



Galilee Society Newsletter



Children Participate in Environmental Programming Organized by EJC Scholarship Recipients

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Call Issued for Environmental Scholarship Applications

The Galilee Society's Environmental Justice Center (EJC) has issued a call for scholarship applications for its Environmental Education Scholarship Project.

Arab university (BA or MA level) students specializing in Environmental Science, Biology, Chemistry, Geography, or Agriculture are invited to apply.

Applicants must commit to volunteering in the EJC's Environmental Education program. The scholarship program requires the university level grantees to conduct environmental programming with children in their home villages and towns. The Galilee Society provides training and support for the grantees in planning these activities, and encourages the grantees to focus on a wide variety of environmental topics.

Interested applicants should apply by the 11th of April 2008.



Boys show their environmental appreciation while participating in programming run by Environmental Scholarship Grantees.

EJC Celebrates Major Advocacy Success in Majd Al Kroum Sewage

The Galilee Society's Environmental Justice Center recently made major progress in its advocacy work addressing the problem of sewage in the village of Majd Al Kroum in the Galilee. Money has finally been allocated by the government for the replacement of the main sewage lines serving several villages, and bidding for the work contract has begun.

Sewage problems pose some of the most hazardous and widespread environmental dangers in Palestinian Arab towns and villages in Israel. The presence of untreated sewage near human habitation poses the risk of infectious diseases, pollutes drinking and agricultural water, and severely degrades the environment.

The sewage flooding in Majd Al Kroum, at times resulting in pools up to two meters deep of raw sewage, led to an insect infestation. When cases of West Nile Virus were reported in the village, local citizen Mahmoud Agbaria, after meeting with the GS, donated enough chemical pesticides to eradicate the disease-carrying insects from the area around the village. Together with several Majd Al Kroum residents who also volunteered their time, the area was sprayed with pesticides as a public health precaution in late summer of 2007.



Sewage flooding in Majd Al Kroum

The EJC brought the issue to the attention of the Ministry of the Environment, which initiated an investigation into the Majd Al Kroum Local Authority. While the Local Authority responded by repairing the pumping machines, this resulted in little improvement of the situation for the residents. The sewage pipes remained neglected and insufficient for the greater area. Majd Al Kroum was still suffering from sewage backup from the other villages in the vicinity.

The Galilee Society lawyer, together with the residents of the Majd Al Kroum (including some GS staff), initiated a class action lawsuit to attempt to force the Local Authority to resolve the sewage problem. The GS lawyer asked the court specifically for an exact timetable of actions that the Local Authority should perform to resolve the situation.

As a direct result of GS legal and organizing activities, two events now mark significant progress in Majd Al Kroum. First, the Infrastructure Ministry allocated funds for expanding the capacity of the main sewage pipe for the village of Majd Al Kroum and the surrounding villages. Second, the Local Authority has initiated bidding among contractors for the actual replacement of the main sewage line.

This technique of advocacy regarding sewage infrastructure has been demonstrated to be effective, and the GS will apply it in other villages where sewage infrastructure poses a problem to public and environmental health.

Rikaz Publishes Sociological Data Marking International Women's Day, Launches New Hebrew Website Interface

Rikaz published statistics specific to Palestinian women citizens of Israel in several Arabic language newspapers to mark International Women's Day on the 8th of March. The statistics are derived from Rikaz original data collected by the 2007 Socio-Economic Survey of 3270 Palestinian Arab households throughout Israel.

Approximately 558,000, or roughly half, of the Palestinian citizens of Israel are women. Of these women, 8.1% are heads of household.

Education levels of Palestinian women vary widely. While 7.9% of Palestinian women in Israel age 18 and over are currently studying, an even larger percentage of 8.3% never attended school in their lives. As many as 35% attended school, but did not finish their secondary education. While 4.9% attributed their dropping out to early marriage, nearly double that number cited no school near their community as their reason for not completing high school.

Regarding health status, 11.3% of the Palestinian women in Israel suffer from chronic illnesses including cardiac disease, blood pressure, and diabetes among others. The number increases to 42% over the age of 40. While 3.9% of all Palestinian women in Israel suffer from diabetes, over the age of 40 the number increases to 17.5%. Diabetes rates are higher in Palestinian women than in men, and higher among the Palestinian Arab population than the Jewish population.

Mobile phone usage varies with age. Palestinian women in Israel ages 20-28 take the lead in mobile phone ownership at 77.9%. Mobile phone ownership drops sharply to 10% above the age of 60.

Rikaz also is launching an updated website in all three languages, and is currently in the process of publishing new information on the Palestinian localities in Israel. These achievements mark the accomplishment of major goal markers in the EU-funded Rikaz project.

