

Welcome, supporters, to ABCD's Spring Bulletin in which you will find updates on our work across the West Bank and other news regarding our support of children and their families who we are privileged to help thanks to your generous funding.

Issue 34 – SPRING 2018

SENSORY ROOMS

Thanks to your outstanding big-heartedness towards the Georgina Mortimer Appeal, the state-of-the-art Sensory Rooms at Jalazone and Nour Shams Refugee Camp Rehabilitation Centres opened in November, when Val Jourdan, Firas Sarhan and Rachel Hogley, ABCD's new administrator, visited.

Fusing different therapeutic disciplines in the Sensory Rooms creates a holistic rehabilitative

environment. The rooms' lighting, sounds and projections can be controlled from an iPad allowing the therapists to adapt the space without interrupting their one-to-one sessions. The endless options create stimulating spaces to suit the needs of every child in an environment a world apart from the children's challenging living situations. Therapists continue to receive specialist sensory room training.



Two children receiving instruction in the Sensory Rooms

The picture above shows 7-year-old Yara who has cerebral palsy, receiving a speech language session with Hadia, a therapist at the Jalazone Centre. Hadia chose a blue light to encourage Yara to focus on her treatment and played



Yara in the Sensory Rooms during a session

a nursery rhyme through speakers in the room that Yara knew. Hadia also incorporated guidance that Yara's physio had given her and was able to position Yara in a way that would strengthen her physical health. With few distractions, a calm space and in a comfortable position, Yara engaged and benefitted from the session.

The Sensory Garden at the Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation is currently under construction and we look forward to bringing you news of its progress in the autumn.

Staying in touch with ABCD

ABCD is hugely grateful to every supporter who has already re-confirmed their details to enable us to keep them up to date. If you haven't yet done so, keep an eye out for a letter or email asking for your permission to stay in touch. On 25 May 2018 processing of personal data by organisations will have to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation Act. Thank you.

SHEEPFOLD

Mary Rewers, who runs the Sheepfold day care centre for children with disabilities in Beit Sahour, near Bethlehem, introduces us to her newest attendees:

"A 9-year-old new boy with autism (ASD) started recently. He's never had any regular education due to living far from any suitable facility, but the family has now been referred to us. His behaviour is quite challenging at times but helping children like this makes it all worthwhile."



Day care centre children taking part in a connection session

"Many families have more than one child with disabilities, one of these has three disabled children. The youngest one, a 4-year-old boy with severe developmental delay and visual impairment who was initially very withdrawn and unresponsive, is making wonderful progress. He loves to play and has acquired a few words despite the very poor original prognosis he was originally given."

BASR Outreach Needs

In November Val Jourdan and Rachel Hopley spent a day with our long-term partners, the Bethlehem Arab Society's Community Outreach Team. We travelled into the more remote Greater Bethlehem and Hebron areas with Jamal, the community physiotherapist, and Aliya, the community social worker. Community Based Rehabilitation workers live and work in the outlying towns and villages. They are the eyes and ears of the community, identifying children in schools and families who

would benefit from the support of the BASR. Once identified, the multi-disciplinary BASR Outreach Team visit children and their families to assess what help can be given. This is where ABCD steps in through our Individual Needs Programme offering assistive devices such as wheelchairs and orthotics, home modifications, home rehabilitation sessions, provide hearing aids and spectacles and much more. The list is endless but the results are heartening, changing the lives of these



An ophthalmologist tests one of the camps' child's vision

children and their families. It was encouraging to see how the system enhances families who need care and support for their children.

Over the years we have touched the lives of over 10,000 children and have donated in excess of £2,000,000. This would not have happened without YOU – our wonderfully generous supporters.

A view of children who are assessed by the Outreach team at one of their schools.



MUSIC THERAPY

"As part of ABCD's ongoing Music Therapy programme at the Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation (BASR), Sophie Williams, a fantastic music therapist, undertook a ten-week Music Therapy programme running clinical sessions in different settings. The following is shortened report of her time. Please find Sophie's full report at <http://abcdbethlehem.org/music-therapy-2017>

The main body of my work was in two schools closely linked to BASR where most of the children had developmental needs on the Autistic Spectrum. Sessions followed a similar pattern every week allowing them to develop a sense of belonging and self, and to explore expression and social interaction.

