

UPAconnect

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UPA United Palestinian Appeal
—Transforming lives, empowering communities since 1978—



Letter from the Executive Director

The Rite of Spring



As another fall semester starts, a new group of young Palestinian students marches enthusiastically through gates of Palestinian universities with pride, seeking a new life of promise—a new spring of hope. Their Rite of Spring has come.

The Rite of Spring is the title of the 1913 orchestral work and ballet by Igor Stravinsky that celebrates the creative power of spring. This celebrated passage into college life is a treasured and much-cherished ritual in all cultures. In Palestinian society, it signifies the creative power of hope despite the dark shadow of uncertainty that looms in the background.

This transition is also the first significant event in one's adult life. For most Palestinians, and others, college education is the first step towards independence. This new life is where intellectual sovereignty is born, where questioning rather than conforming is a right, and open-ended discussion is a virtue. It is a new playing field where young men and women have the ability to envision a present and a future beyond the constraints of their reality and a crucible where all facets of society are bonded by the love of learning. It is the Rite of Spring—the act of renewal that cultivates a hope for the future common to humanity.

One of the measures of success of educational institutions is the percentage of graduates securing instant employment in an overly competitive market. One can argue however, that there is a difference between schooling and education. Schooling leads to developing a marketable skill. Education leads to the ability to think creatively, to imagine and to dream.

In light of the practical need for employment, and echoing a global culture where success is measured materially, it is not unrealistic to assume that Palestinian society would be less inclined to value education. In a community where the rate of unemployment among young college graduates is 53% and rising, many question the feasibility of investing in education. Yet, the demand is growing: the number of college graduates has increased by 82% (from approximately 22,000 to 40,000) over the last 11 years.

History has taught us that possessions can be lost, homes abandoned and homelands conquered. Men and women can be imprisoned, constrained with chains and shackles—save for their ideas and dreams. Those continue to soar freely beyond any constraint of walls, ambiguity of plans or uncertainty of the future. This is the gift of imagination, the Rite of Spring—the right to hope. This is the result of education.

For the last 29 years, through your support, UPA's University Scholarship Program has prevailed. Behind walls and through barriers UPA has cultivated hope among a new generation of dreamers and thinkers who refuse to be bound by a reality that is harsh and unfair. Please continue to nurture the right to hope that cultivates relentless resilience by supporting UPA today.

Sincerely,

Saleem F. Zaru
Executive Director

Healing Through Feeling

Imagine being a child of 10 or even 5 years old and traumatized by war, devastation and loss. A child who sees his or her parents suffering from loss and the stress of war and continuous blockade.

UPA is on the ground in Gaza to help these young children overcome the trauma they have experienced—and continue to experience. UPA engaged **300 kindergarten children** during their summer camp activities through the **Healing Through Feeling** program. Activities were held across Gaza, including Khan Yunis, Rafah, Beit Lahia, El-Moghraqa, Sammouni, Mughrada and Maghaza.

UPA's mental health practitioners conducted workshops for the children's parents on cognitive development in children and how children in different age groups typically respond to traumatic events.

Parents spent time with their children doing creative activities so they could observe their children's interactions more closely. Many parents reported that this was the first quality time they spent with their children, noting how much cleaner, safer and healthier the environment was compared to the

dirty streets that the children are used to.

Sessions were also held in rural areas, providing opportunities for parents to understand the signs and effects of trauma and how to help children heal from it.

Many parents in Gaza are themselves still traumatized by the most recent war, in 2014, and the stress caused by living under siege. These sessions helped them learn how to manage stress, especially as they interact with their children.

Healing Through Feeling combines trauma education, awareness and assessment, working with kindergarten children, teachers and parents. The program invests in local Palestinian mental health practitioners, providing them cutting-edge trauma, counseling and assessment education and training.

UPA's license agreement with the **American Psychological Association (APA)** has made possible access to five of the APA's most effective children's books. UPA has translated these books into Arabic for use by parents and teachers with their children in the program.



Children's Program

Distributing gifts to children in hospitals and camps

During the Eid holiday, which marked the end of the holy month of Ramadan, UPA surprised over **1,000 marginalized children** with gifts. Children in Gaza Camp, located in Jerash, Jordan, were overjoyed to receive games and toys.

