Foyer de l'Amitié

Centre Social Salvatorien



دارُ الصدَاقَــة

المؤسَّسَة المخلّصيَّة الإجتماعيَّة

Zahle on 2/25/2024

Dear brother Hikmat Dandan,

Christian Refugee Relief director Knights of Columbus – Ontario

Best regards, I would like to express to you, on behalf of the children of the Foyer de L'Amitie, The Friendship Home in Zahle and in my personal name, our sincere thanks and gratitude to your honorable person and through you to the Ontario Knights of Columbus in Canada, for your continued support and standing by orphaned children in general and the orphans of the Foyer de L'Amitie in Zahle - Lebanon in particular, through your humanitarian project. The great program that you founded "Orphans for Jesus", is in accordance with the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me", especially through the valuable gift that you arranged for our orphan children end of June, 2023, whose value was $50,000 (Fifty thousand US dollars). This gift has contributed to the development and continuity of work of our home with orphaned children or those who suffer from difficult family situation and social problems through all the programs that the Foyer de L'Amitie, The Friendship Home works on during 2023-2024 period.

Foyer de L'Amitie, the St Savior social institution affiliated with the Monastery of the St Saviour in Joun - Sidon, was founded in 1979 during the scourge of the Lebanese civil war. Its goal was to receive orphaned children and care for needy families who were victims of the senseless war. Since 1985, it has added intensive courses in vocational and technical training so that children who have left school can re-enter the labor market to provide for themselves and their families. Thus, Foyer de L'Amitie Vocational School was born in Ferzol. To this day, we continue our humanitarian and social mission through a group of programs:

First, The Friendship Village Program for Orphan Children: A model village was built in the town of Ksara, which includes four large houses prepared to house orphaned children who suffer from difficult family, social, and economic problems. The goal is to provide a family atmosphere for the children so that they can build a healthy, open- minded personality capable of building a decent and dignified life. In the future, we will try to join the children in their deepest dreams and achieve what we can for them. Hence, the donation supported the expenses of food, diesel for heating, and transportation. It also supported psychological and health care for children, and also supported our educational work. This educational work includes balanced human and psychological care, a high educational and cultural level, and distinguished social interaction.

1- Human and psychological care takes place in our homes, where there is in each home a nanny mother who takes care of education, teaching, and the details of daily life, and an assistant sister who takes care of teaching and lending a helping hand to the nanny, in addition to a housewife who takes care of food, cleaning, and tidying. The children are also visited periodically by a doctor in psychology and a pediatrician. The village is managed by a professor with experience in raising children, who is interested in sports, recreational and cultural activities and in coordination between the various homes of the village.

2- The high scientific and cultural level is achieved by sending the children daily on a school bus belonging to the home to a complementary private school affiliated with the St Savior Order, which is the Saint Joseph Catholic School in Haoch al-Omara. Foyer de L'Amitie follows up the school's work through various cultural courses in languages or scientific subjects through volunteer expats who stay at the home for a full year and deal with cultural affairs and foreign languages. The home also organizes some cultural trips to cultural centers, such as the French Institute in Zahle, where children participate in handicrafts, or by attending a movie or play directed at children, or through educational activities in the library designated for children at the Friendship Home, such as reading or hearing a story from the educator or watching a documentary.

3- Social interaction takes place through holding sports activities with children from other similar associations, or a long entertainment day where groups concerned with childhood and adolescence provide a full day of entertainment for children in the heart of the home or outside it. Children also interact with their surroundings through visits to officials from the city of Zahle in Their own homes, where they are invited to dinner and given gifts, which plants joy in the hearts of children.

The Children's Village also includes a family swimming pool that is operated and receives families in the summer to swim and enjoy the summer sun and the picturesque landscapes. This project constitutes a good resource for the Friendship Home to be able to provide some of the basic needs of children during the school year. When the child reaches the ninth grade, he can choose to continue in an academic school, so he leaves the village to his family home, and the Friendship Home continues to support him through the family follow-up program. Or he chooses to continue in a vocational school, then he stays in the village and Foyer de L'Amitie is interested in training him at the Home's Vocational Institute in Ferzol, considering that the institute is affiliated with the Friendship Home, until he obtains the vocational high school diploma.

Secondly, the home follow-up program: where children and juveniles are followed up while they are in the care of their own families, the Friendship Home provides them with support for school tuition, as most of the tuition was secured from the donation you sent. Also in matters of life, psychological and health, the Friendship Home cares for poor families, providing them with material and humanitarian assistance by finding suitable job opportunities for the head of the family or the mother, which makes it easier for the children to continue their natural development in their families and alleviates many family problems.

Third, the vocational training program: Foyer de L'Amitie owns a vocational institute in the town of Ferzol in the Bekaa, teaching various specializations such as: nursing care, nursery education, electronics, informatics and accounting, hospitality, surveying, and agriculture. In addition to multiple courses during the academic year in carpentry, blacksmithing, automobile mechanics, and sewing. After graduating from the course, students of carpentry, blacksmithing, and auto mechanics can be employed as trainees in carpentry, blacksmithing, and mechanics factories affiliated with the institute to strengthen their skills. The Foyer de L'Amitie Vocational Institute provides training for a large number of students in the Central Bekaa region and annually graduates competent workers in the various fields mentioned, which is considered a contribution to alleviating poverty and unemployment among the youth of the region. Thanks to the generous donation, we were able to conduct some maintenance work, including painting the rooms and putting epoxy on the floor to relieve dust for students, improving public bathrooms, purchasing some necessary equipment for the hotel department, and alleviating the burden of installments on the poor families.

The Friendship Home relied for most of its expenses on the Lebanese state through the Ministry of Social Affairs, which before the current crisis provided about 70% of the expenses. But today, after the collapse of the Lebanese state system, there is difficulty of finding the necessary funding from the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the state abandoning its duties towards the most vulnerable of its citizens, I mean children and orphans.

With the loss of this support, our reliance has become on God first and on all friends and benefactors, including individuals and international social organizations, most notably the Knights of Columbus in Ontario - Canada, through brother and friend Hikmat Dandan, thankfully, who carries in his heart and conscience the pain and suffering of Christians displaced from the East and also those steadfast in the land of Parents and grandparents, so that the message of the Eastern Church continues to resonate in the conscience of all those responsible for human rights, especially the rights of children and orphans to a dignified and healthy life. Responsibility requires us to continue to carry out this message because the extent of poverty and social and economic suffering in Lebanon has increased in a frightening way due to successive crises, which has reflected an increasing demand on the Foyer de L'Amitie Foundation to provide direct assistance to people through its unique and distinguished social programs. From here came the contribution of the generous donors of the Archdiocese of Toronto arranged by the Knights of Columbus in Ontario at the end of June 2023 in the amount of $50,000 (Fifty thousand US dollars) with the energy of Brother Hikmat Dandan to inject new hope and new impetus to the humanitarian and social mission of the Friendship Home. We look forward to more cooperation and support in the future until this dark cloud dissipates from the eastern sky, and the fragrance of faith, hope and love returns to the lives of Eastern Christians. You will find attached some documents and pictures about the lives of orphan children in the Friendship Village in Ksara and about the students of the Vocational School in Ferzol. Please accept the utmost respect and appreciation, asking the Lord Jesus to bless your good deeds and noble goals and increase your health and well-being through the intercession of Blessed Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus.

Father Joseph Jabbour

Director of the Foyer de L'Amitie, Friendship Home





Foyer De L'amitié دار الصداقة











