

Anta Akhi Newsletter

Serving a life of dignity for people with disability



September 2014

Over 35 years of experience in the service of the Church, Mother and educator

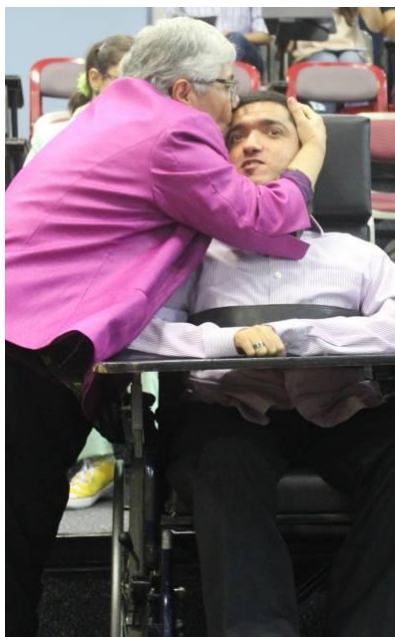
The experience of our young people and their families, the problems they encountered during their journey and their love of life despite the difficulties in the "living together", until their passage into the Father's heart, may shed light on the requirements of the growth of the child of God, in the parish and in the Church, and show that it is possible to live according to the values of the Gospel. We even find interest in walking with the Living Jesus to "grow together in Christ."

Every day, we have experienced that when our young people are supported in their growth throughout their path as children of God, and are connected to Living Jesus in a personal relationship, they may be actors in the growth of the child of God with those they encounter; actors in the growth of the Body of Living Jesus.

We are asked, pastors and children of God, able-bodied and limited by disability, to let the Holy Spirit enlighten my inconsistency and all that is not His work in me, all which does not express the compliance to the Face of Living Jesus, He who is revealed through my experience, to enable him, with Mary, His Mother, to renew me, to illuminate the way of life for everyone in the living together.

Yvonne Chami
Founder - President

Extracts from her speech at the seminar "the church, mother and educator" - May 2014



Jesus looks at us and loves us

After creating the world, God in whom is all wisdom, crowned his work in creating man. He chose me before I was born; he wanted me, loved me, and called me by my name.

Even before He forged me in my mother's womb, He carried me in his eternal thought; He laid his eyes on me with tenderness, He knew me in every detail of my being.

Because He loved me from all eternity, God has a wonderful plan for my life and the lives of each of us: he invites us to share His love and His joy in living our everyday experience.

We can only recognize the Father's plan for us and for our brothers, through the look of Jesus, that look that heals, console, delivers, restores ... yes Jesus' gaze upon each of us, regardless of status, color, responsibilities, potential or limits, is a look of kindness, tenderness and love. We are sons in the Son, we are children of God.

Thus, we are all invited to carry the look of Jesus and Mary, in us and to others, this look that welcomes and does not judge, look that encourages and doesn't exclude anyone, look of love that gives life.

This is the plan that God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - offers me as to any man, that my life journey with you, my brother, gives more joy, more love, more life.



Roula Najm
General Manager

Extracts from her speech at the seminar

We thank our friends who came from France for the seminar. Thank you for your faith in the founding project and thank you for bearing with us the concern for its realization.



Archbishop Jean-Pierre Cattenoz - Avignon, who participated as a speaker at the seminar. He was accompanied by Father Paco and Isabelle, from the missionary family "Dialogue of God".

Our friends from the Franciscan Brotherhood of Bitche Aloyse and Jeanine, Marie-Paule, Elizabeth, and Vincent, accompanied by Marie-Hélène and Bernadette.



Seminar “The Church, Mother and Educator”

The 23 and 24 of May, we held the seminar "The church mother and educator in its compelling responsibility to support the growth of the child of God limited by disability, in all stages of his life's journey."

On behalf of our young people with disabilities, and the big family of Anta Akhi , and the project Handicap and Life in Church, we wish to thank all our friends in and outside Lebanon Lebanon: through your prayers, your presence, your donations, you have actively contributed to its success. Thank you!



Seminar's issues in relation to what the church lives... Open questions ...

The Church, through baptism, is the mother of the child of God who has disability, until the end of his journey on earth. What is she doing to support its growth path as a child of God, to live within the Church, with us, among us, like us?

