

Flexibility and Cop with New Situation



The Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre (JPBC)

JPBC is part of a network of organizations that operates under the umbrella of the Anglican Church across the Middle East in the fields of education, health, vocational training, and disability.

JPBC implements long-term community-based programs and has always maintained a clear vision towards providing Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Inclusive Education through the Child Rehabilitation Centre and the Inclusive School, and Vocational Training to people with disabilities through the Sheltered Workshop.

JPBC currently employs 117 staff members and is actively engaged with multiple local and international partners.

Through its efforts of creating a sustainable process of knowledge sharing and service provision in the field of rehabilitation, the JPBC Child Rehabilitation Centre has always maintained a track record of quality service and accordingly has obtained the Joint Commission International Accreditation (JCIA) for Ambulatory Care twice, in 2015 and 2018.

JPBC is a member of the East Jerusalem Hospital Network, and the main referral by the Palestinian Ministry of Health for treatment of Children with Disabilities (CwD) and acts as a National Resource Centre for capacity building, clinical training, dissemination of knowledge and best practices to practitioners and partner organizations.

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Holy days' warm up



In these unusual times, I would like to express my gratitude to our team who were “candles in the darkness”; where despite the challenges of the Pandemic, they have continued to provide quality services to the Palestinian children with disabilities and their families frontally and virtually. I also would like to thank all our donors and partners for their huge support which enriched our journey and helped us to continue our services provision along this year.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY AT THE REHABILITATION CENTRE

Arising from our belief in the great value of recreational and artistic activities for children, especially during their therapeutic process, our team led children in a Christmas activity to convey something of the joy of these holy days.



International Day of People with Disabilities

TREE OF DREAMS

On the International Day of People with Disabilities, the JPBC team conducted a number of activities for mothers and their children with disability. This year the focus was on dreams of mothers and their children. Each mother wrote her dream and the dream of her child on the leaves of the “Tree of Dreams” which was painted as mural and will remain at the Centre. They also printed their hands under the roots of the tree, to refer to the importance of this day that calls for full inclusion and to raise awareness on the challenges that children and people with disabilities face. The activity also highlights the role of mothers in the process of rehabilitation which bears fruit in the lives of their children.

“These kinds of activities, create emotional relief to the mother and her child, and gives us a space to express ourselves. My daughter Sonia said that her dream is to walk, while I dream that she becomes a doctor”.

Azza, Abu-Elayyan- Tubas, West Bank



New models of treatment

in the wake of COVID 19

Each year has its own challenges that always help us to learn and grow. However, this year we have met with unprecedented challenges with Covid-19, which has kept us under stringent lockdown restrictions for months. As part of the national health system, we have been deeply affected, but our team has been at the forefront of a global solution.

Through our new Virtual Care Model, since July till the end of the year we continued to provide our service provision to 41 children, through telemedicine (Virtual Therapy), whilst they have been at home. Also, our frontal Rehabilitation programs have served 337 children at the Child Rehabilitation Centre.

Parents were very satisfied with the results of the Virtual Therapy sessions and reported feeling empowered through our comprehensive therapeutic vision. This initiative reduced travel costs for families, and enabled our team to reach children together with their families in their own environment.

Even though, frontal therapy continues to be vital in providing more accurate assessment and evaluation and for the optimal development for the children. So now, the Virtual Care Model, whilst becoming an intrinsic element of the service we offer, works alongside the Frontal Rehabilitation Program. Our team follows up on treatment plans with families using a Virtual Care Model and alternates between this and the original Frontal Rehabilitation Program.

“For any challenge that faces any organization, society or civilization, there will always be a silver lining. There will always be something that rises to the surface to help consolidate new learning and to build a knowledge for future generations.

The pandemic might yet last for another year and COVID 19 might stay around for few years. So our role is to make sure that our children receive their therapies on time and in a safe environment. Technology has assisted us in continuing our mission, and the Virtual Care Model continues to add great value to our work. However, it does not replace the frontal rehabilitation and therapies.”