At BASR, I ran open groups for in-patients and their carers (generally mothers) on the pediatric ward. The mothers reported it gave their children time out to enjoy themselves, making them more co-operative even after a morning of therapy and clinics. The Speech and Language Therapy department referred four young boys for group music therapy. Using blown instruments such as kazoos encouraged the children to develop their vocal skills with others. On Fridays I ran a music hour for the educational group, also open



The Count Down Train, a carriage removed every session so the children knew how many were left

to children in the community. This environment gave children with psychological challenges the ability to interact with others in a safe and supportive space.

I also worked on an individual basis with an eight-year-old boy who had suffered a catastrophic brain injury - sound is his only connection with the outside world. Focusing on song, repetitions of his name and pertinent facts helped him be aware that the music was directed at him and was for him.

We are delighted to announce that ABCD is now supporting the salary of a Music Facilitator at BASR. The incredible progress which is achieved during the ten-week programmes, run by wonderful therapists such as Sophie, can continue throughout the year. This has created a more sustainable programme ensuring that more children are able to benefit from everything music has to offer. Our utmost gratitude to ABCD Trustee Claire Tillotson for her incredible organisation of the programme and ongoing support of the BASR Mental Health Team.

I led a music experiential music group for a group of up to 12 teenage boys who are ex-detainees of the Israeli Defence Force. They spoke about how they had found the sessions, which were based on ideas of 'being heard' and 'listening', useful as ways to express their feelings.

My thanks go to all the mental health team for their positive and welcoming attitude and to all the staff at the hospital, with special thanks to Souha Shehadeh and Sawsan Eweineh gave me invaluable professional support and advice. My clinical supervisor, Claire Tillotson gave so much more than clinical support and advice and, without whom, my work here would not have been so fruitful.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to ABCD for the opportunity to work in Palestine. There were, of course, physical and psychological challenges, but I hope that these will have allowed me to experience the deeper emotional and intellectual resources that lie within us all."

Camps Updates

As well as the significant addition of the sensory rooms, The Jalazone and Nour Shams Refugee Camp Rehabilitation Centres continue their exceptional work.

As part of a growing collaboration with Bethlehem University, the camps' therapists received a 5-day training course in April. Delivered by lecturers who specialise in occupational therapy, clinical psychology and physiotherapy, they covered topics such as teamwork in holistic rehabilitation, sensory and environmental needs of children with neurological conditions, working collaboratively with families and the use of adaptive equipment. This kind of training helps to enhance the critical thinking of the therapists, and to plan for the future.

Jalazone and Nour Shams Rehabilitation Centres are now being

used as centres for training students from Bethlehem University. Working alongside Bethlehem University is a valuable opportunity for therapists and children alike. Our thanks to organisers Firas Sarhan, ABCD Trustee and Project Manager and to Manar Jaber, lecturer at Bethlehem University.

The rehabilitation centres in both camps are also opening their doors to the wider community. The therapists provide the camps' schools direction on how to identify learning, speech and language difficulties and support those students referred to the centre. The schools now recognise the benefits for their pupils. Jalazone also hosts a kindergarten every Monday. This inclusion helps to erode entrenched taboos about people with disabilities which are still common in the West Bank.

A NOTE FROM ALISON

Dear Supporters,

I can't believe it's over 10 years since I first contributed to the ABCD newsletter – tempus fugit and all that. Sometimes it has been fun but more importantly it's been a real privilege to work for the charity not only alongside such caring and dedicated trustees but also with our partners on the West Bank. I have now visited the BASR and Sheepfold many times and more recently both the refugee camps and have learned from our Palestinian brothers and sisters about the nature of dignity, humility and hospitality. I wish Rachel equal fulfilment in her rôle as administrator. I was delighted to accept the Board's invitation to join them as a trustee and look forward to continuing my links with so many stalwart supporters and church congregations and other groups whom I would encourage to invite me to come and talk about such a very special charity.



Hassan with an ortho-prosthetic specialist and his mother

Similar to the BASR programme, the camps also provide appropriate equipment and home modifications.

The provision of this equipment and the therapists' expertise in the delivery of their care is life-changing.



Alison and René with olive trees, a parting gift from ABCD

Finally thank you to the trustees for the magnificent olive trees (see photograph) presented to us. René is also retiring as the charity's treasurer. This appropriate gift will certainly join us at our new "coastal" home when we move towards the end of the year. René and I are both grateful for the friendships initiated through our association with ABCD and we hope these will continue well into our retirement. Our good wishes to everybody.