What prevents pastors to fulfill their responsibilities vis-à-vis all the children of God? Who ensures that the Church is, in the life of the poor, Mother and Teacher? Who is present to these children of God? Who is concerned by their growth throughout their lives?

Anta Akhi France... in Lebanon

In 2004, Hadi Antoun Founder and director of Anta Akhi France hears Yvonne, believes, agrees to live and share this challenge, this adventure with her. A spark of love for our youngsters lights in his heart!

After years of gratuity and generosity, a group of friends is formed. This mobilization has helped us and is still allowing us to continue in this adventure of love, hope and faith.

They were with our young people that day... they testify...

It is 11am. Several members of the team of Anta Akhi France with their families and their children arrive at the camp in Kfardebiane to share a picnic with all our youngsters and their accompanists. We were warmly welcome by the sound of the music and the cheerful voice of Walid, helped by our youngsters; it allowed us to feel at home from the start. Besides, no doubt, we're at home!

The site of the camp is beautiful, our youngsters are in great shape, the smell of the grill is attractive, the atmosphere is festive and friendly, all in a heavenly setting, under the pines and amidst the sound of cicadas. The excellent food is shared by everyone in a good mood that characterizes Anta Akhi. Then there are the songs, dances and traditional dabke that brings together, young and old.

While Hadi learned for the umpteenth time to dance the dabke, Joseph thinking he had escaped the dabke by filming (and ultimately no!), Charles admiringly contemplates the youngsters, Charbel dances with little Paul, Lea takes photos, Camille chases Julia, Diane accompanied by Zeina and Carla prepares timidly to get into the game of musical chairs; this game was won by our two interns from France who came to

Anta Akhi to help in this beautiful work. Congratulations and thank you Aurélie and Quitterie!

After that, Walid crushed

everyone in the game of rope, followed by a water balloon game degenerating into general naval battle! All under the benevolent applause of Souleima!

Then Maya and Roula gave voice to our youngsters. And the jolly band was listening carefully to all these beautiful words filled with emotions of welcome and gratitude.

The dessert is an opportunity to celebrate the birthday of our dear Jeannette, Hala and Leila, w el 3a2bel Miye (hopefully we'll celebrate 100 years)!

After, Samo distributed to all the notebooks she made with her friends, and Maya offered all children the traditional gifts of Anta Akhi.

Thank you everyone, Chabibé (youngsters) and accompanists, for this great dose of energy and hope that you give us at every visit. Your dedication is a gift from God and your cause is ours. No doubt, Carla leaves with the certainty of returning to the camp for a month next summer, to integrate this beautiful family! Vive Anta Akhi! You are in our hearts.

The team of Anta Akhi France



The summer camp, an appointment we all waited for!

Since the winter, Samo began to invite everyone she met, to join us in the colony! This long-awaited moment has finally arrived. Since July 8, our young people have moved to live around two months in the convent of Saint Georges Klaiat. Usually, we feel the magic of the early days, the joy of a change of scenery, a cool climate, a sense of freedom ... The first few days are the best! This is true, but the fact remains that for our youngsters, "everything was beautiful", outings, masses, food, quality time spent with their parents and siblings, welcoming visitors from France and Egypt, being relax in the convent ... Tony goes on to say: "For all that God sends by men, thank you! "

Sitting this afternoon at the convent, our youngsters started to talk about the best moments they lived in the summer camp. All are unanimous that the **horse riding** was the best; you should have seen the right and proud posture of Madonna, and the smile that filled Tony's face; some said "on horse we feel like "others"; we can do a lot with their help!"

A day designed by Dany drew plenty of positive feedback: **the day to "pay for everything"**! This interesting game was interesting to make our youngsters aware of the importance of financial management, the choice of priorities according to the available means, the sacrifice for each other, and the pleasure felt to manage resources in common. Practically, small teams were formed; they had to spend the entire day at the convent, spending *currency paper* for all services: food, water, entertainment, and even the entrance to the bathroom!!! The winning team is the one who managed to spend the least money ... Note that since only sleeping was not paid, some have taken advantage of the "system" to sit quietly ... They were absolutely right!

In our roundup, some liked the traditional activities, such as the **picnic** with the team and the youngsters, during which we welcomed members from Anta Akhi France, the **folk evening**, the **evening of old friends and team members!** The **Mass** during which the members of Set El Beit community renewed their commitment was also an important moment. During these times, it is the fact of being in this "big family" that attracts our youngsters and make them enjoy every minute. They are aware of this, and they give thanks for these moments.

