

WE WILL NOT ALLOW THE GRINCH TO STEAL CHRISTMAS
“Christmas Smile” Proposal, December, 2015

Background

16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers (and sisters).

17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him(her)?

18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:16-18)

We read in the gospels that Mary responded with great joy to the news that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus. So the words in the New Testament announcing the birth of Jesus are about joy, light and rejuvenation. This is the true meaning of Christmas: God is willing to be found by us in our searching for peace, justice and dignity. This year again, Christmas is coming to Bethlehem and the Holy Land amid injustices of occupation incarnated in human rights violations, restrictions on movement, crippling economic situation that leaves people with great burden and cripple families and their children who succumb to hopelessness, despair and lack of direction.

This year, Bethlehem is embracing itself for Christmas with the hope that this year's celebrations will bring with it a new hope incarnated in the message of Angels to the Shepherds. We believe that we need to re-live the message of angels: "Peace on earth".

Christmas as we know, is a time for celebrations, family re-union, sharing the bread, and joy for families and children. As we are looking for Christmas as a joyful event, we must think "Others", of the most trodden and the needy who are deprived of any means to celebrate and

live the event of Christmas with its sublime meaning and joy. So, we need to involve children, families and the elderly in the spirit of Christmas as a way to let them feel that they are the witnesses of God's work on Earth.

Yet for many families in Palestine parents are faced with impossible obstacles in which the creation of a cheerful environment becomes difficult and also providing a gift at Christmas might be unattainable or even imaginative.

Providing the opportunity for children/families to participate in cheerful Christmas events is the ultimate way to help children **get** out of their gloomy situation and re-live the happiness and meaning of Christmas.

In that respect, Wi 'am has a long tradition in providing children and their families with activities that can help them hope and joy in the community through the *Christmas Smile Project*. We are planning a Christmas event that can contribute in bringing hope and smiles to children in the area. The Christmas festival that we are planning involves an interactive family program for two-days: the first day will involve interactive activities for children and their families; **Choral** singing, clowns/theater show, singing, Folk dancing. At the end of the day, children will be provided with meaningful presents that suits all ages. **While the second day** will involve a visit to elderly homes and orphanages in which our volunteers and the staff accompanied by an 'performer' will be distributing presents to the residents of these institutions as a token of appreciation to their role in the community.

Objectives of the Christmas event.

- Providing impoverished children and their families with a day of Christmas festivities and a time for hope and joy
- Provide the elderly with a time of joy visiting them at their homes as a token of appreciation

- Providing deprived children/elderly with constructive gifts

Activities:

Day I:

- Opening Ceremonies
- Invocation & Greetings
- Tree Lighting with Santa
- Carol Singing and theatre show on Christmas
- Clown show, Folk dancing
- Distribution of gifts to children

Day II:

- Visit to the elderly at their home and Citizen's senior homes accompanied by volunteers and clowns
- Distribution of gifts to the elderly

Beneficiaries

The Christmas activities will reach approximately around 350-400 underprivileged children from all over Bethlehem City, and around 120 seniors in the area

Budget

Your generous contribution to this event will enable us to provide entertainment and a solemn remembrance of the message of Christmas.

Your blessed contribution to this event will enable us to reach the neediest families who are deprived of any means to celebrate Christmas and enjoy its solemn meaning. Your donation may not only provide a child with joyful memories of Christmas but also help restore his lost hope. We estimate that a gift can cost up to 20 dollars/13 pounds for a child. We estimate that a gift can also cost to 25 dollar/17 pounds for an elderly member of the community. We also estimate that the event will

cost 3000\$/ 2000 pounds, covering logistics, personnel, theatre shows ,clowns, hospitality, transportation, renting of equipment etc.

Your generous contribution will go towards returning lost Smiles to children's faces and help families cope with the burden of buying presents for their children. Your donation will help make this yearly event a tradition that rejuvenates hope and brings peaceful memories to the lives of many children

*“ Let us help the kids enjoy a normal Christmas full of hope, peace and good will. The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing”
Zephaniah 3:17*