Ibrahim Faltas – General Director

“We, as organization, have taken all precautions to receive our children and their mothers safely. We have worked on developing our infrastructures to meet all health standards and maintain social distancing, in order to reduce the possible chances of infection.”

Violette Mubarak – Rehabilitation Centre Director.

“The Virtual Care Model, has expanded our package of services, and strengthened our relationship with family members, which is a key to improving the outcome of all therapies. In addition, it has broadened our geographical reach in the West Bank.”

Lucy Ghrayeb – Clinical services Coordinator

“Through the Virtual Care Model, the Mother and Family Empowerment Program, has enriched our experience because mothers are trained and actively cooperate with us. Even though, this does not devalue the importance of Frontal Therapy, especially for new families who were not part of the Mother and Family Empowerment Program before the pandemic. We now have 50 new families waiting for their children to benefit from our frontal therapies at our Child Rehabilitation Centre.”

Dr. Waddah Malhees – Medical Director

Program	Virtual Care Model	Frontal Therapy Programs		
Number of children	41	In patient	Child Development	Inclusive School
		162	69	106

Continues Capacity Building

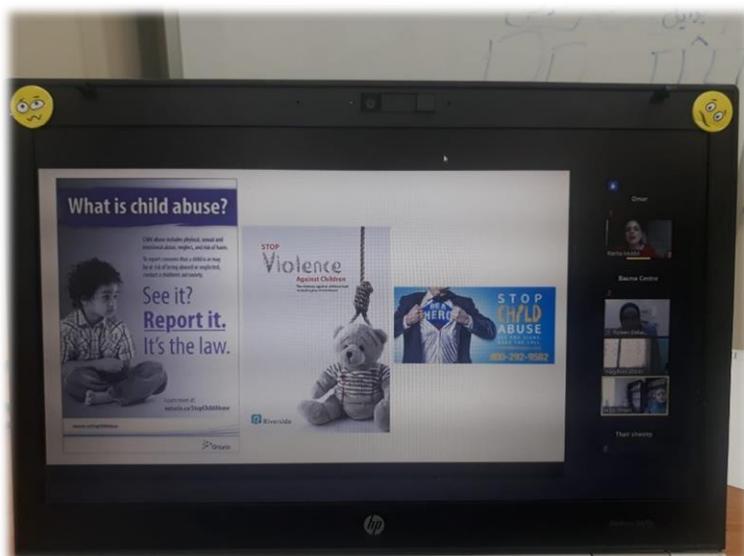


JPBC continuously develops the capacities and expertise of its teams in order to respond to new challenges and needs. In the wake of COVID 19 restrictions, and complementing the Virtual Care Model initiative, the Rehabilitation staff were trained in Child and Family Mentoring. The aim of this training was to educate staff in how to best support families of children with disabilities and build strong relationships with them, to encourage positive parenting and to reduce risk of violence against children at home.

Moreover, staff received professional training in their specialized fields, including the growth and development of children with disabilities, seating and positioning and feeding and swallowing.

In addition, we have trained staff in our West Bank partner centers on 'Child Safeguarding Policy' to emphasize the importance of maintaining safety for children while receiving therapy and treatment at these centers.

This training offered a comprehensive vision for the therapeutic process, to empower therapists and provide them with tools to identify potential violations towards children, as well as giving them tools to create a safe therapeutic environment for children.



The Power of Wisdom



Sam is one year and nine months old. He has a face that doesn't stop smiling, giving the people around him a feeling that he has a wisdom beyond his age. Indeed, he has chosen to be happy enough to carry on his journey; a journey that unfortunately didn't start happily.

A mother's feeling is the best indicator

The story started with a lack of Oxygen at his birth, that caused a restriction in his physical movement. His parents were still in denial, refusing even to think about the existence of any kind of disability. His mother Ahlam, says: "Before he was 9 months old, I recognized that he wasn't able to sit properly, crawl or make any movement. I made all possible excuses just to prevent myself admitting that my son was suffering from any disability or illness".