All this, without forgetting times of prayer that were lived in peace and joy. In this context we visited Ayto, in the North, **the convent**



where St. Rafka lived;

beyond the fatigue of the day, Carole and Elie expressed their joy to be gone for the first time in

this place. Encouraged, Mia, Samo and Madonna have expressed their desire to visit more *saint* places in Lebanon...

Review of the summer camp? Family life with all that it entails as moments of joy and relaxation, but also fatigue. At the end of these two months, our youngsters are happy to see again their Home of Tenderness, their room, their bed. But they give thanks for all that has been lived and Rita R. so aptly put it: "I loved everything! That's the truth! There were difficulties but we surpassed them! I felt that Virgin Mary was with us. I asked Her to help me and she was there! I became stronger! "Even Melanie – who cannot talk – nodded her head when asked if the camp was beautiful. As for Marcelle, who is undergoing a significant regression due to her disability, she could only say in her touching and heartfelt way: "I love you all!"

To each and everyone, Thank you: to our youngsters who participated in all activities with joy, struggling against the regression due to disability; to the accompanists and the logistics team who was present with love despite the fatigue; to all those who worked behind the scenes; to the friends who came to spend beautiful moments with our youngsters; to all donors; and finally, a big thank you to Mary, *Set El Beit*, Queen of the Impossible who tenderly watches over each of us and helps us to always look to the One who is the source of all joy and all rest!



Aurélie and Quitterie – testimony of an "unforgettable lesson in life"

"The summer of 2014 will forever be to remember, because it was during this summer that we shared for one month, the lives of youth and accompanists at Anta Akhi, *You my brother*. We are two French volunteers who came to the summer camp as part of our studies, but especially to live a unique experience.

It was the first time that we lived with people with disabilities and we couldn't imagine receiving more than what we were going to give. Anta Akhi is not a shelter for these people; it's a family, a supportive one, attentive and present in every moment of life, for the people with disabilities and for able-bodied persons. We have learned to see the person and not the disability. The large capacity of feelings, brotherhood, faith in God, and trust in life, are an example to follow every day.

We accompanied our youngsters through their various daily needs: we helped giving them meals, toileting, etc. But we mostly learned to discuss with them, do things together, and talk about the place of disability in their lives.

Living in Anta Akhi is to understand that we are all equal in value as children of God. Living in Anta Akhi, is to understand that

each of us has a mission in life, whatever his physical and mental abilities. This vision has touched us a lot. With their smile, their wishes and their beautiful words to us, the youngsters

brought us a much more important support than just the one we provided. The youngsters needed our help for physical needs and we needed theirs to learn not to judge people by their appearance, to take care of others before ourselves, to share moments of joy. This experience has really helped us; it trained us for the rest of our lives, and taught us to replace things



according to their importance: what importance do I give to people's appearance? my actions and those of others? what sense would I give to my life?

We are very grateful for Anta Akhi's hospitality, for their trust in us. We thank all those we met for this unforgettable lesson in life. "

Initiatives of love

Rita, referent, asked Marianne: "What do you want to do, and don't have the chance to do?" Marianne replied: "Go to a restaurant and eat a burger". Rita: "And if I take you, would it make you happy?" Marianne: "But... and my friends? What would they eat?"

The idea caught on tilt! Why not fulfill the wishes of our youth? Devote time to one person at a time? And so it was!

Pierre chose to walk along the sea, see the sunset and then take a good dessert. Elie, his brother, saw a good movie, along with the essential popcorn, all topped off with a dinner followed by a delicious knéfé (sweet pancake with cheese). Madonna and Marianne have eaten a good burger and went to pray at St Elie Church. Samo, Aida and Lara had a picnic along the river. *Yes ... what we do "mechanically" every day our youngsters dream to live at least once in their life!*



Call

Dear friends, today we are asking for your generosity in purchasing a machine that is intended to diagnose and monitor a respiratory disease such as asthma, bronchial pneumonia, and cystic fibrosis ... This machine is very important for our young people, especially those who regress quickly because of their disability.

The total price is 4000 USD. Thank you in advance to mobilize friends with us to be able to buy the machine!

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 on communication@antaakhi.org

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With the glance of Yvonne