

Anta Akhi Newsletter

Serving a life of dignity for people with disability



March 2013



Dear Friends,

On behalf of the entire family of Anta Akhi which you are already part of, on behalf of our young people with disability, their families and the entire team, thank you!

Thank you to each and every one of you who throughout the Christmas period has been a presence of love; with your presence, with your donation, whether in kind or in cash, whether it is a prayer, a smile, or a glance, you were able to support our efforts to ensure that each one of our young people have a life steeped in the joy of celebration, the joy to know that we are loved.

Yes, God loved us so much that He gave us His son. Jesus loved us so much that He gave us His life.

Let us be dear friends, during this holy period, the disciples of Jesus. Let us walk with him to the path of resurrection, the path of transformation by His Spirit. How?

It is when we succeed to strip ourselves from all that prevents us to listen to him, to hear him, to welcome him, to assimilate and live in His Word daily. It is when we come to Him with confidence, that we can draw the peace and serenity from his eyes, the warmth of the love of his heart, that we renew ourselves.

With Mary our mother in heaven, that our prayer may bring us closer to the love, the infinite love of Her Son Jesus.

Therefore, let us awake the humility sleeping in our souls so that our love becomes purer. Let us strengthen the spirit of sacrifice existing in our souls so that our love becomes more truthful. Let us live fully our communion with the Holy Spirit, so that our love becomes stronger.

Jesus Christ is Risen!

He is risen indeed!

Roula Najem

Assistant General Manager



Death of the Innocent

By the fidelity to the Word of God, we kill His Word

**Whom the Father has sent
to tell us God the Father,
to reveal His merciful love,
His salvation to all men,
the same one, the Word of the Living God
is sentenced to death - and what a death! -
by the same people, who wanted
to be the faithful guards of God's Word,
by those to whom God has entrusted
transmitting His Word so they can keep it faithfully!**

Do we not do the same?

**Don't we sentence the innocent to death,
in whom the Living God exists in the secret of His heart,
and in the name of the Word of God, memorized by us,
reduced by our vision, our understanding, our limitations,
our human deviances that distort it,
by our blindness, our complacency
that keeps us in our stubbornness,
that makes captive the Word of God,
emptied of its meaning, its transforming life,
its dazzling light, its Holy Spirit!**

**Lord open the eyes of our heart,
so your Spirit illuminates our eyes
and allow us to see You, to recognize You,
where You are a living presence in man,
active presence in this world disorientated without you.**

**Jesus, by your death and resurrection, You have conquered
our limitations, our sins, death, evil forces.
But the victory that has overcome the world, is our faith,
our faith in you, Lord, God our Savior.
Living Jesus, Son of the Father and Mary,
we glorify you, we give you thanks
for introducing us as members in your family,
in the joy of being your children in You, by You.**

Yvonne Chami

Happy Easter from our youth

We love you and pray a lot for you - Madonna.

Thank you for your presence in our lives-Gharib.

To all Lebanese and non-Lebanese friends, we wish you a lot of joy and love in the heart - Elie.

Jesus knows our hurts and joys, and he carries them with us, He loves us so much! - Marcelle.

On the occasion of the feast of Easter, we wish you to experience a resurrection of joy, hope and love. Risen Jesus calls us today to be witnesses of his love in our lives at every moment. Yes, all our life is a grace. He has come for us to realize this grace. To you we wish that you find your vocation and respond to the will of God in your life - Fadi.

Our life during Lent

Life at the Foyer de Tendresse continues to bubble! We must seize every passing moment: between prayer, greeting visitors or organizing social and cultural outings, our youth realize that their mission is to be witnesses to the able-bodied, witnesses that it is possible to live in peace and joy despite the difficulties.

During this year's Lent, it's a feast every day that our young people live with their life companions, deepening their relationship with Jesus and being of service to one another. Basically, they offer each working day to the honor of two people from the team or the youths; their daily readings are related to Lent, and each evening's thanksgiving is represented by a grain of wheat that each put in a jar: during Holy Week, all grains will be grinded into hosts consumed during Easter mass.

But also life goes on ...



-On February 2nd, the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, we welcomed over thirty children ages 0 to 5 years old. They came with their parents - friends, team members of Anta Akhi - for the annual mass for children. You should have seen the little ones

when our youth gave them a gift, after mass, during the entertainment! This is to say thank you, you who are in our hearts and in our prayers, as we are in your heart and life!

-We have received up to three times a week, groups of 15-25 students. Based on their assessment at the end of the day, we see a change of outlook towards the world of disability begins to occur: "We are all equal in worth and dignity and our importance is from what we are!"



-We were pleased to receive children with multiple disabilities, up to the age of 12, from Sesobel for a day busy with games, songs, and a good meal! A festive atmosphere prevailed that day. Thank you for your touching presence dear little ones!

- We have resumed our outings, Wednesday, to the heated pool! Wonderful time of relaxation for the young people and their life companions! We thank you, Jeita Country Club, for your donation.

-Yvonne began early this year, existential training cycle for the whole team, divided into 3 groups. This is to take a stand for a way of life, joy, despite the difficulties.

