Exciting Changes at Happy Child Preschool

Starting in 2014, many changes have been underway at Happy Child Preschool. We were blessed with a new Headmistress, Ms. Hala Mohammed from Sudan. As a mother of five children, and someone who has worked as a professional in the field before, she has used her fresh ideas and Christ-like spirit to engage parents and children at the school.

Since coming to Refuge-Egypt in August 2014, she has greatly improved the nutritional quality of the food served to students. By passing on her excellent cooking skills to Wilson, a staff member from Sudan, she has ensured that meals include as many vegetables and sources of protein as possible. Wilson, who is responsible for the shopping and daily cooking, does an excellent job of stretching the small budget to feed nearly 50 students in attendance. Both Hala and Wilson know well the importance of

Continued Influx of Refugees from Sudan, South Sudan and Syria

In 2014, the Humanitarian Assistance team registered a total of 3,430 refugees. Refuge Egypt’s broad programming served African refugees coming from North Sudan (7%), South Sudan (12%), Darfur, Sudan (30%), Kordofan, Sudan (21%), Ethiopia (24%), Eritrea (5%) and Somalia (1%). Of those newly registered beneficiaries 1,792 (53%) were children (under 18) and 1,638 (47%) were adults.

Continuing conflicts in Darfur and Kordofan regions of Sudan, as well as the deteriorating situation in South Sudan led many to search for safety and hope for a better future in Egypt.
healthy eating for a child’s development.

Headmistress Hala’s caring and communicative personality has also helped her reach out to entire families of refugees simply by calling to check on students and parents she sees struggling. She has helped mothers of classmates network and connect with one another for support. Recently, two mothers she introduced were excited to meet a parent who taught them the art of henna design so that they could start their own business for money. They have since put together a brochure of different designs they offer. This is just one example of how Hala uses her role at the preschool to go above and beyond.

In addition to working not only for the betterment of refugee children at school, she has helped bridge the gap between Egyptian staff and refugees who commonly have preconceived ideas about each other. By providing a warm and friendly environment for Egyptians, students, and families to interact, Happy Child Preschool is a rare opportunity for both populations to interact with each other in a positive environment.

In 2014 the owner of Happy Child Preschool’s building decided to sell the property. Due to the move we are currently undertaking, we have accrued some unforeseeable expenses and are quite short on funding as a consequence. Our ability to outfit the new facility is pertinent to the success of our students. Being that much of the furniture we used at our previous facility belongs to the owner, we will need to outfit the new preschool and in doing so have the opportunity to furnish the place in a way that is conducive to learning and the development of our students.

We are so happy to have her here as the structure and even facility in which the preschool operates are currently changing. As the preschool moves to a nearby facility, Hala has been crucial to the smooth and efficient transition for both students and staff. Despite the move, the Preschool still had time to celebrate Mother’s Day on March 21st and welcome parents, who have grown to know Hala as both the Head Mistress and dear friend. She takes her time to ensure that not only are the structures necessary for learning and development present at the school, but that children are also being nurtured at home. And when she feels concerned for a family she is quick to express her desire to help in any way.

By registering newly arrived refugees, we provide those fleeing conflicts and persecution with various services while they wait to be recognized by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Many refugees arrive to Egypt in need of medical care and looking to start work quickly. Without an identification card from UNHCR, they are not eligible to access many social services and yet, receiving a UNHCR card can take anywhere from three to six months upon arrival. This period of waiting leaves many refugees vulnerable and prevents them from getting the medical care and assistance they need. Refuge-Egypt is able to help refugees during those first difficult months with food, clothing, and other services, making their transition to Egypt a little easier. This would not be possible without the generous support of our partners. Thank you!

To find out more about how Refuge Egypt helps these specific refugees, check out our Facebook page, where pictures, updates and answers to prayer are posted regularly.