Additionally, Rikaz held a Steering Committee meeting in March in order to plan the next stages of the project. The meeting of the Steering Committee made plans for the formation of the Consortium of Arab organizations around the Rikaz project. The Consortium is planned to bring about organized activities in coordination with many civil society organizations to address needs identified by Rikaz survey data.



The Steering Committee of the Rikaz EU-funded project meets to plan and discuss the upcoming stages of action.

HRC Delivers Lectures to High School Students, Holds Registration for Second Breast Cancer Course for Health Professionals

The Health Rights Center's (HRC's) Breast Cancer Project Coordinator Amira Othman, as well as Al-Maissam Director Naim Kraim, delivered lectures on the 10th of March for secondary students at the Amal Technical College in Taybe. The College had invited the Galilee Society to participate in a school-wide health day. Naim Kraim presented on Bird Flu, and methods of preventing its transmission to humans. Amira Othman lectured on awareness and early detection of breast cancer. The College presented both GS representatives with a certificate of appreciation for the rich information they shared.

These lectures were part of a series of 16 on Breast Cancer awareness and prevention, the majority of which target high school students. In her lecture at the Amal Technical College, Ms. Othman gave basic information on cancer, its definition and manifestations. She then explained the importance of early detection and self-examinations, and distributed GS breast cancer educational materials.

The HRC values these lectures for high school-aged students not simply as an effective way to protect the girls themselves as they grow older; the lectures also impress upon the students their role as daughters in



Students at Amal Technical College listen to lectures on health topics, including breast cancer awareness and prevention, and bird flu transmission prevention.

protecting the health of their mothers through education and information-sharing.



Amal Technical College students attend the school's health promotion day.

share their experiences. Registration is going on now! A breast cancer study day for health professionals has also been scheduled for early April in coordination with the Israeli Cancer Society.

In addition to the lectures, the HRC has issued a call for registration for the second Breast Cancer Prevention and Treatment Course. The course is aimed at health professionals who work with the Palestinian minority in Israel, including doctors, nurses, social workers and health activists. The program of the course has been honed and improved since the pilot course which took place for only five sessions in 2007. The upcoming course will meet for nine sessions. One of these sessions will involve a visit to Rambam Hospital in Haifa, and a discussion with Arab women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and who will

New Staff Members Join the Galilee Society

Murad Habiballah, whose background is in Chemical Engineering, has joined as of March 2008 as the Environmental Education Coordinator for the Environmental Justice Center. He is responsible for coordinating all projects relating to environmental education. Environmental education projects of the EJC have included the Environmental Scholarships Project which facilitates university students to conduct projects with younger students in their home villages, the Arab Writers Competition to promote environmental literature in the Arabic language, and a beach clean-up with Palestinian students. Mr. Habiballah is currently planning a course for 30 primary and secondary school teachers who will meet weekly over a period of several months. The teachers will hear lectures and discuss a number of topics related to environmental education, such as antennae and electromagnetic radiation, and composting and recycling.



The Galilee Society welcomes [from left] Murad Habiballah, Awda Abdelhalim and Jamie Mandell.

Awda Abdelhalim, specialist in sexual education, joined the Health Rights Center in February as Project Coordinator for the HIV/AIDS Project. Ms. Abdelhalim is also a Masters level student in Social Work at the University of Haifa. For the HIV/AIDS Project of the GS, she will be conducting lectures in high schools as well as the peer education workshops in which high school students are trained as peer educators in HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Ms. Abdelhalim also has done past work in smoking cessation and hopes to bring this field to the GS's work as well.

Jamie Mandell joined the Resource Development department at the end of October 2007. She has worked previously with the Galilee Society as an intern in 2005 and later as a full employee, and she joins again to cover the maternity leave of the department head. "I am thrilled to have this opportunity to observe how the Galilee Society's many exciting projects, some of which were conceived a couple of years ago when I last worked here, are developing. The Galilee Society is a highly professional organization which has done an enormous amount to assist Palestinians in Israel, and I am proud to be associated with them."

Institute of Applied Research Names New Scientific Director

Dr. Hassan Azaizeh, a long time researcher at the Galilee Society, has been named the new Scientific Director of the R&D Center (now called the Institute of Applied Research). As such, he is responsible for overseeing the research activities of the Institute, and the scientific relationships with local and international institutes. He hopes to hone the Institute's scientific goals, mission, and especially future relations with the scientific community, and to further strengthen the relationship with the Ministry of Science and other Israeli ministries. The previous Scientific Director, Dr. Isam Sabbah, served from 2005 until 2008.