The family started to compare Sam to other children and to developmental standards. Some of them thought that Sam was just trying to draw attention to himself.

As time passed by, Sam's parents began to be more worried, so they visited a pediatrician who referred them to a neurologist. Then came the final MRI result that determined he had Cerebral Palsy.

Finally Dr.Waddah Malhees the Medical Director at the JPBC assessed Sam, and referred him to the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre. His first admission was in June 2019, where he stayed with his mother at the Centre for two weeks. Here he received comprehensive therapy, while his mother benefited from the Mother and Family Empowerment Program.



Sam has shown a clear improvement in the second admission; now after his third admission he can sit and crawl. This comes as a big relief for his parents enabling them to have a clearer vision for Sam's future.

The young self-therapist

Despite his young age, Sam tries to join his siblings in all their activities and games. Now he feels more empowered and enabled. He has become a reason for family gatherings, as they continuously try to support his development and inclusion.

Sam has turned to be a very keen and eager child to embrace and overcome his challenges, by doing exercises on his own. His mother says that she often sees him imitating the therapy exercises while playing by himself at home.

Wisdom in each home

Ahlam says that she met with many mothers during her son's journey of treatment, and some of them were obviously anxious about presenting their children to the society. But, in contrast, she tries to highlight her son's case, considering it as a success story that encourages him and other children and families who face a similar situation.

Ahlam always tries to build confidence in her son, to see him flourish in the society, believing that only this wisdom in each home has the power to change the negative attitudes towards children with disabilities.

Covied-19 spread

In spite of the outbreak of Coronavirus, Sam continued to receive a range of therapies, with his mother joining him for each session in front of their computer's camera.

She says: "I'm very thankful for the continuous work of the JPBC team. I really needed this support, especially at this time, because Sam has clearly improved and we can now build on this from this point."

When the dreams and wellbeing of children are at stake, there are no limits. When we consider our promises to our families, there are no excuses. The team here at the JPBC is determined to carry on serving our Palestinian families and children, in new and creative ways, however hard and challenging the circumstances.

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Old but Gold

From Scarcity to Abundance – Hiba Zaid’s story

When Hiba was born in 1990, it was not obvious that she had a physical disability as she started walking as expected. However, at the age of three, she stopped walking, and needed therapeutic intervention, and she found this at the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre.

Over 12 years, Hiba received therapies at the Centre as our services and departments expanded and developed. On her very first admission in 1993, she was enrolled in the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Program as an inpatient. At this time, the Mother and Family Empowerment Program had not been introduced. However, she says, “The team at the JPBC knew how to make me feel at home, they embraced my story, and took care of me, just like my parents.”



Hiba adds, “They used to give me a ‘Home Therapy Plan’ which I implemented with my parents and siblings back at home. This enabled me to maintain my therapeutic process during the periods that I couldn’t travel to the Centre.”

A few years later, her mother joined her therapeutic journey when the Mother and Family Empowerment Program was established in 1997. In this year, Hiba walked again.

“Everybody was taking care of me, but having my mother beside me accelerated my progress and took my development to another level.”

Hiba credits her success to the comprehensive care that she found at the JPBC.

“The follow-up system is designed to make sure that we come to our therapies on time to receive our assessment and ongoing rehabilitation.”

In particular, she believes that the psychosocial support she received was the main reason behind the person she has become now. “Because of this intensive care, I felt that I was

important, they supported us, and instilled in us confidence and faith. I think this has built my character.”

At one point, Hiba did not want to continue her education. However, our Medical Director had a different opinion about that. “Doctor Waddah convinced me to continue my education, and highlighted the value of this, and the opportunities that it would open up for me,” Hiba recalled.

Having completed her BA at a Palestinian university, Hiba now works as a receptionist at the Ministry

“Doctor Waddah convinced me to continue my education, and highlighted the value of this, and the opportunities that it would open up for me,” Hiba recalled.

