

# Foundation Friends of Nazareth

Tilburg - The Netherlands

Address Secretariat:  
P.O. Box 2256 - 5001 CG Tilburg – The Netherlands  
Email: [friends.nazareth.tilburg@planet.nl](mailto:friends.nazareth.tilburg@planet.nl)



## Impressions of the students *Contactbrief 49, December 2011*

**Kafa Miriam.** Student Second year pharmacology.

Honestly, it's hard to believe that my first year ended too fast.

In the first semester I was really afraid because i didn't know what to expect from my classes, roommates... . Also I was worried about my ability to handle separation from my family as we have been very close .

On one hand , I have always knew that it wasn't going to be easy for me to go through the transition experience and get along fast in new society with new people different religions, traditions, and the most important different language .

On the other hand , I wouldn't make these things stop me to involved in this new life , I have had a lot of friends from different countries , religions that our friendship made my transition much easier.

We supported, helped each other also we had a lot of fun and shared everything thing ...

### *Respect for each other*

In the second semester everything went good , I mastered the language , didn't have a lot of difficulties in the classes although I had difficult courses than 1th semester .

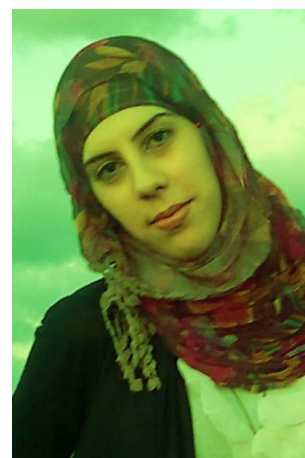
With the amount I have learned, seen and done in the last year I feel I have been here forever .

Although classes will not always be easy, and will frequently be stressed i am looking forward to every minute of the next three years.

My relation with my Jewish classmates was very good despite of that i really didn't expect it to go well , they helped me a lot to pass my fear also in the classes they shared me the material.

I couldn't feel the difference between us although we are from different religions had different traditions , but each one of us show respect to the other and to his traditions .

My volunteering time was fabulous, I had a lot of fun, gained many information that could help me in my subject .



It was much better than first time , because i had already know everyone , adapted in the place . I felt comfort and happy to help people specially they are from my village , also because I contribute with all my strength and ability to help i tried to give all I can and I hope to keep like that :)

Finally , I am really really, really sorry because I send my forms late I had some problems but thank God everything goes well. I hope that you accept my apologize and I'm sure we will keep in touch this time whatever happens :)

---

### **Mona. Fourth year Nutrition**

Hi for all the foundation's members,

It was so long study year; we -all the students of nutrition science- worked hard in order to finish this last year in the university and I lastly finished all my exams successfully. – I will send you my exams results in the next month-

Now and after I finished my theoretical study; I wait for the practical study after the “lottery” the ministry of health will do in the next month; in one hand we are many students in this field and in other hand there are few places to receives us; there for some of us will wait long time for the practical study. I wish to have good luck in this lottery.

And now I want to talk a little about my new development; I write this letter before two days from my wedding; I will getting married to someone I engaged two years. I have lots of feelings happiness for being always behind the man I choose and love; and in the same time some concern from the new stage I will move to. I hope that everything be good.

I finished my study and now I waiting for the lottery I talked about; it will take a time to start working in my field; in this time I looking for work in some places.

I want to finish with many thanks to all of you for your supporting me in my study.

Thanks Mona.

Mona wrote us she was lucky in the lottery and will start i8n January with her practical study in Mayer hospital.

---



### **Rasha**

I indeed was looking forward to this letter and to the board of the Foundation Friends of Nazareth`s answer to my request to be accepted in the foundation scholarship program.

Hence, I am writing this email to express my genuine gratitude to you and to the board for

accepting me in the scholarship program. I was honored to learn of my selection to this program and I am deeply thankful for the generous support.



I appreciate you taking the time to send me this email concerning the scholarship program and I am certainly excited about the opportunity to cooperate with you and with such a well-regarded foundation.

Furthermore, I am glad to have the opportunity to thank you and your foundation personally for the generosity offered.

