



My First Visit to Lebanon

"This Beqaa land of "milk and honey" is still lush and productive and the people we met are warmly welcoming but sadly, Lebanon has been economically devastated. Access to basic needs like taking out your own money from a bank or being able to buy gasoline to fill your car, or even being able to afford food or medicine for your family has become nearly impossible for most people. Smooth infrastructures managed by a just government have seemingly become a luxurious dream.

But even though they too are affected, there is a bright spot of hope! Together, For the Family has two centers around Zahle where Syrian refugees, who have lost everything are embraced as family.

At House of Sara, I loved those Syrian children, living in neighboring tents, are given access to computer education, English lessons, and skill training in woodworking and needlework. And because, after all, they are still kids, Play Station and Football on the newly constructed soccer field provide strategy and exercise. Each child also receives a hot meal each day and about 100 or more poor families receive food packets each week.

At the other TFF center, I got to work with the leaders of the children's program, the cosmetology school, the agricultural training, bakery, and sewing school. Some of the women are Lebanese and the others are Syrian refugees but I was so impressed with their level of education and honesty in sharing their experiences. Izdihar did a beautiful job of interpreting for me. Because she knows each of them do well, she could frame the words to target their specific needs within the context of my teachings from Unlocking Your Design business training. We talked about how each of us has been individually designed and equipped with important assets to help meet family and community needs. Then I shared my simple 5 Pocket accounting/budgeting system for managing small business or even personal finances. At the end of the first class, they were eager to learn more so we scheduled another day to discover their own personalities and ways to handle conflict when working together. Product development exercises gave us a chance to create new samples together. Even though it is not common for women to go into business here they felt that if they did, it would give them a positive and empowering influence in their family and community. I am SO proud of them and all that TFF offers in the name of Jesus."

Lorelei VerLee
Founder of Creative Women of the World



Caring for Babies

This year, the number of newborn babies that we care for has been increased from 23 to 83! It was almost a miracle! Special thanks go to our supporters who believed in this crucial ministry. Needless to report that providing the babies with their basic necessities was a real challenge as Lebanon faces a shortage of babies' milk and medicines. However, through our network of friends we were able to provide the needs for our babies. We are also grateful to God because this ministry is also directed to help the mothers to cope with life's challenges and to share with them the Good News!



A Joyful Graduation!

A very special day to our students is their graduation day! It is one of the ceremonies that they will always cherish in their life. It is an opportunity given to them, making them feel special and have achieved a landmark even at the start of their life. This semester 12 students aged 6-10 graduated. The children and their teachers worked very hard to reach this day. But their journey with TFF will not end here. In the foreseen future we will have intensive classes once every month so they can keep up their good work and stay encouraged to continue their education when they are ready to be admitted to a formal school.



Your hands matter!

In the midst of many challenges that Lebanon as a country is facing and as we serve the Syrian refugees in Beqaa Valley who face a tough present and an uncertain future, we, Together, For the Family, staff, and board feel much exhaustion, tiredness, and helplessness. However, at such times I do recall the incident when the people of God in the Old Testament were facing a major battle with the Amalekites. Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill with Moses. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites would prevail, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites prevailed. When Moses' hands grew tired, Aaron and Hur took a stone and put it under Moses and he sat on it, and then Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands so Israel would prevail (Exodus 17:8-16). I am deeply grateful to God for many sisters and brothers around the world who are taking stones to lift us up and who are holding our hands so we can continue demonstrating the love of Christ in action and we keep on fighting the evils of violence and injustice. Your hands matter! Together, we will win the battle by God's grace!