Rana left us to the world of the Father ... in great peace!

Did Rana's life have a meaning? What fruits this young girl with ataxia telangiectasia, a degenerative disease, could have brought during her 22 years of life on earth? Was her life worth living?



Rana had a severe respiratory problem that required hospitalization. During the last week of her life, the team of Anta Akhi was present at her side 24 hours a day: Friends, youth, life companions, trainers, managers, experienced an intense moment. Jessica will even say: "It was the best week of my life" ... How is it possible to say that? Experiencing the death of a beloved one?

Jessica, a life companion: "You can go anywhere in the world, but you cannot learn the lesson of this week: Yes, in life you can be happy! I lived a lot of peace and joy this week. By being present for Rana I forgot myself, I almost did not sleep but I was in shape and I did not want to go home. I was also touched by the love that her parents brought her and their loving presence for each other. This is beautiful!"

Loyal, a life companion, "Rana has taught me to be myself again, to give without counting. I felt that the mission of Yvonne was fully expressed this week; that it is not a utopia; that we can live together in peace and joy despite disability, and even in the last moments. By the love that she lived, God was present everywhere. We prayed at Rana's bedside with her, and we had all strength! We experienced the joy beyond the pain... "

Roger, physiotherapist: "I realized that my work is not limited at all to the technical aspect. During this week, I joined the medical to the existential. The last 3 days, when I could not even help Rana, I did not have to come, but I wanted to be present to support her parents. I hang on... I am becoming very attached to the mission of Anta Akhi."

Norma, a training coach: "It is a path powered by existential training that prepared Rana to face her physical death in peace. The last week, we prayed a lot together and I brought to her attention all the fruits, that she held in suffering, that she presented to those who suffer and are distant from Jesus. It was so relaxing to her! She laughed heartily after ... In the

logic of the world, Rana did nothing since she does not have the ability, but actually she has so much fruits, being a witness of a great faith, a way of life, an opening and a presence to the other. "

There was a lot of peace in the air the last day. As a gesture of farewell, Rana told us "good night." It was touching for the team of Anta Akhi, the medical team at the hospital who had "never seen anything like this" and Rana's parents who spoke to our team, "Rana is gone but you are our family, do not leave us! "

Thank you for the team's commitment that was mobilized spontaneously and voluntarily, full of love. Yvonne thank you for what you sowed and continue to sow in the hearts of everyone. Thank you Mary, Set El Beit, and thank you Jesus for the gift of life, this life that continues and deserves to be lived fully, like a party!



Initiatives of a creative love

Thank you to all those who recognize themselves in the stories below and thank you to so many others whose story is not mentioned: it's still engraved in our hearts. With your initiatives full of love, our young people can live with dignity in everyday life. Isn't the gift but the fruit of love and generosity? As well said by Yvonne: "Here we speak of the creativity of love! "

- Lani, a woman from Sri Lanka, works in Lebanon as a house cleaning lady. As she went to one of her clients twice a week, the latter proposed to her to save the transportation costs by being escorted by the husband. The two days savings of transportation costs, the Sri Lankan lady decides to donate it to Anta Akhi, one day she was there visiting for the first time!

- Elie vowed to help Anta Akhi for one year. This young employee has decided to involve his customers in the mission of Anta Akhi. But more important, and he knows it, is that he is sure that the Virgin Mary led him to us.

- Rita decided to educate her students to help young people with disability living at Anta Akhi. The students opted for the sale of cakes and juices during the breaks at school. Some insisted and pushed other students to buy: "But don't you like cake? Take

several and leave us the change! It's for a good cause! "

- Michel, in a gesture of generosity, wanted to donate the profits from his book to works of charity. Having heard, Carla and Michel have requested their bank to transfer the profits of the books they bought to Anta Akhi.

- Always in the same spirit, Maya has recorded a Christmas song for the Baby Jesus and made it public. The benefits of the sales were donated to Anta Akhi.

- Carisma, a group of very talented girls, I must admit, hosted a Christmas concert in two parishes in favor of Anta Akhi. The amount raised was designated to meet some dietary needs of our youth.

Life is beautiful with you my brother

Taking advantage of the presence of French volunteers at Anta Akhi, our youth visited several centers that care for people in difficulty: injured persons, with disabilities or the elderly. Mirna says...

Everywhere we went, we were all very well received, our young people felt a real solidarity with each group. What has brought us closer to each person is the fact to be able to share our life experiences and have thought about how we should come to help the Human Person.

We were touched by the testimony given by a lady at the Beit Chebab hospital, a medical center for war injured and others. She shared her experience of forgiveness towards those who tortured her during the Lebanese war and how she struggles to live happily and give meaning to her life through painting.

The presence of the team caring for children with Cerebral Palsy at the specialized center at Bhannes Hospital was a touching experience, and we promised to share with them a celebration during the year! All would appreciate a folk evening!

In the region of Chahtoul, the experience was different for our youth. Indeed, they have memories of a summer camp, before the center was adapted to accommodate the elderly. They remembered fondly the beautiful moments in this place... The visit to the center came after the Christmas period, when every young person has chosen to share one or more of the gifts with others.



