

# **The Learning Center for the Deaf**

Beirut – Lebanon

## **News of the LCD – the year 2009**

### **Introduction**

While looking back at the year 2009, we sense a deep gratitude for what God has done for us, giving us so many blessings, guidance and provisions. Indeed the year 2009 was a good year. The beginning of this scholastic year brought good fruits for the Integrated Nursery Program, where a new devoted teacher has joined the team and serious work is taking place concerning the curriculum, in order to provide rich experiences and learning for both deaf and hearing children.

The Early Intervention Program has served 43 children and their families. The High School has three full classes of 17 students and a second group of its graduates has joined University. A real challenge!

Other activities have been started and many people were served in many different ways.

Praise God for all what he is offering his children through us and for using us as a light to guide the people to recognize his great unconditional love.

May God bless every person supporting the programs of the LCD, those who are offering donations, those who are accepting to work with us for lower salaries, those who are volunteering, those who are spreading the word about our work, and those who are praying for us and whose prayers are certainly being heard and answered.

### **The Outreach Program**

The Outreach Program has proven to be effective; we are therefore setting a date for the next campaign which should take place in the beginning of the summer 2010.

We hope that after having left behind a good impression of our sincere desire to help families of children with hearing loss, a bigger number of young children would join the new campaign. It is very crucial to find children with hearing loss before the age of one year; this is our long-term objective for these campaigns.

Presently, a staff member of the LCD has started monthly visits to Aita Chaab, in the South, in order to support the children diagnosed with hearing loss and their families, within the capacities we have. We also hope that one of our EIP mothers would join in some of these visits in order to encourage the families.

We are very grateful that with the limited funding we have, we are capable of launching such campaigns. This is possible through the partnership we have built with others who joined our campaign, such as Liliane Fonds and the American university Hospital, etc.

We still pray to have more funding for this project in order to have more access to the homes of the deaf children whose families may not make an effort to participate in such campaigns, and who are usually the most neglected.

### **A Close Look into the Life of the Integrated Nursery**

We wish this year, in this report to put you in the picture of how the Integrated Nursery life can be. It seems that God does not underestimate our capacities in serving and loving; he must trust that we can do miracles with him. The year 2009 started easily with a small number of children and this started to change while the year was coming to an end.



Besides the regular challenges of dealing with different ages, of answering the needs of hearing and deaf children, of using three languages in a proper way, the year 2009 brought with it higher level challenges.

One challenge was to deal with the consequences of epilepsy with a child who is treated as a baby at home and whose family is not cooperative despite very friendly and

sincere approaches.

Behavioral problems are usually manageable for a skilled and experienced teacher, but there are two cases this year one of which is a real challenge. There is even a doubt about the mental state of one of the children.



One child is epileptic, and has great difficulty joining the group; two children have behavioral problems, one being quite aggressive besides being deaf, which requires from the teachers to keep him in eyesight all the time so that he does not harm others while in parallel showing him love and respect to help him change. We need to study how we can help him improve.

Often we thought to apologize from the family of one specific child in the Nursery because we

felt unable to accept her with us anymore. The agreement was from the start to keep her in the Nursery if we find ourselves capable of supporting her. She was suspected to have autistic symptoms, but with the follow-up in the Nursery and EIP.

What we saw in this child is a beautiful 4 year old child who loves nature and is happily jumping like a butterfly as long as she is left free in nature, and with the animals. Like us, she will surely enjoy Heaven, where we will be able to live a free life under the wings of the Lord, but here on Earth we all need to learn to follow society and rules, to a certain extent. This teaching requires from the teachers to carry our little “butterfly” on a regular basis while she is resisting and kicking.

The mother is still in denial and is not cooperating with us to understand the child's real needs, which will help us find the best approach to use with her. But the love and care she is having at the Nursery have helped her improve tremendously. While she was not able to say a word, she now uses a few sentences of 2-3 words in the right place; she concentrates quite well in individual learning, and started to concentrate in small group and whole group learning. She plays with her friends and interacts with everyone, even if differently than other children. The teachers are very happy for this improvement and they are equally happy that her kicking is also decreasing with time. Despite all difficulties to support her we could never take the decision of refusing this child in our Nursery. God has put on our hearts together to keep her with us until she goes to school next year.

