



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 the 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.

“After 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.

UPA Connect

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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.
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rsvp@helpupa.org.**

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UPA Connect

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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

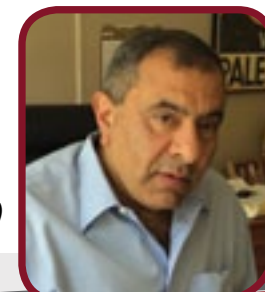
security cameras and loud-speakers blurring instructions. About a mile or so of concrete sidewalk, the maze stretches through no-man’s land. The once fertile land now stands arid; a few cactus plants in a distance, still standing, bear witness to a waterless existence and a harsh reality.

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

(continued inside)



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The **UPA Connect** newsletter is published quarterly by **United Palestinian Appeal**. UPA was founded in 1978 as a non-profit humanitarian organization to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians, particularly those in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and refugee camps throughout the Middle East, and to contribute to the long-term socioeconomic and cultural development of Palestinian society.

Letter From The Exec. Dir. (cont.)

of the destroyed buildings, three boys appeared down the street in a horse-pulled buggy. “Assalam Alaykom,” I said, “Come let me talk to you, let me take your picture.” Without stopping or even slowing down one of them yelled, “Come back next year. We will rebuild our house. We will fix the street. We will rebuild Gaza.... Then you can take a picture.” They waved, making the victory sign as they disappeared around the corner.


Focusing back on the destroyed building, out of the rubble, cactus plants emerge from the bone-dry dirt, clinging to the last signs of life there. Sprouting flowers declare a resurrection here in Gaza. The Arabic word for cactus is “sabr,” which means patience. How appropriate.

Since I met those boys, there has not been one single day that I didn’t think about them. Their passion for life seemed to have turned into resolve and, at an early age, they were blessed with the pleasure of serving a cause greater than one’s own interest. “We will rebuild Gaza.”

Human beings strive to survive, prosper and live without suffering, hunger or fear. In their own way, they imagine how life can be better, and some try to change it. “We will rebuild Gaza,” still echoes in my ears.

“People come into your life for a reason, a season, or a lifetime,” an unknown author wrote.

These three boys came into my life for 15 seconds; their great human soul, in my mind, remains constant and eternal—it can never die. I am thankful for this experience.

Sincerely,

Saleem F. Zaru

Children’s Fund Projects: July - September 2015



Cultural and Social
Nashet Association
Saida, Lebanon

A positive development of young girls’ status is encouraged by creating a safe place for 50 children and adolescent girls in Ein El-Hilweh camp through artistic, cultural and outdoor activities: handicrafts, poetry, folkloric dancing, summer activities and life skills sessions.

According to UNRWA, 63% of Palestine refugees are jobless; 70% of Palestine refugees in Lebanon are poor and cannot meet their minimal food and non-food livelihood requirements, and 6.6% are extremely poor. Poverty was higher among refugees living inside the camps than those in gatherings.



Edward Said National
Conservatory of Music
Project in Gaza

The sea festival helps revive the musical and cultural life of the Gaza Strip, enhances the cultural infrastructure in Gaza and supports local ensembles and bands from all genres, by providing them with the opportunity to perform in the festival.

The project builds on the ongoing efforts of the Gaza Music School, the ESNM branch in Gaza, in relation to nurturing the creative capacities and diversity that can sustain public life in Gaza.

Since its establishment in 2008, the GMS became a conducive environment to the promotion of children’s rights, as well as artistic freedom of expression as integral parts of basic human rights and freedoms.



Young Women’s Christian
Association
Jericho, West Bank

Enhancement of children’s livelihoods at the YWCA KG in Aqbet Jaber refugee camp, through providing a secure and safe haven for learning.

The YWCA was one of the first organizations that offered services to the Palestinian refugees after the Nakba in 1948 and started its center at Aqbet Jaber refugee camp, even before UNRWA was established, thus setting up through the years a good and reputable multi-functional community-based center that gained respect and developed a community sense of ownership.

The YWCA has always been responsive to local needs, providing quality services to the local community members.

Healing Through Feeling

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.

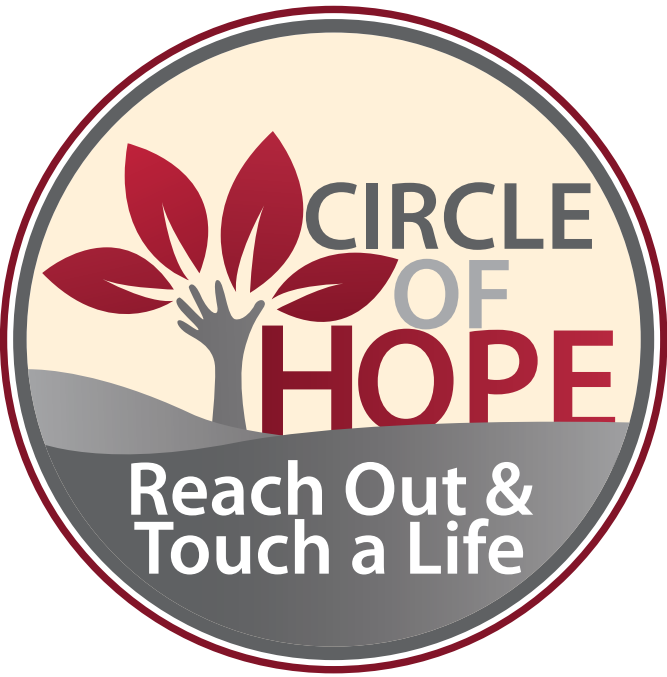
We are now proud to announce the launch of our Healing Through Feeling program, which focuses on supporting the emotional well-being of children in Gaza who are traumatized by war and subsequent living conditions.

Healing Through Feeling is a school-based program where Palestinian mental health practitioners 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, 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.



Join the “Circle of Hope”



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

In 2014, 97% of UPA’s operating expenses went to programs that directly benefited Palestinian communities in need.



Transformative humanitarian work in Palestinian communities.

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