Dr. Azaizeh earned his PhD in Microbiology from the University of Texas, held a Postdoctoral research position at the Technion in Haifa for two years, and worked in Germany as well as the United States in microbiology and biotechnology. He has been at the Galilee Society since 1996.

Dr. Azaizeh's scientific research into 2008 includes such topics as the production of bioethanol from agricultural wastes; the examination, recovery and use of polyphenols from olive wastes for innovative products; the removal of selected disrupting chemicals, pharmaceuticals and pathogens from sewage; the endocrine disrupting activity of steroid hormones and their biodegradation in domestic and swine wastewater; and the use of phytotechnologies to promote sustainable land use management and improve food safety.

News in Brief

American Jewish Philanthropists Visit the Galilee Society to Explore Partnership Possibilities

American philanthropists Judith Schneider and Norbert Weissberg visited the Galilee Society on the 9th of March to discuss the possibilities of partnership around a mother-child welfare project. They met with General Director Mohammad Khatib, Breast Cancer Awareness Project Coordinator Amira Othman, and Resource Development representatives Emily Antoon and Jamie Mandell. Also joining were Professor Alan Apter from the Pediatric Psychological Services Department in the Beilinson (Schneider) Hospital in Petach Tikva, and Mustafa Qossoqsi, a researcher/clinician from the same department.

The proposed project is taken from a model developed at Yale University in the US, which utilizes psychological health techniques and home visitations to support young, first time parents. In addition to the Galilee Society offices, the group visited the Institute for Applied Research (R&D Center), a primary school in Shefa Amr, and a Ministry of Health mother-child clinic, where they met with staff and administration from the Ministry of Health.

Rikaz Representatives Attend Workshop for European Union Partners

Rikaz Representatives Ahmad Muhammad and Jamie Mandell attended a three-day EU workshop which was held for EU partners in Israel.

Twelve EU partners were in attendance from 26 to 28 February at the workshop, which was held in Ramit Gan. The workshop covered project cycle management, specifically how to create a project and ensure its success through effective management. The attendees received certificates of participation from the Head of the European Commission Delegation to Israel, Ramiro Cibrian Uzal.

Rikaz representatives Jamie Mandell and Sobhi Sgher also attended a previous EU workshop in Beit Jala in December 2007 that involved partners in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

GS Resource Development Department Seeks Intern

Resource Development Interns work alongside the Galilee Society staff in our main office in Shefa Amr. Intern responsibilities include writing and editing grant proposals, English-language reports and letters, initiating and maintaining contacts with donors, and writing for the newsletter. The internship offers good experience working in the non-profit sector in an intercultural setting. Applicants should have a minimum BA/BS education and native English writing ability. Preference will be given to those applicants able to commit one year or more.

Deadline to apply is 31 March 2008. To apply, email a cover letter, resume, referee contact, and a 2-3 page writing sample to Mohammad Khatib via the Resource Development staff at antoon@gal-soc.org. Be sure to write "Internship" in the subject line.

How to Support the Galilee Society

Help achieve equitable health, environmental, and socio-economic conditions and development opportunities for Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel by supporting the Galilee Society.

How to Donate to the Galilee Society

Tax-Exempt Donations

In order to facilitate giving, the Galilee Society has recently received tax-exempt status in the United States, via the Friends of the Galilee Society. To donate in the United States, please make checks payable to the Friends of the Galilee Society and send them to:

Dr. Shouki Kassis
Chair, Board of Directors
7 Lee Road, Audubon, PA 19403
United States
kassis25@comcast.net
Tel: +1 610 662 3693

Bank transfers to the Friends of the Galilee Society can be made to the following account:

Account Name: Friends of the Galilee Society
Bank Name: PNC Bank
Branch: Audubon Village Shopping Center
Account Number: 86-0943-9642

Please inform Friends of the Galilee Society of your donation:
fnassar@gal-soc.org.

Direct Donations

To donate to the Galilee Society directly, please send checks (in any currency) payable to the Galilee Society at:

P.O. Box 330
Shefa-Amr, 20200
Israel

Alternatively, bank transfers (in any currency) can be made directly to the Galilee Society's bank account:

Account Number: 9800
Bank Name: Bank Hapoalim
Branch Number: 731
Bank Address: Jabour Street, Shefa-Amr 20200 Israel
SWIFT Code: POALILIT

Please inform us of your donation at fnassar@gal-soc.org.



The Galilee Society - The Arab National Society for Health Research and Services is a leading community-based Arab NGO. The overriding goal of the Galilee Society is the achievement of equitable health and socio-economic conditions for the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

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