

Anta Akhi Newsletter

Serving a life of dignity for people with disability



September 2013



Before being a project for people with disabilities, Anta Akhi and the project Handicap and Life in Church, is first and foremost an ecclesiastical project that allows each individual to live as a son of the Father as a reflection of Jesus. It allows everyone to do so wherever he is, and whatever his state, responsibilities, or status is, so that we could all live together in peace, joy and love, as brothers. And say life is beautiful with you by my side.

Thus disability becomes a springboard to its holder, and throughout his life, he bears fruits, becomes a witness and transforms the man in each man.

Yvonne chami
Founder President

Dear friends,

Is it possible to live in peace with everyday's difficulties? As we perceive the present with all the complications linked to the economic, political, and social situation in Lebanon, we understand that we cannot move along with hope in our hearts without looking towards the Father. For insisting on focusing on the difficulties, the graveness of the problem, and the mere ways we poses to solve such issues will surely lead us to despair. However, if we turn our gazes to the ultimate source of love, we can confirm that it is possible to live in peace, possible to hope in a better future, possible to believe in the man and in his capacity to love and meet his brother's needs.

This summer the family of Anta Akhi was faced with a mighty challenge for we discovered infrastructural problems in its ground floor. The problems were of such great magnitude that we had to evacuate the local as soon as it was possible in May, in order for the primordial reparations to be completed before winter time. Such a task necessitated a huge budget that was not available to us for we are barely able to meet the monthly expenses foreseeable.

With the strength of the Holy Spirit, confident in Mary, *Set El Beit*, who can do the impossible that surpasses us, with the prayers of

our youth, and with the presence and mobilization of our friends, we were able to deal with this unexpected situation.

Dear friends, thank you! Thanks to each and every one of you for due to your aid we were able to raise more than half of the expenses in a relatively short delay. Together we can say, "yes!" it is possible to live in peace despite the difficulties. We can only be amazed that despite problems surpassing our capabilities as humans, Mary, Queen of the Impossible, is here, present, effective, telling us: "Do not let fear into your heart, I am your Mother, I carry you to my son's heart, I watch over you, I am with you, and I love you."



Roula Najm
General Manager

We are very pleased to have welcomed this summer...

- **Archbishop Jean-Pierre Cattenoz of Avignon** has graced us with his presence at Anta Akhi for the third consecutive year. His visit is a part of the preparations of the 2014 seminar holding for theme: "the Church Mother and Teacher". The Archbishop was accompanied by 4 women from his diocese who wanted to get acquainted with our lovely country and our association and who wanted to get acquainted with the art of living happily despite the difficulties.

- **Father Dino Gbebe** came from Togo for a month of training. This simple and content with life priest was sent by Bishop Nicodeme Barrigah. Father Gbebe came to Anta Akhi for the existential training.

- **Anta Akhi France:** alike each year, we are delighted to welcome members of the Anta Akhi France team, notably Dr. Hadi Antoun, head of the association. A convivial lunch followed the Mass held on the occasion of the feast of the Transfiguration in which our youth with disabilities and their life companions, who constitute the ferment of "Set El Beit" community, dedicated themselves to the virgin Mary.

- **Abir Bentoumi** a French volunteer of Algerian origins wanted to spend 2 weeks with our youth. Abir was rapidly integrated into our community life and enjoyed an experience that she will not forget anytime soon!



The summer camp : a coming back to the sources

In the monastery of Saint Georges in Kleiat's region of Mount Lebanon, the youth spent the months of July and August. At this relaxing place in Lebanon they enjoyed the weather and the beauty of the nature, making benefit of an amusing vacation that they deserved after a year well-spent at the "Home of Tenderness".

"As years pass, the challenges increase"... This is no ordinary slogan; this is the slogan of camp 2013. A slogan chosen by our youth with disabilities and the team of Anta Akhi who all together decided to give every person the chance to stop for a moment and think of the past days with all their sweet and difficult moments, thanking God for His givings, and working to grow with others on the path of faith and hope.

In parallel, our youth made benefit of the trips to their friends, to the beach, in picnics, at the restaurant, the boats factory, as well as the fish day since it was the first time they carry out this activity. In addition to this, they rejoiced as they received relatives, volunteers, scout members, organizations, former members from Anta Akhi, and the list goes on... The youth did not spend their days by themselves; instead they enjoyed their time with around 20 people from different ages who came regularly to help them, play with them, and have fun by giving from their hearts so that each one is happy! The atmosphere at the camp was really pleasant and for this reason, some members of the Anta Akhi team spent some nights at the camp to make benefit of their "vacation".

In addition to this, the camp left a good notion in the minds of all those who participated in it. Below are some details pertaining to certain events that took place in the aforementioned two months:

Visiting the places where we used to live before moving to the "Home of Tenderness". The visit brought back to our minds the beautiful stages of our life. From here on, the adventure began. We visited 3 places, but the most touching one of them was the visit we paid to Theresa and her husband who welcomed us at their house. While leaving, they told us: "You have played such an important role in our live, with Mary, Set El Beit; you gave so much!"

