

YOUR GIFTS BRING US **HOPE**

"The scholarship has been a lifeline for me, providing not only financial support but also a sense of hope and opportunity. If anything, the adversity we've faced has reinforced our commitment to our education and our resolve to make a positive difference in our communities."

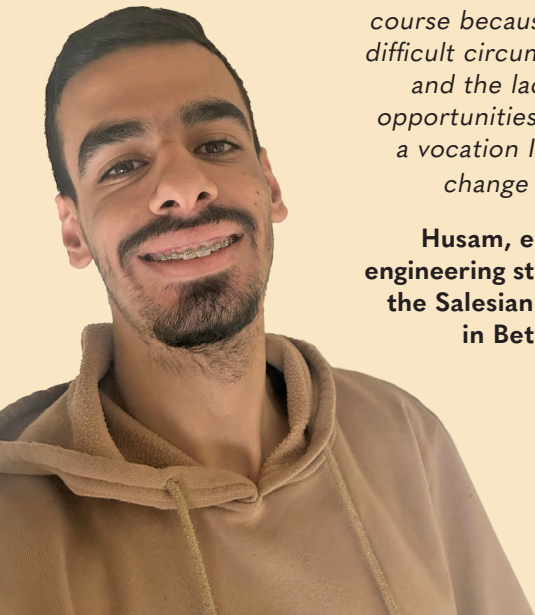
Dana, a second-year nursing student at Bethlehem University.



It costs around **£125** per month to support a student on a four-year nursing course.

"I want to continue this course because of the difficult circumstances and the lack of job opportunities without a vocation I need to change my life."

Husam, electrical engineering student at the Salesian College in Bethlehem.



All quotes are accurate, but names and images have been changed to protect anonymity.

LET'S KEEP OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN OUR **PRAYERS**

FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND PRAYER

Almighty Father, Faithful God, bless our brothers and sisters in the land of the Holy One.

Grant peace in that land, peace in their homes and peace in their hearts.

Inspire the Friends of the Holy Land to build on your foundations of justice, mercy and peace, as partners with our Christian brothers and sisters.

Give to pilgrims a new vision of your Kingdom, fill them with compassion and love.

Keep the cries of this land in our hearts.

This we pray in the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ.

AMEN.

Give a gift of **HOPE** this Christmas

Please give securely online at:

www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/christmas

Or scan the QR code. If you prefer.



Friends of the Holy Land is a UK Registered Charity (Charity Number 1202568).

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Christmas Appeal 2024



This Christmas there may be no celebrations in Bethlehem for a second year, but we are determined to keep **HOPE alive for the region's children.**

You can help our team and Christian partners as they respond to the immediate needs of children and young people while providing them with opportunities to heal, grow, and gain the vital skills they need to thrive.

NAVIGATING TRAUMA

This Christmas, children in the Holy Land aren't dreaming of gifts, nativity plays, or decorations – but rather roadblocks and bombs. A heartbroken father shared, "My oldest daughter, only six and a half, asks me why they are killing children in Gaza.

It's impossible to shield children from the horrors of war, and this constant exposure to death and destruction is severely impacting their mental health. Parents describe how their children are plagued by nightmares and a loss of appetite, with some even losing interest in playing with their friends.

► HOW WE'RE RESPONDING

Our team on the ground sees the impact every day and has responded by supporting six therapeutic summer camps across the West Bank. Around 240 children enjoyed time away with their friends and received support from specialised counsellors.

► THE GIFT OF THERAPY

Your support will help us extend critical therapy and counselling services to provide regular interventions, equipping more children with the tools to navigate the ongoing trauma of their daily lives.

£35 could help a young person access trauma therapy.

The gift of Therapy

"Any contribution to our work, whether material or moral makes a difference in our lives and the lives of the children."

Iskander, a social worker.

"I like my teachers and friends, and I always have fun in class. I want to stay here because it makes learning easier for me, and I feel happy. Thank you so much."

Bishara, a ten-year-old student with additional needs.



£100 could help a child to remain in school.

The gift of Education

PROVIDING EDUCATION

Since October 2023, up to 20% of schools in the West Bank have closed due to escalating violence. Many more children are unable to attend due to travel restrictions, school fees, or because they're simply too frightened to leave their homes.

A father in Bethlehem explained, "They are fearful that the military could come at any time." Their fears are justified. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education, there have been 69 attacks on schools and over 2,350 incidents affecting students and teachers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

► HOW WE'RE RESPONDING

We're supporting Christian schools by covering children's registration and tuition fees and providing equipment for online learning when needed. The School of Joy, serving children with special needs from vulnerable families, is near capacity with 80 students enrolled this year, up from 65, as more families reach breaking point.

► THE GIFT OF EDUCATION

Your generosity will ensure that children in the Holy Land continue their education, by covering their fees.

CREATING A FUTURE

Even before war broke out, the outlook for young people in the region was bleak, with more than 50% of graduates unemployed one year after finishing university. Now, with many families struggling to meet even their basic needs, higher education seems out of reach for many.

If this region is to flourish after the war, it needs a generation of skilled young people, ready and equipped to rebuild their communities.

► HOW WE'RE RESPONDING

In the last academic year, with your support, we funded four nursing students at the University of Bethlehem; eight students at the Episcopal Technology & Vocational Training Centre in Ramallah; and ten students at the Salesian College in Bethlehem, where they are learning trades such as plumbing and carpentry. This academic year we have committed to help twice as many in each area of study where we know there are labour shortages and 90% of our graduates find work.

► THE GIFT OF WORK

We hope we can rely on your support to meet this funding commitment so even more young people can complete the training, giving them the skills and opportunities they need to build a brighter future.

£80 a month could help a young person train as a plumber or carpenter.

The gift of WORK

"The Job Creation programme has helped me cover my university expenses and support my family during this difficult time."

Lena, a trainee teacher at Al-Quds Open University.



Be transported to Bethlehem in
our **NEW** Christmas animation!



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND
GIVING HOPE TO VULNERABLE CHRISTIANS

When evening comes in Bethlehem, so do the nightmares. When Mariam's* little brother closes his eyes, he replays the images of war and destruction that he watches online on his mobile, and in newspapers. To calm him, Mariam tells the young boy that the soldiers, "are not killing children, they are only stealing strawberries."



Head over to www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/christmas or use the QR code to hear Mariam share her story in our brand new Christmas animation. You'll be transported from Christmas in the UK to Bethlehem, where roadblocks have replaced Christmas trees in the streets and children search the sky not for stars for war planes.



*Names have been changed to protect anonymity.