Having completed her BA at a Palestinian university, Hiba now works as a receptionist at the Ministry of Education and in her own time has also started her own business.

Determination, confidence and faith are the keys to success, as Hiba has told us. “I’ve done everything I ever wanted to do.



It is true that I walk with the assistance of a crutch, and with special supports on my legs, but I drive my car to work.”

Whilst the international economy is faced with a reduction in jobs, because of the spread of Covid-19, Hiba has two jobs, and is planning to start her Master’s Degree soon.

Because of her self-acceptance and belief in her own abilities, people

have also accepted her and believed in her.

“I have found support and respect from everyone around me. Now, it’s time to pass this message on to others. I help people, especially girls, to overcome their fears and walk confidently to fulfil their dreams.”



The Jerusalem Princess Basma Inclusive School



Announcement of success in the Enjaz

The school's goal is to guide young people to become future leaders within the Palestinian society, by providing quality education in an inclusive environment for all, helping students without disabilities to learn the inclusive values and creating a healthy space for students with disabilities to learn and grow in a place where they feel accepted, respected and valued.

We receive students at our school from Kindergarten to 12th Grade. During this last grade, students are able to take the National Exam, 'Enjaz', which is the final step before being enrolled in universities and colleges.

In the academic year 2019/2020, 17 students joined the high school National Exam, 'Enjaz' (Enjaz in Arabic means achievement). Of these students, four have a physical impairment, four have learning difficulties, one has diabetes, and one has a hearing impairment.

15 students out of 17 successfully passed the exam. 12 students out of the 15 have now enrolled in universities and colleges and one other has joined his family's business. One of the students who did not pass the exam has enrolled in a hair styling course.

As these students now make their way to the future, we continue with our vision at JPBC; embracing a culture of inclusion and directing our energies to empower students who need our support.

Acceptance and love are the key

Lara has now graduated from our Inclusive School to chart a new path of her life journey towards a bright future. It has been an 18-year journey, involving the support of the Child Rehabilitation Centre and the Inclusive School at JPBC. Her first visit to our clinic in Jerusalem was in 2002, where she was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy (CP), which affected her physical abilities. As a result, she started receiving therapies at our Rehabilitation Centre at the age of two months and then joined our Inclusive school, while continuing her therapies at our Centre.

During these 18 years, Lara flourished, seeing acceptance in the eyes of therapists, teachers and classmates. She says, "At this school, students are well taught on how to respect and support each other. Friendships aren't based on any criteria but humanity."

A new environment

Given that Lara had been raised in an environment based on the inclusion and acceptance of others, it may have felt unnerving for her to engage with the wider society, where people come from different experiences and understanding of disability.

"When I knew I had passed the exams successfully, I thought about the huge challenge I was facing. I decided to see things from a different perspective. I think all people have their own personal challenges; sometimes these can be financial, geographical, or just a result of their own mindset. So, in one way

we all face difficulties standing in the path of our goals, and in that way we all are the same."

Lara says that she will not forget the people she has met on her path, recognizing the therapists, teachers and assistant teachers, who played an invaluable role in her life.

"They didn't only teach and help me, they also kept telling me how hard my parents have worked to see progress in my life and condition. Together, they gave me hope and supported me throughout my journey".

Now, Lara is enrolled in a college in Jerusalem to prepare to join university next year.

"Due to the spread of COVID-19, we receive our education at the college online, so my colleagues haven't met me yet and they don't know I have a disability. However, I'm ready to meet them face to face soon."

Through being a future leader, Lara wants to change society.

Lara hasn't chosen her specialized subject to study yet, but recognizes that primarily she wants to influence others and bring faith and joy to their lives.

"God has made me special. He gave me a gift and I want to pass this message to all people around me."

She believes that life's challenges may well change our plans but never change the goal: "I sometimes have to sacrifice something, but in the end, I will not sacrifice my dream."



Education under the spread of the Corona-virus

The Corona crisis that started in March 2020 led to a full lockdown. We responded to this emergency by introducing Virtual Education.