I recently completed my second year as a student majoring in Psychology and Criminology at the Academia College of Emek Yezreel and I hope to graduate next year with my Bachelors degree. Along with being a full time student, I also have a part-time job as a waitress in a coffee shop in order to help my parents pay for my tuition. It's not always easy to manage with work and school, but I have learned to manage with this combination as well as adding my volunteering work to it in the past year. This financial assistance you are willing to provide me will be of great help to me in paying my educational expenses, and it also will allow me to focus more on my studies and my volunteering work.

I didn't apply for any scholarships in the past two years so volunteering work was neither a requirement nor an obligation for me. As a person whom wants to become a psychologist one day and help others deal with their problems, helping people is a big part of who I am... it is well known that in the Bachelors degree of Psychology there are only theoretical materials and we don't get to experience the practical part of it until we start the Masters therefore I have decided this last year to volunteer in places which could help me get a little bit closer to the practical part of my major and to also offer them help from young people, such as myself, who are ready to give back to the community without expecting anything in return. One of my closest friends was volunteering in Eben Cina Middle School helping a teacher of a ten student's class (ages range from 10 to 14) whom suffer from severe ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). So, it occurred to me to ask if the school could use an extra help. I was amazed, not in a good way, from the unawareness of our community to such cases. It was hard for anyone to see the helplessness of these kids and to still say they've got a chance of getting better. Not only because of the lack of awareness of this society about the disorder they suffer from but also because of the lack of attention they receive from people and especially from their closed ones. We got to know each one of the kids and learn some information about their backgrounds and it all indicated to how little

care anyone gives them... besides the fact that they don't manage to behave in all social situations due to their disorder which made it hard on the school to include them in all school activities, there was the fact that the school budget didn't allow the school to afford itself to arrange for them private activities which made it easier for them to feel more like outsiders. We volunteered once a week for 2-3 hours and started to get the hang of things. The kids needed patience, attention, understanding and nurturing. Although we got a lot of resistance from them at first but we kept on trying to communicate with them anyways by presenting a different activity each week. For example, we printed each kid's name in two different languages (Arabic and English) and asked them to paint it in order to decorate the class with it and to put a star next to every name once they do a task right or so. We also brought two different kinds of snacks as a positive reinforcement for completing to paint each of the two names.

Another thing we did, at Christmas time last year it happen to be also El Adha holiday for the Muslims, so we made ten presents that include both a chocolate Santa Claus figure that presents Christmas and a chocolate cheep figure that presents El Adha in order to also teach them that we all are equal and can celebrate both holidays. This experience was definitely a life changing experience. It was my first time to be in touch with a part of the community that was kind of hidden and misunderstood and it made me earn new perspectives of life such as how one person without having to have a BA, MA nor a PHD can with some patience, will and time, help another person to maybe smile more or express himself in different not formal way (meaning not to actually be part of the formal crew of the school itself) such as the volunteering frame we offered them.

Soon after we finished our second year, my friend and I decided that we needed to dedicate more time to volunteering and to try to explore new places which we can offer our help to. We chose two places: The first one was the Psychiatric Department of the English Hospital here in Nazareth and the second place was an institution, which is considered to be a school as well, for autistic kids which includes 58 autistic kids whom each suffer from a different level of autism (ages range from 6 till 25).

We honestly didn't expect to fully fulfill our expectation and to be accepted to this both amazing and teaching places which from cooperating with both of them can on the one hand let us spread our volunteering spirit and offer our help to the part of the population whom can really use some help and on the other hand to start to see the practical part of the subject we love most and want to continue learning about which is psychology. I will

certainly keep you updated about my volunteering work. Thank you and the foundation again for your generosity and support. Best Regards, Rasha.

---

### **Jeanne Aouda**

This will be my last evaluation as a student; I am now entering a new chapter in my life, just as interesting but way more challenging.

