

# SPRINGBOARD Girls' Schools Newsletter



May 2008

- Building more than 15 school fences
- Adding and planting gardens to more than 10 schools
- Enhancing some schools to be more compatible with the behavior of the surrounding community
- Monitoring all the schools and act positively and quickly to any problems that may occur
- Finishing the maintenance of all the 201 schools
- Spending time with the communities around the schools to explain more the importance of the school and trying to give them some responsibilities
- Introducing the girls of Fayoum to new kind of music – 7 Concerts



... More happiness, more confidence, greater intelligence, deeper friendships, and the ability to achieve any great goal  
Awlad Ahmad School - Minia

Dear Donor and Supporter,

None of us will ever forget how hard and challenging it was to build the 200 schools and looking back at those times makes all of us feel happy and proud. Back then none of us thought there will be an even more challenging job to do afterwards by keeping all these schools working, active, sustained, looking good and achieving its purpose to the communities. Some of our schools started off promising and went all the way along doing well with developing and improving the girls' life's more and more each day, those schools had the support of their communities, donors and supervisors each in his own way.

Other schools started off with an uncertainty of success, we did and still do many efforts to help them reach the goal. Communities and villagers are always our point of focus to work with, trying to increase the sense of ownership of the schools to them, for they are the people these schools are made to help. Also care, support and attention not only by the communities but also by their donors and supporters will help developing and improving these girls.



## Musical Experience

The Egyptian Philharmonic Society invited Springboards Girls Friendly schools to take part in their project "The Orchestra: A Guest in Schools". This program aimed at fostering interest in music in general and in classical music in particular to our girls. It aimed at exposing them to the culture of arts and creativity. The artistic content of the program were composed and arranged especially for children. Apache sponsored seven performances during the calendar year of 2008 at the Cultural Palace in Fayoum City! We had four concerts and still three to go!

The Girls are having an amazing time, for most of them it's the first time to leave their village and the first time to see an Orchestra, instruments and hear classical music...

Moreover, this opportunity was used to exhibit some of the art work and incredible products produced by the girls. The girls produced and presented amazing work. This is not just a great cultural experience for the girls, but also a great tool to showcase the value of Girls Education.



The Egyptian Philharmonic Society introducing to the Girls' Friendly School Project its program "The Orchestra: a guest in schools"

## More Pictures from the Concert



Girls' art work



Audience

## Girls' Education Initiative

UNICEF a major role player in the girls' education initiative in Egypt came for the Launch of the Documentation of Girls' Education in Egypt with The National Council of Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) under the leadership of Mrs. Suzzane Mubarak; First Lady of Egypt. Many UNICEF people from around the world came and visited two Springboard Schools in Fayoum on the 25th of February 2008. Girls and teachers were very representable, smiling and were very confident interacting with these guests (an accomplishment in itself for these once shy young girls). They also showed their work and presented it beautifully. On the 26th of February, the Launch of the Documentation itself where Mrs. Suzzane Mubarak, Ministers, UN Regional Director, UNICEF Directors and many others were there, and during the presentation Apache's role was highly recognized and appreciated. They stated that Springboard was a major player and still is - in developing, helping and maintaining the schools. Moreover, there was a Choral group of girls performing in front of all these people, these girls were the Girls of one of Springboard Schools in Giza "Om El Awlad School-G03" where its donor goes and spends time with them and encourages them to sing and dance. This gave them confidence and self-esteem, and by that they were able to perform wonderfully.

Also, there was a girl that was recognized by Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak because she achieved the highest scores among all Minia Schools and this girl turned out to be one of Springboard Girls "Awlad Ahmad School- M08" where its donor also helped and always motivated the teachers and girls. This donor was different in the way of supporting; he found out that the teachers were paid 25 dollars per month, so he decided to reward the teachers periodically. The teachers felt appreciated and recognized which made them want to prove to their Donor that the school is up to his expectations.

More success stories are there with more help and support from all involved parties...

"The key to success lies not in combating or looking down on the communities where girls are being denied access to schooling, but in valuing them and the girls and listening to them and in winning them over and mobilizing them behind the same ideal" Dr. *Ronald G. Sultana*, Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Malta and Director UNESCO Chair in Mediterranean Education Studies.



UNICEF visitors interacting with the girls



"I remember I felt like I was going to heaven... going to school for the first time. Looking beyond the walls of my home! Learning is just great!" A girl from El Gomhoryiah School - F107

# A Donor's Note – By Christine Patton

Visiting a Springboard School for Girls is always a Special Experience.

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*“Education is for the majority of girls simply the way to character improvement and a way to reach higher goals”*

Over the past several years, I have visited a growing number of Springboard's One Room Schools and I have found that some things are consistent with every other visit – there is always a warm welcome from the teachers and the students, who are proud of their school and their accomplishments, whether the school is one day old or long-established. The teachers stand and point out the work that has been done, calling on the girls who sit quietly at their places, bright-eyed and attentive. The walls are covered with examples of the artwork of the students, with alphabets and animal cutouts, sometimes with photographs of the students or other visitors. The blackboard has a message written on it to greet the visitors and make them welcome.

Often there are curious observers outside, looking in the wide windows, sometimes the Elders of the village who watch over the school, perhaps the donor of the land that the school sits on, or a parent of one or more of the students – perhaps all of these. There are usually a group of boys outside, who watch intently and who seem to want to be on the inside.

But every school is unique, and so every visit is different. When I visited the Hanna Habib School, in Youssef El Seddiq in Fayoum, I visited a school that I had seen on its first day, two years before, and now it was going into its third year – what a difference! Again, some things had not changed – very importantly, almost all of the girls were those who had started three terms before – the retention rate was very high.

The teachers were the same as well, -- Hoda Fathy and Soad Shabaan were familiar, friendly faces for me. The familiar one-room design was cool and airy, the tables and chairs in the grouping for the four work areas, everything impeccably tidy and clean.

It was the atmosphere in the school itself – there was warmth and a sense of confidence that came from each of the students as they shook hands with me and greeted me, some in English. We discussed the achievements of the past two years, and the objectives that they had targeted were striking – Teamwork, Cooperation, manners, in addition to reading, mathematics and handicrafts. It was clear to me that these girls, guided by their teachers, were gaining a strong sense of their individual potentials, and their capabilities as a group. The self esteem and delight in the benefits of work done well was palpable, and the girls were able to share with their visitors that day the sense that learning was now an activity that they pursued with passion. I was overwhelmed by the rapid progress that they had made, and resolved to work harder myself to find ways to give these girls, and the thousands like them in other schools, more opportunity to grow.



Christine Patton with the girls of her donated school Hanna Habib F08

Dear Donor,

Thank you for your support of this project. Please feel free to contact us if you are planning a trip to Egypt and want to visit your school. Also, please feel free to communicate with us regarding any information you may need about your school. The underprivileged girls of Egypt thank you for your support and for enabling their dreams to become reality.

*The Girls' Schools Team*  
*Salma Zaky, Youssef Youssef, Haytham Gamal*

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Girls' Schools May 2008