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Nazareth PROJECT, INC.

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A practical work of healing and reconciliation in Jesus' hometown

Winter Update, March 2016

On a Hill

SERVE Nazareth offers a way for you to get really involved in the work in Nazareth. Our volunteers – we call them "SERVERS" - meet local people, encourage and empower Christian ministries, and become the hands and feet of Christ in His hometown.

So what is it really like when you are there?

We believe this invaluable experience gives participants the chance to scale the heights, meet and overcome challenges, and grow in knowledge, faith and understanding as they serve God.

They arrive in Nazareth at a high point, in every sense, as the Hospital is at the top of the steep Nazarene hill. Participants are filled with excitement and anticipation as they take in the view, settle in, and are welcomed by a community known around the world for its warmth and hospitality.

"The hill is one of the highlights for everyone who visits", says Christine Farah, of SERVE Nazareth. "For all of our SERVERS, their time here is a journey, in many ways similar to one of our regular hiking excursions, the Arbel cliff, which also forms part of the Jesus Trail.

"We begin our hike at the top of the mountain, where we stop to take in the scenery. The surroundings are more beautiful than we imagined and there's the excitement of being where Jesus walked during His time on earth. We are always compelled to stop to capture the beauty of the moment.

"New SERVERS arriving in Nazareth, in response to God's call, experience a similar emotion. It is a time of enthusiasm and enjoyment, a time of anticipation of all that God will do in us and through us - a time of simply being ready and in the place of His calling – the mountain top.

"As our SERVERS go to work, engaging with the local community and making new friends, the trail can get tricky! As with the descent of the Arbel cliff, SERVERS have a few things to deal with which aren't so familiar, and it can take some time to find a foothold where they feel comfortable.

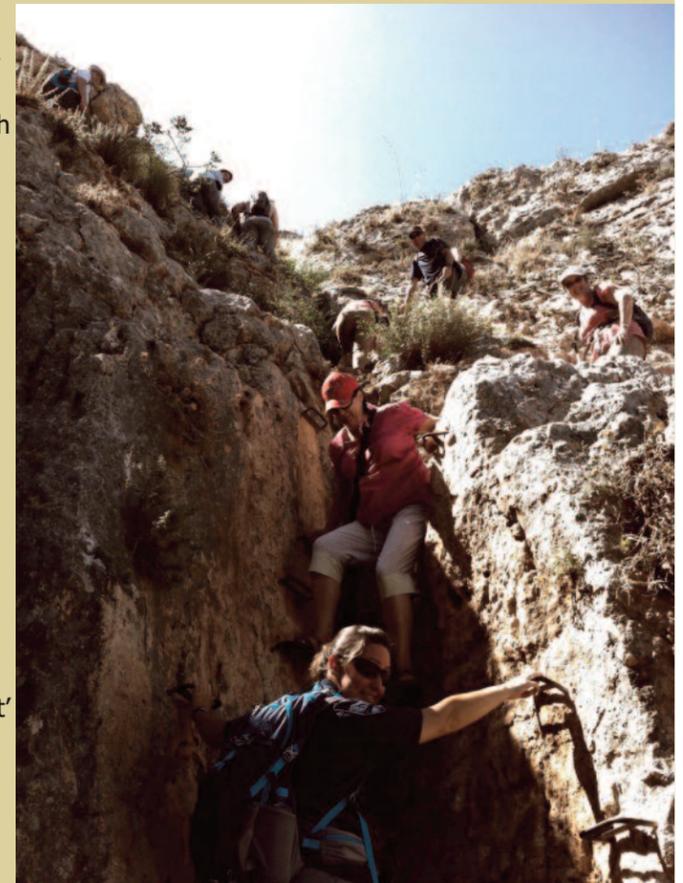
"As with all cross-culture ministry, there is a time when we recognize our own differences - things are done differently, responses vary, and that culture shock can be an obstacle for us to negotiate and appreciate.