The real challenge is not only in having children with difficulties, but rather in helping the rest of the children live a happy and rich experience without any being by any means affected negatively by the presence of such difficulties around them. Our compliments to the teachers of the Nursery.

### **High School Program for the Deaf**



During June 2009, the second group of the high school students, comprised of 3 deaf students, performed for the official governmental examinations. The result was that the 2 students passed the exams, and the third one has to make a second chance which was taking place in August. He had a problem with some specific subject matters. He did the second examination, and as a result, he passed with distinction. We guessed that he was a bit nervous during the first exams, and that he had experienced it and did well at the second one. During September 2009, these students enrolled at different universities. Bilal decided to major in Interior Design. Chefic majored in Communication. Both Bilal and Chefic study at the same university (AUST). Zeinab is now enrolled at the Lebanese University, and is taking general courses. She has not yet determined what to major for her study career, as she is looking for the possibilities.

It was such a fine experience to observe these students passing their official exams, and now enrolled at the universities of their choice. We did some follow up and found that they are doing remarkably well, despite of their hearing handicaps, thanks to the kind support and attentions made by the professors and administrators of each university. At first, they had some difficulties, but with time, they manage to follow and catch up the courses. We wish them all the best.

With respect to the previous group (the class of 2006), one student Wissam has just finished his education at the NDU university with BA in Biochemistry. He wanted to be a specialist in the Medical Laboratory whereupon he will be titled as a doctor. Why not? He is now continuing his education at the same university. The other 7 students will be finishing this scholastic year.



A new class of the high school program has joined, comprised of 5 students. All of them came from different schools for the deaf. And one of them was educated in USA, and recently his family determined to return to Lebanon for good. He is facing some difficulties to learn in different system. We are sure that with time he will acquire, learn and manage with the Lebanese system of studies.

Al-together there are currently 17 students in the high school program, divided into 3 different levels. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year group of 8 students, is now preparing for the official examination held during June 2010. We have also no doubt that they will do just fine, as we have had experiences.

In general, it is so nice to be in the high school program, observing these students study and learn together, as well as eating and staying with us. It made us so proud of them. We also thank the good Lord for this wonderful opportunity for these students to have a place to learn and succeed in their life.

### **Preparation for Audiometric Testing**



A new program that we started at the LCD is the preparation of children for the audiogram. In the past, we used to prepare the child to be conditioned to respond to Play Audiometry by having him/her manipulate a toy such as dropping blocks in a bucket, when hearing a sound of drum, other musical instruments, and voice. Some children and despite such preparation still failed to perform the Play Audiometry test at the clinic outside the LCD, because

they were not familiar with the sounds produced by the audiometer coming through the earphones. Therefore we are now training the children with an audiometer and earphones giving them the same sounds which will be given to them during the final test.

For our deaf children who are in the integrated Nursery, we are doing many preparatory steps to encourage the children for the test. For example, the tester (teacher of the Deaf) goes to the Nursery to do games with the children, then auditory games, then the test for all children (hearing and deaf) in the Nursery, then invites the children two by two to the testing room, until the child is capable and encouraged to go for the test, where he will also get some goodies in the end. This method seems to help a lot and we are quite excited about it.

### **Collaborations and Workshops**

The LCD has gained a very good reputation among professionals working in the field. This has been translated already through the referrals when people need an expert opinion. It has also been translated in kind of partnerships we are having in some

projects such as the Outreach program. The American University Hospital has recently informed us that the LCD will be chosen among three associations to have an exhibition about our work during a 2 to 3 days conference which will be held for the Middle East region in April.

Markus Barta, the representative of the Med-El company for Cochlear Implants in Austria has chosen the LCD to make a conference for all parents of children with a CI.