In 2007 I started my law degree, I had just barely turned 18, never lived in a big city before, barely spoke Hebrew, but I had a dream. And now, years later I am closer to this dream as ever. I am now a legal intern in 'Addameer' a human rights and prisoners' support association; it was the first association to exclusively focus on the issue of Palestinian political prisoners. The issue of political prisoners is so important to me for many reason being that it is difficult to find any person, both in the West Bank, Gaza and inside Israel who have not in one way or another been through the Israeli Judicial system, by which I mean both the martial law which is in military ruled occupied West Bank and Gaza and the civil system which applies to citizens of Israel. Detention, Interrogation and imprisonment of Palestinians have largely affected every aspect of Palestinian lives, economically, socially and politically, and it enforces and strengthens the occupation of the Palestinian territories and the discriminative policies of Israel in general towards Palestinians, also living inside Israel.



It is quite a complicated matter with so many aspects and implication, that's why it is both very important for me to be part of it, it is interesting and challenging. I am learning so much at my job but I'm also gaining more experience in the legal field because my job includes a lot of legal research, both on Israeli law, comparative law and international law, and writing a lot of legal documents, such as legal claims and correspondences in the matters of ill-treatment and torture of prisoners, prisoners in isolation, prevention of family visits rights, and even more serious violations of prisoners' rights. I am happy to be part of the work that might change the lives of so many Palestinians and their families and also on a higher level, changing and improving arbitrary and discriminative regulations and policies through

political and legal activism.

The staff that I work with immediately made me feel at home and that what I do mattered. To be honest, I am very relieved that I do not have to study any more and do papers on subjects that I was not interested in, etc. I loved my time as a university student, I will never forget those 4 years in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, with the hardships but also the very fun times that I had, but now I am more excited than ever.

Sometimes it seems only yesterday that I applied for the Friends of Nazareth scholarship, how fast time actually runs!

---

### **Marlen. Second year occupational therapy.**

My studying this year was fun, since I started my clinical studies. Where I was in a psychiatric center. Each one of the students was in a different place. I have not had really any irregular experiences, but I have a friend (Arabic friend) who failed her clinic studies and she now is a year off. She cannot continue her studies till next year. As she said That part if this was because she was a Muslim and wearing a hijab. Her instructor who give her the grades, decided to fail her. But really we cannot know if this was really the reason, or if there were other reasons, but I really thank God that this year passed on me safely.



About my volunteering work: it was so fun. I took two kids who were in the elementary school and taught them English. Both were in the third grade. So we started by learning the letters, colors, short words, body parts, days and simple conversations. During the year the kids really were improved. It was very good that I could help them, and we saw that their parents were proud of them. Most of all they were really thankful that I helped them. For my feelings I was satisfied and happy that I could make a difference, a positive difference for these kids.

## **Montaha. Fourth year Dentistry.**

Dear members of the Foundation friends of Nazareth,

The last year was very important transfer period of my life; I had the opportunity to complete my bachelor degree successfully, I also was engaged to whom my beloved husband now- Mobarak, and of course had the opportunity and more time to contribute to the communities among my people; All thanks to your help!



In Jerusalem, I volunteered in 'Mahpach- Taghir' organization, to empower children's of the age 13` and help them studying and doing home-works.

I was excited with this new experience and also achieved success with the students I was responsible for, they became more relax and polite in handling with their classmates and starting to get better grades.

The point is that those were Jews kids who live in the neighborhood of my dormitories and the campus where I study. It was different experience that I was glad to have, I exposed more to Jews, they exposed to me, I realized how many mistakes they study on their curriculum about Islam, about messenger Mohammad and about History, lots of lies about History, where I didn't hesitate to correct them over and over and over again.

In the year 2011 as each year they celebrated the independence of Israel, and I explained to them that for me it is a SAD DAY called 'Al Nakba', in fact I lectured the group if 'Mahpach' about our Nakba. Furthermore, in the year 2011 we had an event of explosion in the bus station in Jerusalem; my girl student 'Bar' who is very close to me was understanding and could differentiate that her teacher student of dentistry Montaha in Jerusalem didn't do the explosion in the bus station, since I myself take the bus few times every day in Jerusalem. My problem there was with other kids and specially with Bar's cousin- 'Amit', she hated me because I am an Arab! She and others (13' years old) blamed me for the explosion. It was hard to me to face this alone because the other guiders and teachers were all Jews! What helped me is that 'Mahpach' is an Arabic-Jewish organization which work to achieve justice in the community and to empower weakened communities, to empower women and to empower minorities.