"On Mount Arbel, when we look, there are handholds and footholds just where we need them. These holds keep us going when the way ahead looks difficult.

"Cultural interactions need those handholds too. The support of community, fellowship, prayer and a desire to see the Lord work in us and through us help to keep the SERVERS on track.

"We may express ourselves in different languages and gestures, but we worship the same Lord. It can be precarious and challenging at times, but the realization that we are 'one in Christ' (Galatians 3: 28), is a revelation that strengthens and teaches us, as we continue to serve Him in a new and unfamiliar context.

"After this tricky descent on Mount Arbel, we reach the bottom - the completion of our journey. (continued on Page 2)



25th Anniversary Events!

Look for details in our next newsletter about events celebrating 25 years of support for the Nazareth Hospital & School of Nursing through the Nazareth Project!

These celebrations will take place in the Lancaster, PA area but we would also like to hear stories from supporters throughout North America. We will also be sharing stories and photo essays on our website and in future newsletters.

If you have special memories and stories to tell, please contact us through our website or by email at NPI@NazarethProject.org

Arab Christians in Galilee need our support

- Learn more at www.ComeAndSee.com
- Pray for reconciliation inside Israel
- Support Nazareth Hospital with a gift to The Nazareth Project

Through major grants & initiatives, we support Nazareth Hospital and School of Nursing. Your gift to our operations helps us devote more time and energy to securing the resources they need to continue their unique healing and teaching ministry.

Will you help us with a gift this spring?

"Cycle the Galilee" Fundraiser

The Ride is back! This 220 Mile Ride through the Galilee from Nov. 6-13, 2016 will provide for upgrades to the Pediatrics Ward at the Nazareth Hospital.

Contact us for details and registration info.



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“For SERVERS that completion comes when it is time to return home. The journey may have been challenging, the culture shock an unexpected obstacle, but reaching the destination is always a celebration!” said Christine.

SERVING God in Nazareth is an adventure, which will strengthen you, not only through the hills, stairs and cliffs you’ll climb, but also through His work in you.

You’ll be physically and spiritually stronger, have an appreciation of other cultures, and be better equipped to serve others.

You will also have an insight into yourself and your relationship with God that you may not have gained otherwise. This is something special that you’ll take away from Nazareth - something that lasts a lifetime!



Christine Farah, SERVE coordinator (in purple hat, with Jesus Trail Hikers)



Berry Friesen appointed NPI President

In mid-January, I joined The Nazareth Project’s staff as president.

In one sense, I’m a surprising addition, having never been to Galilee or met the staff of the Nazareth Hospital and having no connection to the medical profession. Yet in another sense, I represent exactly the people NPI must engage if it is to continue its mission.

Over the years, the core supporters of NPI have been health practitioners, many of whom visited Israel and Palestine. Thanks in large part to this group of people, NPI has provided \$5.5 million in support for the Hospital over a quarter century.

To continue this important work, more supporters are needed. I expect them to step forward and help, once they get acquainted with the story of the Hospital.

My personal story is a zig-zag journey pursuing the justice spoken of so often in Scripture. For a decade, I represented indigent individuals and groups in the courts. Next, I led Mennonite Central Committee’s (MCC) community developments program in some of the poorest localities of the U.S. Then I worked as an anti-hunger lobbyist in Harrisburg and Washington, speaking on behalf of people who worried about the source of their next meal. Before coming to NPI, I worked for MCC as a consultant.

What I see in Nazareth Hospital is so much more than a hospital. Yes, its core mission is physical healing, but it also bears witness to the way of Jesus in a troubled land through education and community development. It serves as an agent of empowerment through spiritual healing. It is an encouragement to the Arabic-speaking community of Galilee, enabling it to be more resilient and resourceful, better able to seek reconciliation and pursue peace.

