

# AN EDUCATIONAL MONTH



**S**alaam and Peace be to you from Jerusalem! It has been a busy few weeks since I returned from my time in the States, and an

exciting time for the ELCJHL Director of Education Office!

## BUILDING HOPE IN RAMALLAH

First, on February 7th, in Ramallah, we all gathered to lay the cornerstone for a new building for the Evangelical Lutheran School of Hope. It was really fun to gather with both students and teachers at the new site and literally cement in the new cornerstone.

The school choir was present, as well as students in traditional Palestinian dress, as well as dignitaries, including the Palestinian Authority Prime Minister, Dr. Salam Fayyad, and the European Representative, Mr. Christian Berger, along with pastors and principals and lay members from the ELCJHL.

The Evangelical Lutheran School of Hope is an outgrowth of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hope in Ramallah. The Congregation was founded in 1954 in response to the needs of Palestinian Lutheran refugees who had fled to the Ramallah area during the 1948 al-Nakba (the catastrophe) war. The school began eight years later in 1966 as a kindergarten with ten students and two teachers. Each year the school added one more grade, and graduated its first Tawjihi (grade 12, and senior year in Palestine) class in 1979.

Since its beginning, the doors of Hope School have been open to the community of Ramallah regardless of “religion, gender, capabilities, or financial/social status.”

And the Evangelical Lutheran School of Hope has continued to grow through the years, and currently serves 454 students—22% of whom are Christian, and 78% of whom are Muslim—and employs 38 teachers and support staff. The population of Hope School has been

outgrowing its present facilities in recent years, and is, therefore, very excited for this new building project that will enable Hope to grow to serve more than triple the number of students in the Ramallah area.

What an amazing ministry this school is—I’m so glad to be even a tiny part of it!

## FUN WITH ENGLISH

And then, on February 12th, participants and cheerleaders from each of our ELCJHL Schools gathered for a day full of English, as Dar al-Kalima Evangelical Lutheran School in Bethlehem hosted the fourth annual ELCJHL English Language Bowl.

The day began with pre-bowl pizza and games. The only trick was, the students had to use their English language skills—and only their English language skills. After this, participants split off to receive final instructions, and the cheer teams left to prepare their English language cheers.

In the first round, participants presented a dramatic reading of a prepared text, with marks given passed on pronunciation, eye contact and body language, as well as vocal expression. 8th grade students read from Katherine Peterson’s Bridge to Terebithia, 9th grade students from Louis Sachar’s Holes, and 10th grade students from Rick Riordan’s The Curse of the Titan, the third book in the Percy Jackson and the Olympians series.

In the second round, each student had 10 minutes to prepare a freestyle speech on one of two topics picked from a hat, ready for a follow-up question from the judges. Marks were added for organization of ideas, content and grammar.

Each and every one of the students did so well, and we were all so proud, but, most importantly, everyone involved said it was a great day!

You’d be amazed at our students—I know I am every day! Students in each of our schools begin studying English in grade one, or even before, and by the time they reach middle school they’re even beginning to study other courses in the English language. And that’s on top of their German language studies that begin in the 3rd grade.

You may be even more amazed to realize that our students reach fluency in English with only a very small English-language library available to them. But, that is something that the ELCJHL is trying to build upon.

At the beginning of this year, after many hours of research by our ELCJHL teachers, the ELCJHL launched the ELCJHL Libraries Project: Opening a World of Possibilities. The aim of the project is to grow vibrant and educational

English-language libraries in each of our four schools—book by book.

## BOOK BY BOOK

And the ELCJHL is inviting you to be a part of this. How? Well, that’s the easy part!

The ELCJHL has already picked out the books and put them online. All you have to do is visit our online store at: [www.elcjhl.org](http://www.elcjhl.org) > Support our Ministries > ELCJHL Libraries Project, or directly at Amazon: [astore.amazon.com/e0a08-20/about](http://astore.amazon.com/e0a08-20/about) Browse, buy, and send your book(s) to: *ELCJHL Libraries Project* Wartburg Theological Seminary 333 Wartburg Place Dubuque, IA 52003

Volunteers from Wartburg, the ELCJHL, and people coming to visit the Holy Land will do the rest in getting the books you have given into the libraries of our schools, and into the imaginations of our students.

And, on top of your gift of a book, with every purchase, a donation is given to ELCA Global Mission Missionary Support for the Middle East.

So, as you begin your Lenten journeys, or search for the perfect present for someone this spring, I invite you to join with the ELCJHL in making this not only an educational month, but an educational year!

*Peace,*

*PS: for more ‘out-of-the-box’ giving ideas:*

*Elly*

Pastor Elly McHan

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, Communication Assistant

Consider giving directly to ELCA Missionary Sponsorship <http://goo.gl/oHt91>

Or to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal: [www.elca.org/hunger](http://www.elca.org/hunger)

Browse the ELCA Good Gifts catalogue [www.elca.org/goodgifts](http://www.elca.org/goodgifts)

Donate funds to make a difference in the current Crisis in Egypt <http://goo.gl/CRIZh>

Or continued Haiti Earthquake Relief <http://goo.gl/fQA8E>

Or find a creative way to give back in your own community or in your own way!