

Wi'am Summer Camp for Kids



From May – September 2006, the staff and volunteers at the Wi'am Center were actively engaged with over 120 children in the Bethlehem area for our annual Summer Camp. Ranging from ages 6-17, the kids coming to the Wi'am Center enjoyed various activities, challenging projects and educational trips throughout the summer. We were thrilled to have so many children attend, and we were all able to learn and grow through the time we spent together this summer.

Coming together each Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday of the week, the staff and volunteers provided a regular schedule for the kids. Through our continuing Trauma-Coping Program, lessons were offered in art, drama, theatre, dance, music, English, and sports.



Art with Jad



Hard at Work



Time to play!



ABC's



Dabkeh!



Songs for Justice

In addition to such weekly activities, there were also several special projects and educational trips included in the Summer Camp schedule. During the second week of July, all the kids participated in an Environmental Week. This project took place mainly at the Melkite Church here in Bethlehem. The kids helped to clean the garden, participated in sports, and learned through art about different topics involving the environment. They were also able to travel to Beit Jala, to the Tulit al-Kumi school for an entire day on Environmental Awareness and in order to visit the Environmental Center there.



Cleaning up the church



Learning about the environment

Continuing to educate through the arts, the older kids (age 12-17) were given the opportunity to learn the art of expression through photography. After a few courses detailing how best to take photographs, the kids took to the streets and to the wall to shoot some photos and to spend some time reflecting on the meaning of those photos. The photos are now displayed in our Conference Room, and we all take great pride in their hard work.



Taking photos of the wall



Learning to hope through art



Lonely...



... but not alone

Many educational and entertainment trips took place each week as well. Travelling to the nearby village of Arrtas, the kids were able to visit a local monastery and helped do some voluntary work while there. Arrtas is a lovely area in which we were all able to enjoy being in nature and having some time to relax in a very scenic setting. There were several opportunities as well, to swim at local pools, culminating in a trip to Jericho for swimming and relaxation. Our summer trips came to an end with our final adventure to Funland Park in Ramallah. The kids enjoyed fun rides, games and time to celebrate just being young.



The Church and Monastery at Arrtas



Many smiles at Funland in Ramallah



Final Trip to Jericho with Kids and Mothers

The summer was capped off by our End of Camp Celebration at the Mary Doty Park here in Bethlehem. Eager to share their new skills and hobbies with friends and family, the kids put together several songs, dances, plays and musical performances. We showcased their artwork and we were able to provide them with certificates and t-shirts as well. In our efforts to help get them excited about the return to school, we were also able to provide each child with school supplies and handbags in which to carry their books.



Artwork by our young Wi'amers



Performing for Family and Friends



Our wonderful Coordinator, Saliba



Receiving books and bags for school

We had an amazing summer. The kids learned so much, and they taught us much about laughter, hope, and energy... they have a lot of all three of these things to go around! We are grateful to everyone who volunteered and to our staff for their commitment to creating opportunities for young people.