

# Our life at Anta Akhi

*Serving a life of dignity for people with disability*



September 2018



“At school, I was observing... I remember a five or six-year-old boy whose face was wrinkled because he was unhappy. When his mother came, when the heavy iron door opened, his face lit up, it became beautiful at once, like a sky that lights up. We are ugly because we are not loved. And we are beautiful when we are loved. I want to love those who are not loved.”

*Yvonne Chami*  
Founder

## September 8, 2018 Closing of our jubilee

**25 years** serving young adults with heavy disabilities,  
**25 years** serving a change on society's perception of handicap,  
**25 years** serving a purpose that places the person at the center and aims to live together in peace, joy, love, like brothers.

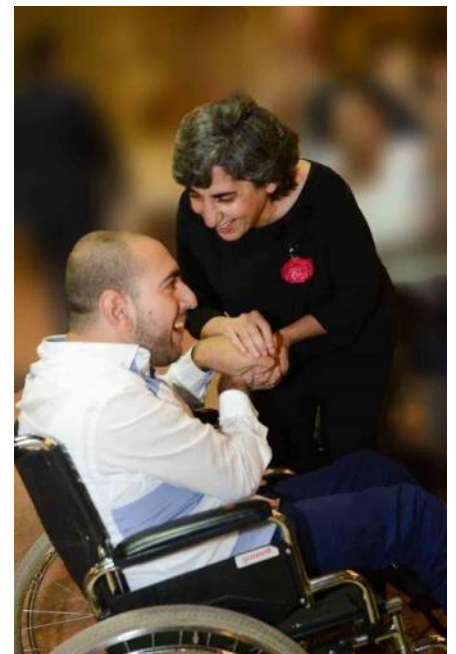
Throughout these years, and especially in this jubilee year, we put all our trust in Mary. Despite the difficult times that Anta Akhi, in Lebanon, and the different corners of the world have gone through, we have never missed the essential ... We did our part and left to Mary, *mother of our house*, her share.

**Mary's share** has been the most beautiful throughout these years.  
**Mary's share** is you dear friends who continue the journey with us.  
**Mary's share** is this presence of love, this perseverance, in a great fidelity.

We give thanks on Saturday 8 September for

**The birth of Mary**, great gift from heaven our humanity,  
**The birth of Anta Akhi**, for a way of life, of joy, to all the children of God,  
**The birth of a friendship**, that is renewed every day, through you, through every person with whom we make a life course.

From the bottom of our hearts, from our big family, THANK YOU.



## 25 years of life and trust A wonderful experience of Love

Thank you Mary ... Thank you Jesus

Today we want to thank you, with a very grateful heart, to Mary, our Mother of Heaven, to Her Son Jesus our Savior, and to the Holy Spirit our source of peace.

Thank you for being with us, so present in our joys and sorrows, in our successes and so many times in our failures. We give thanks for this jubilee, for our home, with its hospitality, its exchanges, its hopes and its joys.

Joy of meeting with each other,  
Joy of surpassing oneself for complementarity, in everyday life,  
Joy of life despite difficulties, illnesses and all obstacles,  
Joy of communal life that makes the presence of love grow and mature in us.

Thank you for all the faces that we met, for all the people who believed in this purpose and who carry with us the concern for continuity.

How not to say Thank you Mary, Thank you Jesus for everything beautiful we have been through but also fragile of our 25 years

journey. Thank you Mary for the flame that you lit in Yvonne's heart and continue to flow through all those who live in this house.

Thank you Lord for Anta Akhi, this house of prayer, which allows us to communicate and stay in communion with you.

25 years of life at Anta Akhi, with the assurance, the certainty, the deep conviction that Mary is here, present, with Her beloved Son. It's a truth, a fact that changes neither with time nor with the eras, as Jesus said: “ And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Mt. 28, 20.

Virgin Mary,  
Help us to proclaim with you, every day, the wonders of God the Creator,  
Let us taste like you the fruits of the Holy Spirit,  
Help us to persevere like you in faith and trust, to share with others the joy, peace, and love of your Savior Son.

