without the help of Jeel. Many have gone on to help their families financially, which can be vital set against the dire economic situation that prevails in the Palestinian territories today.

Jeel al Amal changes lives and many are the pilgrims who over the years have been moved and amazed by its work. The McCabe Educational Trust supports the running costs of Jeel with a monthly remittance and funds improvements with capital grants.



Over the past three summers the McCabe Educational Trust has linked up with the charitable teaching organisation, Unipal, to send a team of experienced volunteer teachers from the UK to run a summer school in Bethany. The objective of the programme was to help the children with their English and also to have fun in arts and crafts sessions. Activities included making puppets and collages, cooking (the Palestinian children were particularly interested to experience English cuisine!) and painting and drawing. The boys at Jeel have painted a large mural on the playground wall and the teachers accompanied the children on trips into Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho and Ramallah. This summer school will now become an annual event.

The volunteers were amazed at what the staff achieve with the children, especially in the light of the political difficulties and restrictions that Bethany experiences, not to mention the lack of resources and funding. They were particularly impressed at how the older boys act as mentors to the younger children and help take responsibility for their welfare. All of the volunteers felt that the level of teaching at Jeel and the care given to often vulnerable children was exceptional.

Volunteer Rachel Holmes writes:

"It is hard to sum up what an amazing time I had in Bethany. I have learned so much, and I know that the skills I have acquired will now be put into practice in my teaching at home. What we gave, as volunteers, is only a fraction of what we received".

The work of the Trust and the generous support of our contributors, all become worthwhile when we see the smiles on faces of children and from the sense of achievement that comes from knowing that we are making a real difference to the lives of these boys and girls.



Lazarus Home for Girls

Let us introduce you to a remarkable woman and a remarkable work ...



“My name is Samar Sahhar; I was born in Jerusalem the eldest of six children. At the time of my birth my parents had founded the Jeel al Amal orphanage for boys in the village of Bethany near Jerusalem. It is not usual in Palestine for sexes to mix, but I grew up with all the boys and joined them inside the orphanage with games of football or marbles. Of course outside the orphanage we were forbidden to mix. Later in life I worked closely with my father Basil, assisting him with the running of the home. I gained first hand knowledge of the work God had given him in rescuing orphaned and destitute boys and after my father’s death, my mother and I continued to run the home.”

OUR STORY BEGINS

In November 1997, Alan Anderson visited Jeel al Amal and witnessed a heart-rending moment when four children were brought to the home, two boys and two girls. The boys were taken in but there was no place for the girls. In this moment, “The Friends of Lazarus” had its beginning. Alan found the funds and Samar rose to the new challenge. An apartment was rented and adapted for use as an orphanage and the name Lazarus adopted.

Over twenty years the home operated in rented accommodation with space for approximately forty girls, four housemothers and Samar. Conditions were cramped, sanitation poor, and the rent high. Even so, the Lazarus home provided a safe and loving environment and the girls thrived. All of this was been made possible by ongoing financial support from The Friends of Lazarus, the McCabe Educational Trust and visiting pilgrim parties who included a visit to Lazarus in their itinerary - visiting the “Living Stones” of the land.

A HOME IN CRISIS

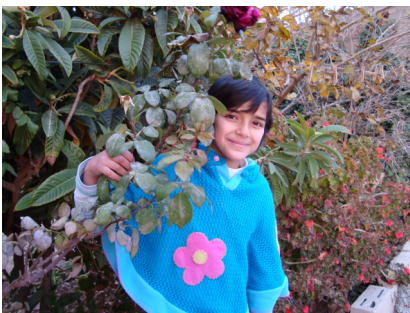
At present (June 2011) the Lazarus Home for Girls is closed. The detail is not clear and we are unwilling to print any of the many unsubstantiated rumours that are circulating. The Palestinian Authority acted on reports received and decided to close the home. Some of the girls are being housed by the authority; others have gone back to their villages. We are not sure what the future holds for Samar or the girls. We are in communication with the Lazarus board but at present it is very unclear whether in fact the home will re-open.

The Sahhar family have done tremendous work in Bethany over a long period of time and rescued countless young people from often desperate situations. We have confidence and belief in the integrity of Samar and are standing by her at this difficult time.

The board of the McCabe Educational Trust meet regularly and the future of the home is top of the agenda at every meeting. We do hope a way forward can be found for Samar to continue with her visionary work. On the financial side, we are keeping £200,000 in a separate client account ready to be used if a solution to the current crisis is found. Any additional donations received are being added to this fund.

VISITING BETHANY

For most McCabe pilgrim parties, a visit to the homes in Bethany is a highlight of their pilgrimage itinerary. At present groups are visiting Jeel al Amal Boys Home. Your and our support is as important as ever. Our hopes and prayers are with Samar at this very difficult time.



Let the McCabe Educational Trust be a channel for your charitable giving

Send a general purpose donation OR send a specific donation

Remember The McCabe Educational Trust in your will

Become a regular donor to the McCabe Educational Trust with a standing order

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