Children and their families there live in one of the most impoverished Palestinian refugee camps. They lack access to many public services and live in the margins of society.

UPA also supported the distribution of gifts to children from the West Bank and Gaza Strip who are receiving medical treatment for cancer and intractable diseases in Israeli hospitals. Women from the Acre Arab Women's Association delivered a gift package to each child that included clothes, toys, games, books and chocolate.

The women also gave fruit baskets to the parents who were able to obtain a permit to stay with their children. Because those parents were not permitted to leave the hospital site, they were also provided a change of clothes.

The women's visits brought smiles and warmth to those parents and to the children. During their next visit, the women plan to entertain the young patients with a musical puppet show.



Free medical screenings for disabled children

UPA continued its support of the Community Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled, which is based in Gaza Camp, located in Jerash, Jordan. The Center works to ensure that disabled people have access to opportunities so they may lead a life of value, dignity and equality.

UPA's support allowed the Center to conduct a workshop for parents of disabled children on how they can help their children successfully integrate and engage with their communities.

Parents learned about the rights and services for disabled children, and the importance of public awareness and accessibility for the disabled. Parents also learned how early intervention is critical for bringing about the best for their child's physical and cognitive development.

A free medical day at the Center also allowed parents to seek the medical attention their children need. Malak (not pictured) is 4 years old and has microcephaly, which causes delayed growth of the brain. Thanks to UPA's financial support for the Center's services, Malak was able to receive intensive physiotherapy to be able to walk and take her first steps in



her mother's presence.

The Center also helped Raseel (also not pictured), who is 5 and has cerebral palsy. Raseel received therapy as well as a walker, wheel chair and bath chair. Her kindergarten in the camp also installed a ramp for her.

Palestinian youth deliver a message of peace, freedom and dignity

In July, a female ensemble and choir, known as “Banat al-Quds” (or “Daughters of Jerusalem”) travelled to Athens, Greece, to perform Palestinian music and songs. Banat al-Quds was established in 2013 as part of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, a UPA partner.

The ensemble treated its 2,000 person audience of Greeks, diaspora Palestinians, and dignitaries, to traditional Palestinian and Arab music. The program included works by Marcel Khalife, the Rahbani Brothers, Ahmad Kaabour, Hussein Nazek, Amel Mathlouthi and Suhail Khoury—their conductor and general director of the Conservatory. They played a range of instruments including traditional ones, such as ‘oud,

qanoun, durbukkah and daff.

The Athens performance was inspired by a famous line from one of Edward Said’s poems about Palestine, ***“We have on this earth what makes life worth living.”*** By performing songs that interpret the Palestinian experience, they conveyed their desire for peace, freedom and dignity.

They also treated the audience to Greek music to strengthen the bridge between the Greek and Palestinian communities.

Banat al-Quds is the first all-female ensemble and choir in Palestine.



University Scholarship Program

UPA welcomes this academic year’s new scholarship recipients from the West Bank and Gaza Strip joining the program as incoming freshman. We wish them the best in their studies!

“I’m a doctor of pharmacy student and very excited to help my community when I graduate. I am from the town of Ya’bad, close to Jenin. The UPA scholarship helps my family a lot as my dad is a teacher so it relieves the burden that my family has with other medical and living expenses. I am so grateful for this opportunity.” - Iman, An-Najah University



Why give to UPA?

"Hope can be eternal as a motivation factor," Dr. Erna Lund told me, "when it is supported and reinforced by compassionate actions for positive change."

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Erna, a UPA donor who is part of the Circle of Hope, UPA's monthly-giving program. I asked her about what inspired her to become a monthly supporter:

"The Circle of Hope is an opportunity to reinforce the commitment to Palestinians so crucial to survival and their struggle," she told me. By becoming a sustaining supporter of UPA, Erna was able to expand her life's dedication to supporting happier and healthier lives to children and families.

Erna was introduced to the plight of the Palestinians during the 1980s through meeting Palestinians in her Seattle community. Since then, she has worked determinedly with local committees, interfaith coalitions and justice groups. At that time, she was also introduced to UPA and how it was supporting refugees. ***"I can readily identify, appreciate and support the working philosophy of UPA and its impressive programs throughout the Middle East."***

"Even with a small amount on a regular basis," Erna told me, ***"one can see the critical benefit to the children and their families for even simple, very basic needs."***

She admires the *sumud* ("steadfastness" in Arabic) and spirit of the Palestinian people, despite the many obstacles in their lives.

