

Your Neighbour from Hong Kong



What is a lively bunch of teenagers from Hong Kong doing in Taibeh, Israel? In June, a Christian youth group from Hong Kong spent a memorable day at the Alkhaimah Education Center (www.alkhaimah.org). This after-school learning center was established by Saeed Azbarga, a Beduoin resident of Taibeh and the director of Alkhaimah- Association for Education & Development, in response to the crushing need of his community for education opportunities.

The Beduoin community in Taibeh has one of the highest drop-out rates at high school level, with almost no females finishing school at high school level. Already by eighth grade many youth will have stopped all formal education. Alkhaimah's learning center aims to strengthen the students at elementary school level by providing after-school lessons in Arabic, Hebrew, English and Maths. In his center he encourages parents to get involved in their children's education and tries to help bridge the huge generational gap between the older and younger generation.

The older generation came from a nomadic tent-dwelling life in the southern desert area of Israel – Tel Al-Malah. In the 70's when Israel gave the Sinai to Egypt, some Beduoin from the Negev were resettled by the government to other cities. This enormous adjustment from a life-style that was based on agriculture and livestock to an urban way of life is being felt especially by

the up and coming generation. There are many needs in the Beduoin community in Taibeh; although it is one of the largest neighbourhoods in this 100% Arab city, it is one of the poorest and most neglected, with a lack of basic infrastructure such as running water, sewage systems, proper housing, dependable electricity and basic health care services. However, Saeed believes that education will be the most effective way of helping his community move forward and deal with the new challenges facing them.

During their day at the Alkhaimah education center the young people from Hong Kong were given the opportunity to paint a wall mural with the Beduoin children, they performed a drama of the Good Samaritan and enjoyed a time of singing with the children. The children at the learning center had a taste of Chinese culture and enjoyed the small gifts the young people had prepared for them. The Hong Kong youth experienced the hospitality and warmth of the bedouin community and were able to understand some of the real struggles they are facing.

Alkhaimah Association for Education & Development is establishing learning centers in other villages and cities that also have beduoin communities; Daboria, Kalansawah, Mgableh, Ein Mahil and Hura (Bedouin village in the South). During the school summer holidays he ran an intensive English camp in Daboria village and welcomed different groups of tourists to join in and have a fun day with the children.



The Guests from Hong Kong



Preparing for drawing on the wall



Painting



























کون ہے فریسی؟

Who is my neighbour?