In spite of the challenges, we trained parents in the online software that we adopted to provide the education for our students. Special schedules were devised and students gradually adapted to this new system.

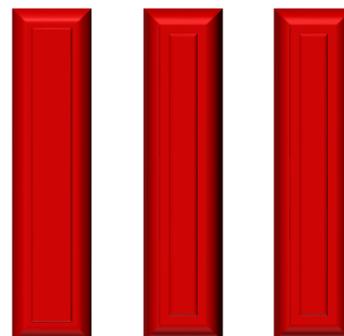
“This new Educational Program has encouraged many students to move out of their ‘comfort zone.’ Many students with disabilities used to rely on our extensive frontal support system and it wasn’t easy for them to join our Virtual Education without an assistant teacher. However, after our team had encouraged them to persevere and to liaise with their classmates, they returned to school even stronger.

This program has enhanced the abilities of many students who felt more comfortable to learn and exchange behind the computer camera.”

Ayman Ramadan- Deputy Principle

“This program moved us, as teachers and parents, out of our comfort zone. In ‘frontal classes’ the teacher can control the educational process and evaluate the students accurately. Even though this Virtual Education Program was challenging, it made a great impact on the students’ personalities and overall academic records. This generation has demonstrated great ability to accommodate to these online platforms. I value this time because it has set us all on a continuous learning, evaluation and development process.”

Jenny Bandak- English Teacher.



“I would like to thank the teachers for all their great work with our children. Sometimes, as mothers, we don’t have enough experience to teach our children. But this program has taught us a lot; teachers were flexible and they always helped us with informal materials for the parent’s use. Now, I like to teach my son and he started getting better marks because I am supported and can help my children. Even still, this is a new experience for us all and we need more time to learn about the latest methods to support our children. In addition, children need to socialize and meet people out of home, so Frontal Education is highly needed. however, we’re ready to face any upcoming emergency”.

Mother of a student

Finding solutions

“This has been an unprecedented period of time for our school staff and parents. However, great efforts have been made to move beyond this experience to achieve higher standards of service provision, in the best interests of the students and the educational process.”

Bassma Kirrish- Inclusive School Principal

Many lessons have been learned and our capacities raised, with our academic staff walking alongside students and their parents to bridge the distance and sustain our services to our children.

There have been serious technological issues facing our academic service provision. Students did not have enough laptops and the school was not equipped with the technology to face an emergency of this kind. Now, we are moving forward to ensure our school has all the electronic equipment it needs. Each class will now have a laptop, projector, camera and speakers. This will enable us to provide virtual and frontal classes of a high quality.

Students are not yet allowed to return to school on a daily basis. Instead, we have a



comprehensive schedule, enabling us to receive groups of students on a rotational basis on site, whilst providing our virtual classes for those at home awaiting their classes.





Olive harvesting

We belong

The olive tree is a hugely important national symbol for the Palestinian people, and so each year, for Palestinians, the harvesting season starts in mid-September and finishes in mid-November. To uphold this tradition, our Inclusive School allocates one day every year for olive harvesting. Since the school has a number of olive trees, students along with their teachers, harvest the olives whilst listening to traditional and national songs.

The school takes every opportunity to highlight and implement our vision of empowerment and inclusion, with adaptable activities so that all can participate. Alaa Jalajel, the Special Education coordinator at our school clarifies:

“Through our work with the students, especially for those with disabilities, we start with a general goal and move to individual goals. We explain our aims to the students for each activity and create an individual plan to enable each student to achieve these goals.”

She continues, “The olive harvest is one of the activities that gives students with disabilities a sense of belonging to the environment, people and culture around them. When conveying these principles to our students we enhance their confidence and their own responsibility in their inclusion.”



Ending

As we end this extraordinary year and begin a new year, we seek to serve with renewed passion, love and determination for many years to come.

And through your generous donations, the JPBC will continue to provide Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Inclusive Education for our Palestinian Children with disabilities.

To support our mission please donate by visiting our website:

www.basma-centre.org

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New