This is a great accomplishment to have such a respect in a country where most relations are based on common interests.

### **HSED's staff: Hiyam and Levon**

While searching for devoted persons to work with us at the LCD as participants in a humanitarian mission is becoming more and more difficult in days where the view for life has changed for the youth and the economical situation made this reality almost impossible.

Luckily we had the chance to have special members join us even though they had to leave us for personal reasons such as mainly marriage (changing address, finding less demanding jobs, etc.). Our prayers are in great part in request to find the right people to join our team in order to keep the family atmosphere alive at the LCD.

Who says that God does not respond to prayer? After almost desperation God sent us a few very special persons to join our team.

One day Hussein was interviewing teachers for the High School in order to teach English. He met a lady called Hiyam, whose brother in-law knows Hussein and Nadine from the Church and informed her about the job. Hiyam was traveling at Christmas 2008 so she introduced to Hussein another male teacher called Levon, who also could not teach on Fridays. Therefore they both shared teaching English to the High School students. It seems that this was God's plan for us to get to know two marvelous persons, who are very committed real Christians, whose first aim in life is to serve God. Though they had the chance to have other better paid jobs, they chose to stay with us. Levon is now teaching the High School students and Hiyam is supporting the students who need extra lessons to catch up with the class.

Both helped give lessons to deaf adults during the summer. The agreement was that the LCD gains nothing but to provide the service to the Deaf. Not only they made a good price to the Deaf, but the income was donated to the LCD !

### **Levon's (English Teacher) Personal Note**



I thank God for the privilege of working at the LCD. When God called me to quit my previous job, I wasn't sure where to go or what to do next. I heard of a job vacancy at the LCD and applied. I ended up employed as the English teacher for the Secondary classes. I remained unsure whether I was in the right place, doing the right thing. The first few weeks were very challenging. I had never worked with deaf people before, and was anxious about my ability to communicate with them. I

prayed and asked God to help me. And guess what! He not only helped me to do my job, He also helped me to enjoy it. In just a few weeks, I was more than sure that I was in the right place.

Everyday is a new learning experience for me. I ask many questions to everyone in the Center, including the students themselves, to improve my teaching and their learning. I have to admit that I do get discouraged sometimes, but the encouragement I receive from everyone in the Center keeps me going.

I love my work, and I love my workplace. If you ever visit the Center, you'll find a big family of teachers and staff working together in a loving atmosphere to provide the students with *"a good start ... for a better future."*

### **Karine and Young**



Levon's sister, Karine, also joined our Integrated Nursery in September 2009 and now we have a wonderful teacher whose heart is guided towards loving and giving. Karine came as a great support to Nadine who was trying to find a good team of teachers for the Nursery. Nadine is presently teaching at the Nursery and helping develop a special program for the integrated Nursery, supported by two teachers, Wadad and Karine. Arzeh, who is deaf, and was Nadine's student when she was six years old, has also become an assistant teacher at the Nursery in addition to supervising the boarding girls at night.



Young is a volunteer from Korea who came to the LCD through Hiyam, the High School teacher, who knew of our need for someone to assist Arzeh at the girls' boarding. She introduced Young to us, and Young then needed a permit to stay in Lebanon through an association. Young was delighted to help us; she is a beautiful lady who left her country in order to come to Lebanon and serve the people as a way to serve God, when she heard of the war of 2006 and its horrors. She is now helping create a very motherly atmosphere at the boarding, and she is also assisting us at least twice a week during the day, wherever there is a need, to prepare material or replace a sick Nursery teacher.

### **The Bazaar**

In the summer of 2006 and just before the July war, the LCD held a Kermes (fair and bazaar) at the same time as the World Football match. It was then a great success... before the storm.



Last summer, we thought to hold a Bazaar with some entertainment activities. For a while we thought to cancel the idea since there were almost no volunteers to help in the Bazaar.