The kids found it hard to accept different people; didn't accept others, so I also gave them a lecture about accepting others. I will attach to the E-mail my power-point presentation I had and with translation with down notes.

In continuing to my volunteering work in 'Eissie Shapiro' organization, I started volunteering in 'Al Hanan' School for special-needed kids and adults on behalf of the 'Amichai' (NGO). My experience in 'Al Hanan' was not sympathetic. First because it was neither next to my

mother's house neither close to my dormitories; it was in Tira, so that each time I had to travel via a car or a bus there. more un-convenience was that I was working with people who are not kids, they are adult who are mental retarded, it was hard for me to handle with such a group, so hard that I was not sure about how much do I really contribute to them or to the institution, that's why actually I quitted later, and didn't continue the year there.

As an introduction to my clinic year, I also started the year in volunteering at the 'E'tessam' organization, the manage kids gardens and schools. I volunteered in the kids gardens. My work focuses on Oral Hygiene frontal lectures and activities for the kids. I illustrate every step (of tooth brushing etc.) with paints/ photos/games/stories.., I feel pretty satisfied with my work, I also started follow up and monitoring their health (how many teeth with caries they have since the last visit to the dentist etc). the kids enjoy the hours I spend them and wait forward to my visit to them, the study well, learn more and ready for any new approaches, they study the Islam religion in their curriculum and learn how to read Quran (although they are young) because 'Al-E'tessam' believe that they can teach everything about our religion starting from the childhood.

I look forward for advance contribution to those gardens and others in my town Qalansuwa, I believe it is important for my sole as a dentist, as well as for my career, and for the people and parents in Qalansuwa who got to know me closer now.

I moved to live in Qalansuwa Permanently, I got married in September the 27<sup>th</sup>, I have one more good news, I finished my three years of Bachelor in the Hebrew university of Jerusalem, and since I got married, I found it hard to stay in Jerusalem so I sent an application to Tel-Aviv University which is closer geographically to my house, and this week they approved their acceptance so that I can continue to the forth year at Tel-Aviv. Of course I don't plan to live in the dormitories, so I will stay in my husband's house and will get to the Faculty each morning via a car or transportation.

I finished the last exam of Oral Biochemistry in Sep. 22, and just last week the grade was published, that's why in fact I waited to contact you till I have all the papers, and because Tel-Aviv University was waiting for the last grade to get published. I was glad to be accepted in Tel-Aviv, because now I am a married woman who have more responsibilities and the minimizing of the distance meant lots to my life-style. Now I got relieved!

This summer was long, we didn't have many exams, but we the Muslims have the month of Ramadan, many prayers prayed every day, and I had the opportunity to pray in the 'Aqssa mosque' in Jerusalem, I was there with my husband's (fiancé then) mother. It was in the

special date 27<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan, 'Laylet al Qadr' (the night of fate). It is two-three days before Al Fetr Feast.

Each year we the Muslims dream about praying in "Al Aqssa", during 365 days billions of Muslims around the world are forbidden and not allowed to reach this holy place, we the Palestinians can do it, according to the international agreements which were signed among the years. But the Zionist government doesn't hesitate to make it difficult and hard: usually they forbid young Palestinian men between the ages 25 and 55 to enter the borders and pray in 'Al Aqssa' mosque, they claim those ages threatened the security of Israel! (they just want to pray).



Montaha, her mother and nephew

We the seven girls of my mother celebrated my mother's birthday in august 3<sup>rd</sup>.

This year was tensioned politically here in the region, 'cause of the Arab people revolution in their countries. There were also the incidences of nakba on the north borders with Syria and Lebanon; the Town of Majdal Shams was also on the Titles, I

visited Majdal Shams earlier this year and captured a photo of a wall, where they ( the people of Majdal shams are neither Muslims nor Christians, they are Druze, those people fought the Israeli army and won, and see themselves as Syrian- never Israeli!!, but the borders become to join them to Israel, they are strong very much and more strongly: Fighters!) quoted a very famous poeter and writer of the Palestinian wealth named Mahmoud Darweesh, he died just 4 years ago. Wrote: "about me, I'm not mine" this is the translation of what is in the photo. Extra quotation I remember about this poet he wrote: On this land, what worth to live".

---