

# Friends of the Lazarus Home for Girls Newsletter

**Christmas 2010**

**UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE ITS LABOURERS BUILD IN VAIN.**

**Wishing you all a very blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year.**

## **A letter from the Chair of Trustees**

Dear Friends,

Change can sometimes be viewed as negative or as a threat. However, Jesus talked a lot about change. He spoke of new birth, new life, and a new covenant. Change can be exciting, challenging and renewing. Bearing this in mind, changes have taken place at the rented Lazarus home in Bethany.

Following a phone call from Samar Sahhar, co-founder of the home, we were concerned to hear of the children being removed from the present home by the Social Services. As my wife and I were already in the process of leaving for our annual visit, we made arrangements to meet the General Manager of the NGO's and Public Affairs within the Palestinian National Authorities Ministry of Interior. It was during this meeting that we expressed our concerns at the reports that the 'Friends' were receiving. A further group meeting was immediately held with the Minister of Social Affairs at the Ministers Office in Ramallah. As the attached letter confirms, corrections to the current Lazarus Financial and Administrative status need to be made to comply with Charitable Society Law. The agreed outcome of the this meeting was "until the new board of trustees is elected and ratified and the new construction of the Lazarus Home is complete (for occupation for the present girls and staff), the Minister will take the decision to temporary board the girls in Bethany." A letter from Fadwa Shaer, General Manager of NGO's confirms the above decision as a temporary measure and the girls will not be moved into any other institution, home, or other building until the new Lazarus home under construction has been completed to accommodate the present number of girls and staff. The 'Friends' have access to the girls for monitoring and evaluation.

On this completion the girls will be returned with immediate effect back into the new home and to the newly elected board of trustees.

In previous editions of our newsletter, you will recall the mention of tremendous support from McCabe Educational Trust ('MET') and McCabe Travel in the procurement of funds raised specifically for the construction of the new Lazarus Home's completion. It is with great sadness and dismay to read the posting on (MET) website 'Lazarus Home in Crisis', which states they have lost faith in the 'Friends' ability to deliver this project and have terminated their relationship with the 'Friends'.

The 'Friends' board of trustees now wish to clarify the present situation.

You may recall there was meeting held in York with two trustees from MET, where I was pleased to report an offer of £300,000 from MET was made, albeit conditional on the 'Friends' filling the funding gap of £200,000 by the end of September 2010. Due to the time

scale, this task was impossible to meet. As a result, the 'Friends' made a counter offer. This included the contractor and architect agreeing to carry out £200,000 worth of work but defer payment until funds were available (no interest or conditions attached). In this regard, the 'Friends' could give no guarantees, but were confident (as evidenced by the additional payments that have been made below) that such funds would be forthcoming. In addition, a sealed and signed letter from the Jerusalem Governor confirming his support was also provided to MET.

See also the further letter from the Governor (all documents referred to are on our website).

Sadly, the above was deemed insufficient by MET and its offer of further funding was withdrawn.

This was clearly a major blow, but the Friends were dismayed to find that not only was MET withdrawing its support, but, via a series of actions, were seemingly seeking to undermine the 'Friends' work. Apart from verbal statements made by the personnel authorised by MET, the Friends received several calls from distressed supporters about the above article on MET's website, which states "In our opinion there are insufficient funds available to complete the new home and the 'Friends' have made it clear that our involvement in the planning and construction is not welcome".

The 'Friends' find MET's actions both distressing and inaccurate. In particular:

- In terms of the planning and construction of the building, our charity's architect was appointed by the 'Friends' board of trustees back in 2005 well before the involvement of MET.
- The 'Friends' have in the last months paid an additional £165,000 towards the construction costs.
- As indicated above, the 'Friends' have the support of the construction team and the Authorities. As such, the Friends remain confident that the home will be completed as planned.

The 'Friends' vision and mission statement is and has always been the health and wellbeing of the girls and staff. We are saddened and disappointed to think that, coupled with the steps the Friends have taken above, had MET's funding been provided, the then home would have been completed for this Christmas.

Despite the above setback, the 'Friends' hope the above represents merely a 'blip' in our relations with MET and that it rejoins the project in order to provide any funds it has raised from clients for the building project. If not, then with your fantastic support we press forward in Christ to the opening day for the home.

As always we ask for your continued support and prayers.

In Christ.

Alan Anderson Chair of Trustees.