Nadine prayed and left it up to God whether this event should take place or not. A few days later she got a confirmation from friends that they would take care of presenting a show for kids in addition to

face painting and ballooning. These friends are from the “Family Care Association”, which members are families and individuals from different countries around the world, living as one family with the aim of spreading God’s love through their services to the needy. A group of friends who always meet for bible study and prayer offered to volunteer for the services of selling and organizing activities.

This was a clear sign that the event was meant to take place. Indeed the day of the Bazaar came and the atmosphere was great. Besides the entertainment activities and the selling of old and new things many of which was offered by people, Hussein took charge of an auction, where people were competing to buy items, whether for the need of the item, or for the fun of competing to buy an item, or simply and kindly to support the LCD.

It was indeed a memorable day full of laughter and fun for participants as well as for organizers. The result was a bunch of joy, shining rays of love, as well as a sum of \$1,550, which is part of a sum needed for training purposes.

## **Bino**



Bino is a cat we adopted at the LCD. She came to us as a cute kitten, in January 2009, from a dog shop where her owner who worked there was not allowed to keep her. Bino first stayed inside the building of the LCD. Slowly we helped her go outside. She now appreciates her freedom to go in and out at her free will.

The children of the Nursery are all delighted by her presence, but poor little ones, they do not realize that their screams of joy make Bino run away. Stephanie, one of our Nursery children who has communication problems and who took some months to learn to look us in the eyes, is very fond of Bino to the point where it is very hard to bring her in when Bino is outside. She keeps following her with her big beautiful eyes, and she jumps from joy every time she sees her, but rarely manages to be close from her due to the way she expresses her excitement and runs after her, like a beautiful wild cat herself. Stephanie is fascinated by animals even the Nursery’s tiny water turtle. Stephanie brings the cat puzzle piece to the turtle and shows it to her.

In reality, everyone is starting to like Bino, even those who do not really like to have animals around. In a short period of time Bino was able to sit on the blanket assigned for her on one of the chairs in the sitting room, and quickly learned to sharpen her nails only in the garden and not in the furniture. She is a special cat indeed.

### **Project Accomplished During 2009**



Beside the several projects which have been accomplished during the past years, the Embassy of Emirates, specifically the Red Crescent Emirates, have donated the LCD a Mini Bus of 15 passengers during the early 2009. We were very happy with this support, as we have been waiting for such an accomplishment for many years; since we do not have a bus at the LCD. The bus would facilitate transportation of deaf students,

parents, and others, to specific locations.

Beside the donation of this bus, the Embassy also contributed with some equipment such as professional video and still cameras, DV-Cam supplement equipment for editing machine), computers, a projector (beamer), LCD TV set 50", educational materials, and a prefabricated shop (kiosk). The total amount for these donated items was US\$ 44, 567.

### **Visitors during 2009**

During 2009, we have received so many visitors who were from different countries. It was a blessing experience for us to have such visitors, as we have exchanged information, support, and sometimes prayers.



Among the visitors, we also had a special group from Holland and Ireland, during April 2009; those were Elisabeth, Anton and Geraldine Scheele. They have supported the work of the LCD from the very beginning, and have always acted as guardian angels for us. Also, Suheil Andeweg, the son of the late Father Andy Andeweg, came along

with Elisabeth as well. Suheil is deaf and is a dear brother to Hussein. Elisabeth stayed with us for their entire visit (12 days); Anton and Geraldine later joined

Elisabeth and stayed with us for 4 days. It was really a blessing experience to have them with us.

During their stay, we have managed to spend a weekend in the mountain, where we had fun in the snow, and explored the area's mountains and valleys.

Before their departure, Elisabeth, as usual, made a donation for some educational materials and equipment for the LCD.

### **Participation in the Marathon Event**

During November 2009, the LCD has participated in the International Marathon Day in Beirut. Some staff members and students have also participated. We did not register in the 42 km run; as we thought we could not reach that level yet. So we participated in the Fun Marathon Run which is 12 km long. A large number of participants joined the event, whose were at least 33,000. The atmosphere was good, despite of the bad weather, and we were happy to be part of it on that day.