



A description report about the 17th summer camp activities 2011

Introduction

The annual summer camp in the center is one of the main and important activities in which all the administrative and functional staff put all their efforts and experiences to make it succeed and to achieve all the requirements and goals in order to support the children and their families.

The first summer camp took place in the first year of establishing the center in 1994. Then the Center annually held a camp and now reached its 17th summer camp. This year the summer camp started on June 25th and ended with its closing ceremony on 23th July. During this ceremony the children performed and presented the activities of the summer camp.

The following aspects will give an overview about the goals of the summer camp and its activities and structure.

1.) Goals

- Physical and emotional expression through the various games and activities.
- Enhance reading and listening skills to children and stimulate them on reading and searching in the library.
- Develop the children's creative skills through music, arts and craft activities.
- Enhance the concept of the positive initiative, involving volunteers in the work and focus on environmental issues: taking care of the center's environment (gardens, trees and the whole center) and keep it beautiful and clean.
- Behavior modification to reduce violence among the children through individual and group meetings and interactive activities.
- Children awareness in accepting each other, especially awareness towards disabled children, to combine the children altogether in different activities and events to achieve their physical and emotional support with each other and to enhance their self-esteem.
- Discover children who are suffering from educational, social and health problems and cooperation with their parents to set a plan for each child.
- Introduce children to other places and organizations during several field visits, introduce them to the places and give an overview over the history.

2.) Overview of the 17th summer camp

155 children shared in the summer camp, altogether 95 boys (61.3%) and 60 girls (38.7%). The age group was between 6 and 12 year olds. They came from different geographical areas: 68 children from Bethlehem (43.9%), 38 children from the refugee camps (24.5%) and 49 children from east and south villages in Bethlehem (31.6%).

The children have been divided in five different age groups, including boys and girls together. The groups were named Gaza, Jaffa, Safed, Alled and Nazareth. Different daily activities took place according to the daily schedule that was prepared before the start of the summer camp.

The summer camp was supported by volunteers, mostly members of the Hakaya band, under the supervision of the Ghirass staff.

3.) Summer camp weekly schedule

The summer camp took place five days a week with Friday and Sunday off due to the religious days. Three days a week the children stayed inside the Center for activities, one day per week a trip to a swimming pool was organized and one day a trip to the nature in the surroundings of Bethlehem took place.

4.) Overview of the daily activities

Art section (under the supervision of the teachers Abeer Albatha and Akram Abu Alia, with the volunteer Jihad Abusrur)

According to the daily schedule all participants in the summer camp shared activities in all the sections. The art section was about free art, expression art and color mixing, also hand craft from cartoons, plastic and paper. The children drew on these materials and colored them with lovely forms. An art gallery was created in the Al Feneiq hall in the closing ceremony to present the results from this section to the parents and family members.



Drama section (under the supervision of the teacher Areej Faraj, with the volunteer Rana Sajadya)

All children were trained on dancing, sport, acting and movement activities, according to their gender. They also performed the dances at the closing ceremony.

Games section (under the supervision of the teacher Samar Oweyna, with the volunteer Ibraheem Oways)

In this section the children played, learnt new games and had several group activities under the supervision of the teacher. They played law games such as chess, zeno, Marrakech and the pluck. The children called them law games because they depend on specific laws and rules. The children also played mental games such as puzzle, Lego, movement games and popular games.



Library section (under the supervision of the teacher Sa'eda Harbe, with the two volunteers Noor Shweaky and Hiba Ilzghayyer)

The library is one of the main sections in the Center and played an important role in the summer camp. The librarian did many activities with the children such as reading stories, cultural competitions, writing summaries of certain stories, discuss the story with the whole group, make a wall paper about the migration cities and about other literature subjects.



Music and Dabka section (under the supervision of the teacher Maher Derbaney and Sama' Ilzghayyer, with the two volunteers Anan Fsesey and Yazan Skakya)

The children had been trained on five songs such as the alphabetical song, “wish I am a kite” and the cultural Palestinian song. The children performed these songs in the closing ceremony.

Psychological and social support (under the supervision of the social worker Ayed Hoshya, with the volunteer Rasha Khater)

The activities of this department were combined with the music department. The activities concentrated on team building, leader skills, violence, time organization, children rights, communication skills and group activities.

Beside these activities there were the sport activities in the morning and during the closing activities each day.

The social worker was also responsible for the trips and he wrote a report about the camp which was published on Ma'an News, Jerusalem newspaper and on the website of the center. Moreover he supported the children who were in need of special help and contacted their parents to follow up the children's situations. Some children had problems such as behavioral problems or health problems (sight, hear and pronunciation). They were transferred to specialized centers if

required. This section was also responsible for individual counseling and work with the children if they had a conflict with each other to modify their behavior.



Computer section (under the supervision of the teachers Jihad Hammad, Shireen and Melanie Reinke)

Each one of the supervisors was in his/ her place according to the schedule to organize and control this department. The children learnt in this department how to start and close the computer safely, how to enter the internet and they got educational information especially from Google and the YouTube web sites. They also played games and learnt how to print by using Microsoft office word.

Documentation: Melanie Reinke and children from different groups

Melanie documented the daily activities during the summer camp, together with a group of chosen children from the camp. The children took pictures from the activities in the Center. Also the outside trips and the closing ceremony were documented. Several pictures were published on the Ghirass website and were used for the articles for Ma'an News and Jerusalem Newspaper. All pictures from the camp activities were presented on a slide show during the closing ceremony at Al Feneiq hall.



The following outside activities were organized:

- 1- A trip to the YMCA in Beit Sahour: Painting activities, singing, cultural competition for all children
- 2- Two trips to Cremisan: Games and different activities like singing and dancing for all children
- 3- Three swimming trips to Dighol pool in Beit Jala for all children
- 4- Beit Jala modern library: three visits with altogether 96 children (three groups)
- 5- Nativity church: two visits for four groups, altogether 100 children
- 6- Closing ceremony on 23th July 2011 at Al Feneiq hall for all children and family members

During this ceremony the children showed and presented the activities and skills they have been trained on during the whole summer camp. The following activities show the variety of the presentation:

- The director of the Center welcomed the audience and thanked all who participated and worked in the camp.
- All children did performances on the stage according to what they have been trained.
- There was an exhibition of the art and craft works and paintings from the art section.
- The Dabka band performed with singing, dancing and playing drums.

Note: An article about this activity was also published on Ma'an News.

Evaluation of the summer camp activities

Ghirass staff evaluated the activities of the summer camp on daily basis and discussed the participation, acceptance and feedback from the children. Every day, the problems that occurred were discussed with the whole team and solutions were developed together. Also the parents and family members gave feedback to the Center.

The closing ceremony of the summer camp was evaluated with following results:

- Many of the parents were very impressed of the ceremony as they show that the children enjoyed the performing.
- The children represented the camp's activities in a good way. Most of the children attended. It was the day with the less daily absents.
- The volunteers, mostly from the Hakaya band, showed great commitment to the activities and performed well.
- The main supervisors made a high effort to succeed their plans and goals. This was shown clearly during the ceremony show.

The main difficulties and challenges in the summer camp

- Some problems appeared with the children such as problems in hearing, attention, violence and other psychological problems. The social worker contacted the parents to follow up the children.
- Some kids came late on the daily morning activity.
- The hot days during the summer camp.