*Roula Najm*  
Chief Executive Officer

# The summer camp! Long-awaited holidays ... in Kfifan!

The joy was there during the summer camp, it started in Kfifan in the north of the country, and continued in Ballouneh. Three weeks outside the home would have been enough for a total escapade. Our youth and companions, parents and team members, friends and volunteers were delighted to live a unique experience despite the fatigue, the heat of certain days, the lack of adaptations. But all agreed that the atmosphere was great and it was the best summer camp! What has fostered such positive opinions? What were the particularities of this summer camp? Our youth and their companions express themselves:

A first in the team management: to avoid the tiredness of the trip and to fully live the family spirit, most of the team members slept on the spot. Tiring? Yes! But so fulfilling for those who were accompanied by their children. Optimum situation in a large family where children add a note of freshness and are always ready to help!

Youth, team and volunteers were divided into 4 groups and each had to prove that he was the best, whether in games, in team spirit, in attention to each other, during trips or at the summer camp.

An exceptional program with these beautiful holidays: a day with games, entertainment, evenings with parents, trips to the beach, picnic, trips to the convents of Saints Hardini and Estéphan, and that of Sainte Rafqa, processions, moments of prayer... nothing is missing, even the day upside down where everyone had to eat a kebab early in the morning! What an experience! During trips, people offered us ice cream, coffee, and came to see us in our local, hands full, as good Lebanese!

We do not forget the part of our French friends and volunteers, especially a group of Scouts from France who started with us the summer camp. This was the big surprise of the summer camp!

These young people, enthusiastic, full of energy and motivation, lived 10 days among us. They helped us with all the work and fostered a great atmosphere, laughter, and prayer among us.

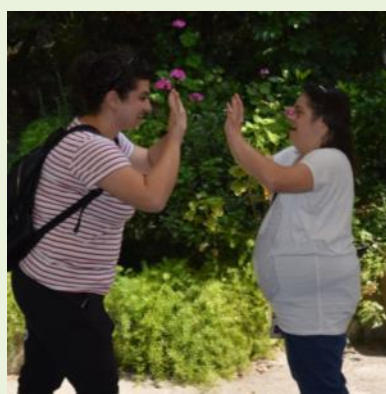
Everything was beautiful! We were lucky to see a total lunar eclipse; phenomenon appreciated especially since we were in a rural area, without much light around us.

And in this area we were near a church, which was almost stuck to a mosque. This gave us even more openness to the other, different, with great respect for his religion, and made us want to get to know other religions while deepening ours.

**We are thankful for being able to participate in the summer camp outside the enclosure of Anta Akhi. This change was quite invigorating! We see the efforts of all those who have put their heart, their time, their gifts, their income to allow us to enjoy a holiday with a beautiful spirit, just like a family. We touch the graces that we receive and we pray that our family will continue to grow under the gaze of Mary, always united, in joy, despite all the difficulties!**

## Our preferences

Carole liked the game about the Old Testament; she laughed, remembering that one night we covered her with pillows! Elie S. enjoyed a campfire with his friends. The "water fight" was appreciated by all during the farewell party of Gabriel, the French seminarian. Pierre had a great time with all the team members during game day! Fadi especially liked the evening with the parents, animated by songs. "Zouzou" just appreciated how we were all together as a family.





# Pierre, towards a path of reconciliation...

He always welcomes us with his smile; whether they are newcomers, volunteers, friends or trainees, Pierre is one of the gateways into our big family with his friendly presence and attention. He lives with his brothers, Elie and Philippe permanently in Anta Akhi ; all 3 are suffering from Ataxia Telangiectasia, a degenerative disease that gradually causes the loss of the use of hands and feet. They were one of the first families to respond positively to Yvonne's action in 1976. Today, Pierre is 53 years old! If everyone knows Pierre in appearance, what about his inner heart? Of discreet and timid nature, Pierre does not show his daily struggle.



**- Pierre, what makes you happy in life?**

- To summarize, what I love most in life is believing that God gave us life to rejoice. I am happy to see people by my side, who help me, who entrust me with their worries, their prayer intentions. I am happy when I go to visit my parents, when I manage to arrange things, when I am asked for help : I was very happy when Mirna entrusted me with the task of "keeping" Steven, her newborn in the morning. I love Steven! He is like my child !

Besides, I would like to get married but... I try to change any feeling of love in friendship. I remember a girl for whom I had feelings ... today she is a friend; she is married, has a son and we still are in contact.

**- What are your difficulties?**

- It's clear that no one would want to sit in a wheelchair all day. I can not do anything anymore and I feel the regression about the use of my hands and feet. Some days I accept my disability, and others times I do not. I would like to be healed. I dream of being able to get up, to be independent, to help others, to help my parents : they were present for us when we were young, and even today, when they can hardly do anything anymore, they continue to help us. I accept this situation with difficulty.