The meeting with former Anta Akhi members was full of memories and feelings, especially those who haven't visited us for the past 10 years. The meeting was held on the Our Lady of Mount Carmel's day. For this reason, a procession for Virgin Mary was held and it was followed by a mass celebrated by Archbishop Cattenoz, and a very pleasant evening!



The meeting with the youth who follow the "emergency" program and their parents made us live other amazing moments. At the end of the meeting, we all together enjoyed a joyful evening during which we sang and danced. At the end we assured the parents that they are in our hearts, and that we will always be united through prayers despite the distances.

Other activities that marked us? The annual folkloric evening, the Shawerma dinner prepared by Chef Fady and the fishing trip. Although we didn't catch more than 3 fish, the fishermen across us offered to share with us the fish they had. Fish for that evening's dinner was one of the best platters!

For all this, we are thankful for our Father's wonders in our lives, which allow us to discover our talents and put them at the service of others.

Small news

- It is the first time since 33 years that Fadi goes to the beach and not to the swimming pool. The team has done everything to help him get there. You should have seen his face!

- Jeita's grotto, the famous finalist to the natural wonders of the world, is not

adapted to persons with handicap! However, the team has carried some of our youth to go there! "Difficult? Yes, but our youth are worth it!"

- During the folkloric evening, a lady declared: "I feel that the ground dances with you and all the youth at Anta Akhi!"

- A special group came to visit us : it

included scouts from Lebanon, France, Jordan and Egypt. The girls spent a beautiful day, marked by a rallye paper...

- Gisele Eid, a friend writer, adapted her home just to receive our youth. At the program: pool, tasty lunch and a beautiful atmosphere! Thank you for this unforgettable day!



AIESEC's volunteers

They contacted us: "We are AIESEC, a youth association, managed by us. We are present in 124 countries with more than 86,000 members ... Are you interested in receiving volunteers from different countries of the world?". "Well of course!"... Numerous wanted to come, but five only have dared to experience a few weeks in an unstable country. They wanted to discover the Lebanon they heard so much about, and in the same time do something useful. Cherif, Mohammed and Meena came from Egypt, and Sophia from Germany as accompanists, and Khoulood came as a computer scientist from Tunis. Meena, the 20 year old social sciences student and Sophia the 20 year old politics and economics student share with us their impression.

"I can tell from my experience, that I've never seen anything like it in Egypt, said **Meena!** Instead of being "dumped" in an asylum, young people with disabilities living in Anta Akhi are well served and surrounded. They know they have the same value as any healthy person and this is a great thing! I understood the importance of spiritual guidance that helps to have a mental balance and helps the progress of every person and every work. Young people in Anta Akhi are happy to live and they do activities with joy, and are happy to learn! I was always looking forward to participating in cultural activities in order to expand my knowledge.

"The experience in Anta Akhi is a first! I learned not to look only for material stuff. I never thought of giving free time to others. It is true that I was giving alms but I never took the time to be there for those who needed. I think we need to pause, to take care of each other and thus spread the joy! When I was serving the youth and then be thanked with a smile I felt an indescribable joy. I thank the youth who helped me way more than I did! I show gratitude to the great team of Anta Akhi that knew how to manage their time: they knew when to party and when to be serious. They live in joy and they pass it to the youth when they make them feel that they are



here because they love them not for the sake of duty. I will surely come back to Lebanon and will pass by Anta Akhi to say hello. And who knows maybe I will find my future wife in Lebanon? "

Sophia, told us with a large smile: "I felt immediately at ease, as if I was in family. I was afraid to have "pity" for the young people, but it has never been the case because I saw that they are treated normally the way any of us will be treated! They have learned to live disability as a mission, and I think this is due to prayer.

Anta Akhi has much to offer, especially in its opening to the society where its youth go out on trips. It helps others to no longer ignore them in fear of blunder! I share with you an episode that really touched me. We were at the pool, and a lady looked at us puzzled. At one time she came to us, leaving her two daughters, and asks permission to take care of Barbara ... She spent the day with her, and at the end, exchanged the phone number. For me, this is a great lesson of integration! "In Germany we lack the gratuity, the smiles and the tenderness! It is so beautiful! "»



Stories of our youth and their life companions !

- Marie-Therese a pregnant accompanist, tells Samo: "Yesterday I went to the doctor?" Samo asked with enthusiasm:"What did he say?" "Marie-Therese replied:"I have a daughter!" Samo replicates sure of herself:" Yes, I know, I had asked the Virgin."

