Vendor Carts in Gaza — “Hope” is the Name of My Cart

With your support, UPA initiated an emergency youth employment project this summer in Gaza City. The Vendor Carts for Marginalized Families Project turns despair into hope by helping long-term unemployed young men who are heads-of-household start their own businesses.

A significant portion of Gaza’s economy is based on the work of self-employed peddlers, who sell their products from mobile carts. In light of the scarcity of permanent employment in a stifled economy, this is a temporary option for generating quick, modest income for impoverished families.

After completing a two-week training program on how to run a small business, 30 participants received a vendor cart and an interest-free loan for their proposed business. Mohammed Abo Hamad, 21 years old, living in East Gaza, was unemployed before he received a cart from Vendor Carts for Marginalized Families in the Gaza Strip Project, funded by UPA and implemented by the Palestinian Association for Education and Environmental Protection (PAEEP).

“I could not continue my studies due to my family’s economic situation, so I decided to work to help my family, but it was difficult to find a job due to the high rate of unemployment,” Mohammed said.

“Afther I was selected to receive a cart,” he added, “I felt that now I can start my own work and build my future, so I named this cart Hope.”

Ahmed said that through this project he aims to help his family and build his future by selling accessories and children’s clothes.

A Glimpse of Hope in Gaza

UPA Open House
The Year in Pictures
Saturday, December 5th
3 - 6 PM
Meet staff and learn more about UPA programs. Refreshments provided. RSVP by sending an email to rsvp@helpupa.org.

UPA Washington Office • 1330 New Hampshire Ave NW
Suite 104 • Washington, DC 20036

Letter from the Executive Director

On a hot summer day last August, as a surveillance camera circled the sky, watching from a distance, our air-conditioned taxi approached the checkpoint. UPA Director of Programs Hanna Rabah and I wondered whether we would be allowed to cross this time. Last week’s attempt failed, as it was determined by a young soldier that our papers were not in order.

The term “checkpoint” is quite misleading here; this “checkpoint” is rather a modern steel and glass spacious, air-conditioned structure, with multi-story spaces, offices and security personnel and cameras throughout. It could be easily mistaken for an airport terminal in a number of European countries.

For the few who are lucky enough to be granted crossing permits, stepping out of the building, they are faced with a dramatic contrast. Greeted by the hot, humid air, the journey into Gaza starts with a maze of steel-mesh walled walkways, separated by electronically controlled gates, with overhead security cameras and loud-speakers blaring instructions. About amble or so of concrete sidewalk, the maze stretches through no-man’s land. The fertile land now stands arid; a few cactus plants in a distance, still standing, bear witness to a waterless existence and a harsh reality.

The eye in the sky still watching!

Throughout the landscape, the damaged streets once travelled by tanks slowly wind into lifeless neighborhoods of rubble-lined avenues that extend to the horizon.

We stopped several times to take pictures of the “unsettling of Gaza” and the lacking rebuilding efforts. As I focused my camera, zooming in on one
A child’s path to a bright future begins with a healthy body and healthy mind. Through the Children’s Fund, we have long been committed to supporting the physical well-being of children in Gaza. We are now proud to announce the launch of our Healing Through Feeling program, which focuses on supporting the emotional well-being of children in Gaza who are traumatized by war and subsequent living conditions.

Healing Through Feeling is a school-based program for Palestinian mental health practitioners who will provide kindergarteners and their caregivers with the education needed to understand and address their symptoms of trauma.

The program was developed by a team of American professionals in child development and trauma who have worked in collaboration with colleagues in Gaza. We believe that awareness-building is a crucial step to healing and will begin the process for these children to grow, succeed and thrive.

Dear Friends of UPA,

By joining the UPA Circle of Hope monthly-giving program, you are making a profound and dedicated humanitarian gesture. You are reaching out & touching a life.

Your monthly sustaining support allows UPA to continue its work in transforming lives and empowering communities.

How you can join:

• By Mail: Fill out the enclosed donation envelope with your credit card information, indicate the donation amount and check, “Monthly.”

• Online: Visit our Circle of Hope donation page at helpupa.org/hope.

• By Phone: Call us at 855-659-5007, ext. 202.

Thank you for reaching out and touching a life.

Sincerely,
The UPA Team