The Board of Directors has asked me to speak personally with as many of you as possible in coming weeks and months. You are the key stakeholders in NPI, equipping us to generate funds for the Hospital and strength its witness to the healing and reconciling way of Jesus. I ask you to help us find new supporters among the many who hunger and thirst for justice in Israel and Palestine.

Thankfully, Karen Miller Rauch continues as our Grants Administrator and Jason Allgire as our Operations, Communications and Events Coordinator.

This is a special year for NPI--our 25th as a legally recognized entity--and we plan to celebrate! Let's use this moment to enlarge the circle of support for this Hospital that is contributing in so many ways to healing and justice in Israel.

20 Years of Biking, Hiking & Supporting the Nazareth Project

After experiencing an affinity to the land of Israel in 1995, Jerry Hess and I had a dream to return. Back in 1995, I joined a group of cyclists from various parts of Lancaster to participate in a charity bike ride for the Nazareth Hospital. During that 5-day bike ride, I met Jerry and we developed a friendship. Three years later we married.

The idea of slowing down the pace and biking from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee, along the Jordan river to the Dead sea and Masada and then finally biking up into Jerusalem proved to be an epic adventure.

Ten years later, in 2005, Israel was experiencing political unrest and the charity bike ride was diverted to Egypt, so Jerry and I biked along the Nile river to raise money for the Nazareth Hospital. Fadi Obeid, a Palestinian Christian, was also on the ride and we became friends with him.

Now 20 years after our first trip, we had a desire to see the Holy Land once again. The Jesus Trail Hike seemed like the perfect opportunity to experience Israel from another perspective. To slow the pace down even further and travel by foot, to step where Jesus lived, grew up and later taught and healed seemed intriguing to both Jerry and me as Christians and working in the medical field. Jerry is a retired nurse and I started working 21 years ago at Roseville Pediatrics where I am a practicing Pediatrician.

Eunice Hess, Jerry’s mother, had hiked the Grand Canyon after turning 80 several years prior and expressed the idea that she would also be up for this adventure. As Jerry’s four sisters heard more about the trip they too became excited to experience such a trek with their mother. This would be the first trip to Israel for all of Jerry’s sisters. Each person had different ways to prepare for the hike. Some hiked mountains surrounding Lancaster, some swam laps in the neighborhood athletic club pool and others hiked back roads in Lancaster County. Although the training was all different, it helped increase the endurance of each person to prepare for the terrain on the trail.

Our trekking group was made up of hikers from Northern Ireland, Scotland, and a couple from Mississippi. During the hike we were joined by various others connected with the Nazareth Hospital and the SERVE volunteer program.

After the hike, Jerry and I were able to spend a full day with Fadi Obeid after 10 years of sending cards and written greetings. We toured his Palestinian Christian village, Makker Village, which was spared miraculously from destruction during the war in the 1930s. We visited the first Christian church of the village and lit candles in reverence and respect for the relatives who paved the way for the descendants’ faith. We attended Fadi’s church and enjoyed a celebratory gathering afterwards in honor of Fadi recently passing his Israeli dental exam. We feasted with his family and extended family and enjoyed their Palestinian hospitality.

Our Lancaster group spent an additional day in Nazareth and Dr. Najeeb provided Jerry with an in-depth tour of the Emergency Department (ED). Jerry retired last year from 38 years of working at Lancaster Regional Medical Center’s ED. What struck him was the amazing improvement in equipment since his tour of the hospital in 1995. The equipment at the Nazareth Hospital today is as sophisticated as that in a U.S. emergency department, thanks to past initiatives (by NPI) that raised money to buy it.

Our group passed out teddy bears created by knitters in the US to several patients on the Pediatric Ward of the Hospital.

Jerry and I both feel a great indebtedness to the Nazareth Hospital for making our meeting possible back in 1995. As the Hospital continues to provide quality care to the region of Nazareth, we consider it a privilege to be able to support the Hospital in this way.

—Written by Bonnie Zehr

For more details & pictures from the family’s hike, visit: NazarethProject.org

