

# Tahaddi is “Back to School”!

2016-2017  
Academic Year is a Go!

## Goodbye, little Mohammad!

A bittersweet moment for many of our staff, KG student Mohammad is immigrating to Canada. For all of us at Tahaddi who have grown to adore this little man, his absence will be felt strongly. Mohammad came to us at age 3, struggling with Specific Language Impairment. He was frustrated, and prone to



screaming and hitting to express himself. After years of intense effort by our speech therapists and educators, now not only is Mohammad able to speak in small sentences but his personality has been transformed as he learned how to communicate. We hope that through the opportunities available to him in Canada, he will see his life further improved.



“Back to School” at Tahaddi Education Center is always a fun, busy time for our staff and educators! This 2016-2017 academic year is one of our busiest yet, with the center at full capacity supporting 350 children and adults each day for one of our different educational and social programs.

Tahaddi’s health center also took part with a “back to school” health screening for TEC’s new students. Over 100 children met with our nurse and physician for an assessment of their overall physical health. Read more about this screening effort over at our website: [www.tahaddilebanon.org](http://www.tahaddilebanon.org)!

We also partner with several local and international NGOs that use our facilities to provide a wide range of psycho-social activities for the community. We rarely have a dull moment, but the impact these programs and activities have on the community is immeasurable!

This “Back to School” period was also quite a busy one for the TEC Social Worker, Razane, who registered over 60 children from the surrounding community in public schools. We collaborated closely with the Lebanese Ministry of Education as they expanded the “Second Shift” program for Syrian refugee students in the afternoons, giving tens of thousands of Syrian refugee children the chance at an education. However, nearly half of school-aged Syrian children in Lebanon are still out of school. TEC welcomes over 150 Syrian children in one of our different educational programs.



## How Tahaddi Gave a Woman a Chance at Literacy

While most of the students at Tahaddi's education center are children, we also run three popular adult literacy programs in the mornings and afternoons: Arabic, English, and Computer literacy. One of our students, a Syrian woman named Sawsan, began taking Arabic literacy classes with us three years ago. Today she continues to take Arabic courses at TEC, but acts as the assistant to Ms. Hanadi, the Arabic educator. She told us recently how this educational opportunity has changed her life:

*"I never went to school, my father wouldn't let me. He forced me to get married at 11 years old. I was a grandmother by age 28. I wanted to be able to walk in the streets and understand the signs and things written in shops. The first time I wrote on the board in the literacy class at Tahaddi I was shaking and could not hold back my tears because I finally had the chance to learn how to read and write. I thank God for Tahaddi and I thank God for Ms. Hanadi and her patience with me. Tahaddi has been a blessing in my life."*

## Update on Sara

Sara, the little Syrian refugee born with Spina Bifida, is doing well with her new prosthetic leg! She is walking to and from our center on her own and is attending regular physical therapy sessions. Unfortunately, her large family is struggling financially and recently had to move again to a one-room shack because they could no longer afford the rent in their previous apartment. Sara and her siblings are still forced to sell Kleenex in the streets to support their family.



## Social Medicine at Tahaddi Health Center

Practicing medicine in Hay El Gharbeh is very different than practicing medicine in other contexts. Addressing families' health concerns requires also addressing the extreme social and financial conditions they face. Last month a little boy named Omar came to us with an upper respiratory infection that required immediate hospitalization. The housing conditions in the area mean his family likely lives in a damp, dark room with limited ventilation

and sunlight, and that the children often play in sewage-filled streets while burning trash fills the air with caustic smoke. Omar had been previously hospitalized for the same condition, which was exacerbated by the environmental conditions, but the family was unable to pay the expensive bill and was blacklisted from the hospital. Our social worker got involved, negotiated with the hospital and the UN, and with the help of our supporters, was able to get the boy admitted to hospital. Tahaddi was able to treat his immediate health concern. However, the environmental conditionals in the area mean that Omar will likely be back at our clinic soon with a similar health concerns. As an organization, we will continue to do what we can in face of the complex social and political realities of the region.



## The Dream for an Early Childhood Education Center is Becoming a Reality!

A new project that has long been on our minds and hearts is finally becoming a reality! A third center, located between our health and education centers, is in development and will be focusing on early childhood education. Although we still need to raise significant funds, with the support of our board and several generous donors we are moving forward on this exciting new project.

Early childhood intervention is a growing focus at Tahaddi. The area of Hay El Gharbeh is increasingly crowded and dangerous; very young children play long hours unattended in the sewage-filled streets, or are trapped inside most of the day in small, often dark rooms, with no stimulation, toys or positive social interactions.

Our dream is to create a safe, stimulating environment for roughly 25-30 children between the ages of two to four, split into two classes. A ground-floor apartment, with a sizeable outdoor space surrounded by a solid gate, was recently vacated by a Syrian refugee family immigrating to Europe. With some renovations, this location could be ready to host our developing Early Childhood Education program.

If you are interested in partnering with Tahaddi as we move forward with this project, please contact Rose Khouri at [rkhour@tahaddilebanon.org](mailto:rkhour@tahaddilebanon.org)



## Refugees Sewing for Refugees!

This fall, an exciting new addition to our income-generating sewing program was introduced. The women in our sewing program are themselves refugees who have shown great perseverance and courage in their willingness to learn new skills in order to provide for their families. The blankets they produce will be sold for a profit to local NGOs for the winterization efforts. The funds will be then used to sustain the project and as income generation for the families involved.