**- Do you ever want to resign?**

- I am not a person who resigns. I draw my strength from God and I pray him to give me strength and health; yes sometimes I pray for my healing. And I thank him for all his gifts, especially that I am still able to think and help others to my measure.

**- What place does Anta Akhi have in your life?**

- Anta Akhi opened the door to society for me and helped me to look beyond the looks of others and their comments. Existential formation helped me to accept society and others, and taught me to be patient... I would like to continue to be happy and make others happy.

**- A last word Pierre?**

- I hope that the reader will understand me...

**Yes, we hope that the reader understands that not everything is taken for granted, that some difficulties are temporary and others are not. And if some days are more difficult to accept his daily life in joy, Pierre invites us to not resign but to take a small step, to turn his weak but confident look towards God who gives meaning to everything and who is the source of all peace, all joy.**

## OUR Summer Parties!

Our Annual Family Dinner on July 13, 2018



August 17 party to thank all our friends

Traditional folklore evening on August 24th



## Our friends from elsewhere

More than 51 visitors shared the experiences of our youth. All were affected in one way or another. Who are they and what are they looking for by living a few hours to a few months with our youth?

**Mgr Jean-Pierre Cattenoz**, Archbishop of Avignon in France and **Mgr Nicodème Barrigah**, Bishop of Atakpamé in Togo, respectively made their 8th and 3rd visit to Anta Akhi. Beside all that we have received by their presence on our side, they themselves testify to the richness that they acquire by sharing the experiences of our youth.

**Gabriel Lopez y Diaz and Joris Roland**, 2 French seminarians concluded their year of internship at Anta Akhi, coming respectively from the Paris and Ars seminars. We share a nice thought from Gabriel at the end of his stay: "There is a kind of spiritual key that I really needed, which was passed on to me by the youth of Anta Akhi, and especially those who are mentally retarded: the important thing is not to think God, but to live him." As for Joris, he concludes his stay by: "Anta Akhi must be a house of formation, also for future pastors, because once we've been here, we leave really changed."



## Our youth in Medjugorje

Thanks to our friends of "Youth of Mary" and the Ladies' Committee who have allowed 2 consecutive trips, to our youth and their companions, to Mary our mother. Joy and Marcelino were accompanied by Christelle and d'Elie K. They followed in another trip Nicolas, Rita, Elissa, Mikael and his mother, accompanied by Dany and Michel N.

Elie K. testifies after his return: "In Medjugorje we had the chance to taste the love of the Lord; every time the bell rang, we felt the call of Jesus. Our enthusiasm never vanished. Our joy was great for many reasons. We had the most beautiful moments of friendship, despite the physical fatigue; we were surrounded by the love of all, and no obstacle obstructed our experience. This trip was an amalgam of prayer, meditation, joy, total presence of the Lord, and our own presence to each other."



**Ms. Lynn Hindi**, member of the Ladies' Committee, passed into the Lord's Light on July 12, 2018. We give thanks for Ms. Hindi's loving and faithful presence in our family.

We entrust each member of his small and large family to the merciful love of God. May He fill them with his graces to sing every day His praises, in sadness as well as in joy.

### Claim

*Dear friends, we are writing to you with great hope to help us to provide a bath trolley for our young people with disabilities. Today, a growing number of our youth are in regression and must newly use a trolley, hence the need to increase the existing number. The cost of the trolley is 4120 euros. Thank you in advance for your generosity.*

### How to help Anta Akhi:

1. Sponsor part of the cost of accompanying the life course of a young person with a disability, starting from \$10 (or 10€) per month, \$120 (or 120€) per year. Bank Audi – Iban: LB07 0056 0001 6520 8465 0440 1605

2. Make a one-time donation, you can possibly specify the need that you want to support.

To make a donation with tax receipt in France, please contact in advance [elisago.57@gmail.com](mailto:elisago.57@gmail.com)

To make a donation in Belgium, please contact [l.hermans@skynet.be](mailto:l.hermans@skynet.be)

Thank you for being part of what we are building together.

**Anta Akhi: B.P 70164 Antélias Liban – [www.antaakhi.org](http://www.antaakhi.org) - [antaakhi@inco.com.lb](mailto:antaakhi@inco.com.lb) +961 9 230 650**

This circular is sponsored by