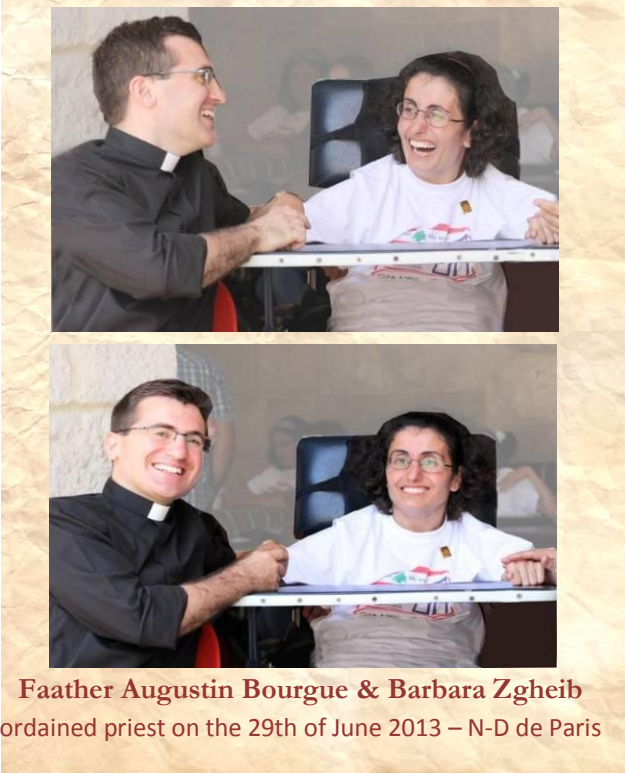
-Due to her regression in her disability, Marcelle has to eat stranded food since April 4. To help her accept this fact, Rachel her accompanist decided to eat also stranded food as a first step!

- Samo in bed does not want to get up to go to the bathroom at midnight. Jessica her life companion, did everything to persuade her, but in vain. Aida sleeping in a neighboring bed, hears the conversation, and comes up alongside her sister, giving her a hug. As Samo still resisted, Aida went to his feet, kissed her and finally won the battle: Samo went to the bathroom!

- Madonna was very sad because she was told she could not eat too many bananas! In the chapel, she prayed and wept ... Paul wanted to join his prayers to hers on his knees and offered to take a bread of life (phrases from the Gospel). Paul does not read ... Madonna either... But Paul, taking the bread of life, explains the phrase he took: "Jesus tells you he loves you very much!"

Father Augustin Bourgue... Again in Lebanon

He came to Lebanon as a seminarian in the summer of 2012. After a month of his ordination in the diocese of Paris - France , he comes to spending two weeks with our youth . Before leaving, the greatest gift Anta Akhi presented to him, was the prayer of Barbara who committed to carry the holiness of his life . Below Barbara's vow !



Faather Augustin Bourgue & Barbara Zgheib
ordained priest on the 29th of June 2013 – N-D de Paris

أبونا أوغستان (Augustin) ،
أنا بريارة، بقدّم حياتي لمريم ست البيت، ملكة المستحيل،
تأحمل قداسة حياتك، ككاهن يسوع الحي،
بصلاتي، بأوجاعي، بمسيرة حياتي.

Abouna Augustin,

Ana Barbara, b'addem hayā-ti la Mariam Set el Beit –
Malikat al Moustahil,
ta ehmol adā-sset hayé-tak ka-kā-hen Yassou' al hayy,
bi salā-ti, bi awjā-ii, bi massi-ret hayā-ti.

Father Augustin ,

**I, Barbara, put my life in the hands of
Mary, Set El Beit, Queen of the Impossible
to carry the holiness of your life,
as a priest of the living Jesus,
in my prayers, my pain and my life journey.**

Anta Akhi
5 août 2013

Date of my yearly consecration
Mary, Set el Beit, Queen of the Impossible

A little riddle!

Kiki is one of our youth with multiple disabilities. She understands, but cannot express in words. However, she manages to be understood, especially by the "yes" or "no." Our chef, Yehya, loves to please her and likes to know what she wants to eat. It is her life companion Marie-Therese, who is the link between Yehya and Kiki ! Guess what our young Kiki wants to eat!

- Do you want to eat Kiki? - Yes
- You want something special? - Yes
- What is its color? Can you show me? - Yes ... she shows her clothes.
- It is the yellow...
- A dessert? - No
- A savory dish? - Yes
- And the questions begin: Curry? Rice? No - Puffed potatoes? No - Cheese? No...

Sometimes Marie Theres thinks Kiki was wrong by showing the yellow! She suggests other dishes!
Kiki impatient: nooo ! Marie- Therese, who is out of ideas: pepsi? noooo... creme caramel? nooooo...
After 40 minutes of guessing and riddles, Marie- Thérèse guessed! And you dear reader, did you find it? Dig a little deeper...
Well, it was French fries!



Call

Dear friends, we appreciate the contribution of all our friends who helped us to rehabilitate and strengthen the structure of the Home of Tenderness, and those who have allowed us to live two months of summer camp, ensuring the cost of renting! Through your prayers and your donations, we were able to collect, until August 31, the sum of \$110,315.00. We still need \$49,128.00. Thank you for participating as you can (prayers and donations) to this site! For everything you do and everything you are, thank you!!

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