Alison (and René) Meissner

GOODBYES AND HELLOS

2018 is seeing big changes at ABCD. We say farewell to Alison Driscoll, ABCD's accomplished Administrator since March 2006, and whose name has become synonymous with ABCD. Alison has visited Palestine on many occasions with ABCD and the charity Living Stones, introducing many visitors to our projects. Her warmth and natural ability has made ABCD many friends over the years. Alison's previous work with the Methodist Church nurturing special links with the Holy Land encouraged her to become an accredited preacher in 2009.

She has interested many churches in ABCD's work, both as preacher and speaking on our behalf. Alison has generously agreed to join our board

of Trustees and will carry on her very effective work engaging churches around the country... and so we say hello to Alison as a Trustee.

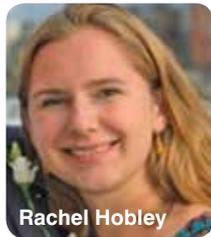
René, Alison's husband, has taken care of our finances for the last 10 years as Honorary Treasurer. Together they have made a great team. Our heartfelt thanks go to them for their tireless support and expertise.

We also say a big hello to Rachel Hobleby as ABCD's new administrator. Rachel started with us in September 2017 and has worked closely alongside Alison for the last six months learning the ropes and making contacts and friends. Rachel graduated from Edinburgh University in 2017 with a

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GOODBYES AND HELLOS

Continued



Rachel Hobley

degree in Social Anthropology – what better background for ABCD. She has a great interest and passion in Palestine, having spent time there as a volunteer and researcher in the West Bank. She

speaks some Arabic and understands much more, the perfect fit for ABCD. We all most warmly welcome her.

We also welcome Alex Ilkun who has generously taken over the post of Honorary Treasurer. Alex discovered us through the charity REACH (Retired Executive Action Clearing House). He is far from retired though, a young man with a young family and with many practical ideas on how to move ABCD forward.

A very warm welcome to two newest members of ABCD. Andrew Mortimer has agreed to become a Patron of ABCD. Through Georgina, his late wife, Andrew knows ABCD from its very beginnings, as does Lara Madge, Val's daughter, who joined the Board of Trustees in November. Lara master-minded ABCD's first involvement with the Palestinian Marathon in 2017 and has given much guidance and insight. We are so pleased that they are both officially part of the ABCD family.



Hassan, one of our children who receives treatment with ABCD

Donate:

Donate online via Virgin Giving (search for Action around Bethlehem Children with Disability)

Bank Transfer – make a bank transfer to Lloyds TSB, Sort Code: 30 99 66, Account Number: 00 63 09 49

Sign up for Give as you Live – raise funds for ABCD as you shop online at no extra cost to you

Cheques (made out to ABCD) can be sent to Dovecot House, Winchester Road, Goodworth Clatford, Hants, SP11 7HN

For more options, including setting up a standing order, please go to <http://abcbdethlehem.org/donate>

ABCD Registered Office: Dovecot House, Winchester Road, Goodworth Clatford, Hants, SP11 7HN

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Update your contact details

If you no longer wish to hear from ABCD please either visit <http://abcbdethlehem.org/stay-in-touch> to change your preferences, email info@abcbdethlehem.org or call Rachel on 07593546004. To read our full Privacy Policy please go to <http://abcbdethlehem.org/privacy-policy> or contact us for a hard copy.

Contact us

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Write: Dovecot House, Winchester Road, Goodworth Clatford, Hants, SP11 7HN

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Upcoming Events

13th May

Palestinian Lunch – St Mary Bourne Village Hall – the first in a series of regional lunches. Let us know if you would like to hold one where you are.

24-27 August

Greenbelt Festival - catch up with the team at Greenbelt Festival this year

15th September

ABCD Sponsored Walk – a nine-mile sponsored walk in the Test Valley area. Open to all.

September 22nd

Swim Serpentine - sponsored swim. A brave feat being undertaken by ABCD supporters – join the team or sponsor their efforts

November 2018

Auction of Talents - Our Lady of Victories Church, High Street Kensington – an auction of material and non-material lots, from help in the garden to a Christmas Cake

December 12th

ABCD Carol Concert 2018 – at 1830 - St George's, Bloomsbury

March 22nd 2019

Palestinian Marathon – join the ABCD Team to undertake the race of your choosing and visit our projects in the West Bank