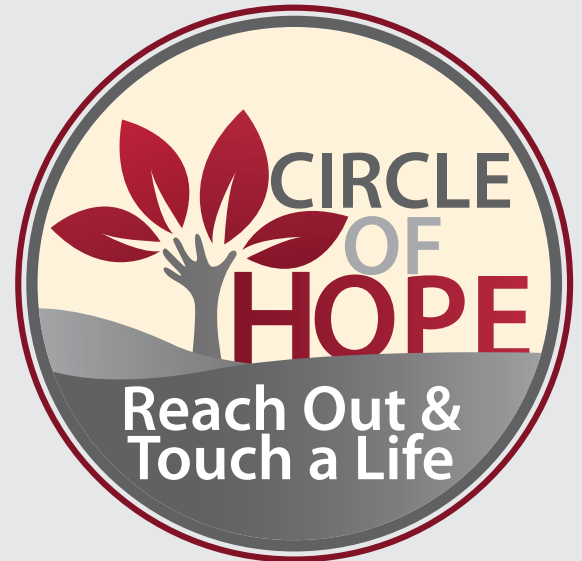
A monthly donation at any level allows you to be part of a dedicated community that is helping Palestinians through their daily obstacles.

Turn your compassion into action, as Erna did. This is what allows UPA to help children heal from their trauma, provide life-changing surgeries, help youth and women heads of households start small businesses to generate income for their families, allow aspiring students to receive a university education and provide emergency relief during crises.

Won't you join Erna's call by visiting www.helpupa.org/hope or by filling out the enclosed postage-paid envelope and marking "Monthly" with your donation amount?

Thank you for your support of Palestinians in need.

Deena T. Faruki
Director of Donor Stewardship



Join UPA's Circle of Hope
\$10 / month!

By Mail:	Use the enclosed envelope (check "Monthly")
Online:	helpupa.org/hope
By Phone:	855-659-5007, ext. 202

X-Ray Machine for Gaza Camp in Jordan

Medical Aid for Palestinians-Jordan has been operating the Gaza Camp Health Center for 16 years. The Center, located in Gaza Camp (pictured at right), serves a population of 49,000 Palestinian refugees—more than half of whom live inside the camp, with the remainder residing in neighboring villages.

The Center's old x-ray machine broke, forcing the Center to turn away some patients, since its staff were unable to provide thorough medical attention. Additionally, five other clinics in the area depend on the Center for its x-ray services.

A UPA grant to MAP Jordan allowed the Center to purchase new x-ray equipment, including one unit for dental imaging. The new machines are critical for the Center to continue serving its patients, especially those with bone injuries and diseases.

"The old x-ray unit needed continuous repair and the image quality was poor," said Dr. Saif Ababeh, an orthopedic doctor at the Center. ***"Now, I am very satisfied with the quality and reliability of the new equipment, and I am now able to treat more patients."***

One resident of the camp is Abu Walid (pictured at center right), who was born in Gaza in 1936 and has been living in Gaza Camp since 1968. Abu Walid suffered a hip injury earlier this year.

"I can't travel to Jerash or Amman for an x-ray. It made a big difference for me to get my tests and treatment at MAP," Abu Walid said. ***"It is only a 2-minute walk from my house, and they sent me a wheelchair to take me from home. This saved my life, I can walk now using a walker."***

Demand for the Center's services has increased by 45% as word about the new equipment spread. Other organizations' doctors have also referred their patients to the MAP Jordan Center as a result of this equipment update.

The Center provides gynecological, pediatric, dental, ophthalmological and osteopathic services, and consists of laboratory, radiology and nursing departments, as well as a pharmacy.





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A UPA-supported pre-school in Bani Na'im, West Bank, in 1988. This year, UPA marks 39 years of transforming lives. *Photo credit: Neal Cassidy*

In 2016, 97% of UPA's operating expenses went to programs that directly benefited Palestinian communities in need.



UPA is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible according to applicable laws.



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