## Lazarus Home for Girls Board Approval

**We are pleased to announce the Palestinian Ministry of Interiors has now officially approved the new board of trustees. The appointments of the trustee's positions within the full governing board will be elected on the 13th December 2010.**

## Construction Report

I am delighted to confirm the new windows have now been manufactured and will be installed with the internal plaster work which is now nearing completion. All the electrical wiring to the ground, first and second floors has now been completed. The floor tiling for the above areas have now been placed on order and work will commence on 13th December 2010. Work is proceeding beyond our expectations and we are confident the girls and staff will be relocated early in the New Year.

The Minister has given her full support to the charity and will officially open the new home.

## Sponsorship News

As you will have read in the above report, the Lazarus Girls are temporarily boarding at the Zahra Home until the new Lazarus Home is ready for occupation. During my recent visit, I visited the girls at the Zahra home with the lawyer and representatives from the Palestinian Social Welfare Department. The building is only two years old and is to a high standard. The girls are also being well cared for during their temporary stay. The Social Welfare representatives and the Director of the home made it quite clear that they only take in young orphaned girls; they do not take in girls from broken homes or girls with challenges.

All the girls were well-presented and accompanied us on our tour of the building.

The girls are all sleeping together and attending school. There are facilities for homework and an outside play area as well as a TV and leisure room. The staffs of the Lazarus and the 'Friends' have, within reason, open access to visit the girls for monitoring and evaluation purposes. The 'Friends' is still forwarding sponsorship for the benefit of the Lazarus Girls.

We are all looking forward to the day when the Lazarus Girls can move into to the new building.

## Treasurers Report

I have, as requested by the Lazarus board of Trustees, forwarded, via International Payment to the charity's appointed architect, £165,000 to further the internal works in readiness for the girl's long awaited arrival into their new home. The International Sponsorship Payments to the home are still providing support for the girls and their well-being.

During this difficult climate of uncertainty, your continued support and donations continue to overwhelm the charity's trustees. We all extend to you our deepest gratitude, as without your help and support we would not be able to provide the girls with support and love.

## Role of Honour

Belated Ruby Wedding Celebrations are extended to **Mr and Mrs Mackness**, whose gifts were turned into funds for the Lazarus Home. A vast amount was raised and this has now been forwarded out for the building project. We all say a very big thank you.

Well done to **Sylvia Austin and her team**, whose coffee morning raised £50.00.

Thanks go to **Eileen Russell** Eileen gave talk on the home to one of her local church groups and raised £35.00.

The trustees also extend our gratitude to all those who have donated so generously, but wish to remain anonymous.

If your church or group require a presentation on the work at the Lazarus Home for Girls in Bethany (no cost incurred) please contact the registered office.

Love in Jesus.

Shirley Anderson, Hon. Treasurer

## Prayers for the Homes and for peace in the Holy Land

They can be used as biddings in Church Services; for expansion into extemporary prayer; and as themes for meditation.

**Mondays** - Give thanks for the Jeel Al Amal Boys' Home and School, for its excellent education of boys. We pray for the Head, Rana, the teachers and for improvement in the boys' accommodation. We also thank you and pray for the education of our older girls at government schools in Bethany. We thank you for the service of Samar and pray for her work and witness.

**Tuesdays** - Pray for the Lazarus Home for Girls in Bethany; for Shamarim, the manager, and the housemothers; for abused children; and that the administrative problems of the home may be tackled by the newly elected Board. We thank you that we have now received the Licence for the home from the Palestinian Authority.

**Wednesdays** - Give thanks for the near completion of the new building for the Lazarus Home and we pray for putting in the final touches, so that the girls may be able to move into their new home in the New Year.

**Thursdays** - Pray too for the fitting and furnishing of the proposed Medical Centre and for the willingness of the Palestinian Authority to cooperate in running this place of healing, for the benefit of children in the neighbourhood.

**Fridays** - For the peace witness of Samar and her Jewish women friends; for the wider reconciliation of Jews, Christians and Moslems in the Holy Land, in this country and in the US. For lasting peace and justice in Israel, the Gaza strip, the Palestinian Territories and the Lebanon.

**Saturdays** - Pray for the overcoming of problems caused by the wall and Jewish Settlements. We pray for the Prime Minister of Israel in talks with Hamas and the West Bank, arranged under the auspices of Hilary Clinton.

David Attfield