Then, in the joy of the holiday, we had an animated time with games, songs, poems turned into fun competition called in Lebanon "zajal"! A living environment that our youth have conveyed, and a desire on both sides to recreate new opportunities for entertainment and sharing time together.

Our young people have kept in their hearts the beautiful experiences and keep in their prayers all the people they met. They also expressed their thanks for the sense of family they live every day, and the time of intense prayer and living together at Anta Akhi

After these visits, they have realized that living together - in every sense of the word - in the community, is very important. And they recognized the importance of the existential training and coaching. The problems they face help them grow and the importance in everyday life is given to the true values of life. So in wanting to give, our young people have received a lot...

Manuela Sgorbati: "The only important thing here, was to be together"

Manuela, a young Italian lady spent 2 months at the Home of Tenderness. Wanting to discover Lebanon and be useful at the same time, she chose Anta Akhi to give from herself and assist the team in the translation of documents. Her joyful and loving presence left in the hearts of those who knew her the memory of a person in love with life!

Upon my arrival at Anta Akhi I was greeted by the young people and the team as an old friend whom they haven't seen for ages, to whom they asked about her news and sought to make her comfortable in an atmosphere of joy and happiness that has not stopped for the duration of my stay.

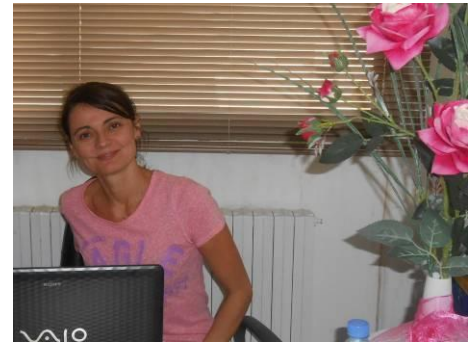
My fear of being clumsy and have difficulty in communicating with young people because of the language disappeared when I realized that the only important thing here was to be together, to share experiences and to offer each other mutually what we could. The youth at Anta Akhi, with their openness to others, their happiness and affection despite their difficulties have been for

me a source of inspiration and immeasurable enrichment that will accompany me forever. They are also testimony to the success of the visionary project of Yvonne and the flawless work of the whole team.

On a personal level, I have the feeling of having received much more than giving. It was truly a privilege to have shared a small part of my life with the great and beautiful family of Anta Akhi. Here the barriers - religion, social status and appearance among others - that are the source of the worst disasters do not exist, because each gives according to his abilities to create an atmosphere of love and solidarity.

With Anta Akhi, through exchanges with young people and the team, I also discovered Lebanon, a country that I did not know, its cuisine, and culture. I met incredibly engaging people who were hit by big problems several times but each time managed to recover with dignity while keeping their humanity and warmth. The youths of Anta Akhi are the true children of Lebanon, struck in their natural right to live peacefully but still come to enjoy life with enthusiasm and great joy.

The day of my departure, the team had organized a surprise party for me during which we sang and young people gave me gifts. Surprised, I was visibly moved and it is Madonna who took me in her arms to comfort me. This spontaneous gesture sums up the atmosphere we breathe at Anta Akhi.



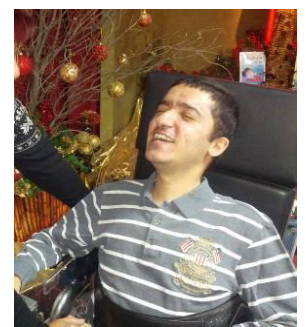
Manuela

The touching story of Gharib and a friend...

Gharib, a young man suffering from a degenerative disease, Duchenne muscular dystrophy, lives permanently in the Foyer de Tenderness. He has changed a lot since he began his journey at Anta Akhi. After being in an angry mood, he became tender and present to others, especially to friends and the poor, whom he carries in his prayers: he offers his rosary to their intentions.

During the summer, Gharib was very close to a life companion who was going through a difficult period. He cried thinking of her, saying she's crying too. And it was very true ... He decided during the Sunday mass to dedicate his communion to the girl and not himself. Receiving communion, Gharib, happy, realized that he got two hosts stuck together instead of one!

Praise be to God now and forever!



Call

Dear friends, our youth often have pulmonary congestion associated with regression of their disability.

Today, we appeal to your generosity for a cough assist device, a vital medical need that can help our young people to have a better quality of life, and that they do not suffer from pulmonary complications. The price of the needed device amounts to 8500 dollars.

Thank you for helping us!

How to help AntaAkhi

1. Sponsor a young person from \$ 10 (or € 10) per month, \$ 120 (or € 120) per year.
2. Make a single donation possibly specifying the need that you want to support.

To make a tax exempt donation in the US, please contact sesobelusa@gmail.com

Thank you for being part of what we build together in our journey of life

If you wish to receive our newsletter by email, please notify us.

AntaAkhi: B.P70164 Antélias Liban – www.antaakhi.org - antaakhi@inco.com.lb +9614415365

Editor

Roula Najm

Assistant General Manager

Maya Aoun

Service projects

Avec le clind'œild' Yvonne

Thank you