



Nazareth Project Inc

Partnering with Nazareth Trust in Nazareth and surrounding areas



Dr. Youssif Nijim, Director, (fourth from left) with other staff of the Neonatal Unit at Nazareth Hospital

Nazareth's Neonatal Care ranked first in the country

Despite myriad challenges, the dedication of Nazareth Hospital's staff, with the support of the surrounding community, continues to bring hope and healing to the region. While carrying a heavy mental and emotional load, Nazareth Hospital's Neonatal Unit was recently ranked number one across the country in the category of up to 5,000 births, with this being the fifth consecutive year that Nazareth Hospital's unit was placed in the top five.

Dr. Youssif Nijim, Neonatal Unit Director, said the achievement was a result of 'the high professionalism of our different teams' as well as the focus on keeping up with the latest medical and technological developments.

Joumana Khoury, Neonatal Unit Head Nurse, added: "This achievement is a reflection of the great efforts made by our various teams, including our nursing staff, and the spirit of cooperation and giving that prevails on the work of the staff, to ensure the best possible Neonatal care."



NPI receives partial funding from ASHA

In January, NPI was informed that grants that had been awarded from the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) in 2023 and 2024 were being rescinded by the new administration. This included \$1.5 million for new equipment at the Nazareth Academic School of Nursing and nearly \$2 million for an expanded cardiac unit at Nazareth Hospital.

The cardiac funds were lost; however, \$1,150,780 was received in late June for the School of Nursing project. This was a result of persistent contacts in Washington and in Jerusalem.

Howard Good, NPI Executive Director, expressed gratitude for the release of funds and the several decades of support from ASHA. "Since 1995, NPI received 10 grants from ASHA totaling \$8,341,475. If we had been able to retain the cardiac award the total would have surpassed \$10 million.

"Though a relatively small program with total funding of \$28 million per year – within the much larger USAID budget of \$40 billion – ASHA awards significantly increased the capacity of recipient organizations while highlighting US public diplomacy."

On July 1, all ASHA operations ended. Our partners in Nazareth are grateful for ASHA's support over the past 30 years.

See Page 3 for the amazing story of the 100-day Miracle Twins

The Nazareth Trust welcomes new International Director



Steve Sanderson

Steve Sanderson joined The Nazareth Trust in June, following many years working with Baptist Mission Society (BMS). In this newly created role, he will expand the Trust's presence across the English-speaking world.

NPI (Nazareth Project) is a North American partner of The Nazareth Trust

– owner of Nazareth Hospital, Nazareth Academic School of Nursing, Nazareth village and SERVE Nazareth. NPI works with senior Trust leadership as we collaborate on fundraising and the promotion of engagement in Nazareth.

Recently, Steve was interviewed about his background and what brought him to the Trust. **Here are excerpts; the full interview is available under the "News" tab on the NPI website: www.nazarethproject.org**

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP, AND WHERE DID YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH LEAD YOU?

"Like a lot of people who grew up in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, I left seeking a more peaceful, quiet, and secure future. This was as simple as choosing to go to university in Scotland to discover a clearer future.

"My growth in my walk with Jesus owes a great deal to the various people who invested in me during my youth, but the biggest growth spurt occurred during

my university years. Life, it turns out, doesn't need to be a drab journey of work and survival; it can be a bold adventure of mission.

"Working with students in Dar es Salaam was my first real exposure to the injustice of poverty. Then, working with justice projects in Rwanda opened my eyes to just why justice matters.

"...(These experiences) moved me to step aside from what would have been a probably tedious (if lucrative) legal career and instead join BMS World Mission to grow access to justice projects in Uganda."

WHY DID YOU RETURN TO THE UNITED KINGDOM?

"Somewhere on this journey, I met my wife, Caroline. Caroline is a fellow adventurer in every sense of the word. We have three kids (all in their teenage years). When Bethany (number 2) was born, we were told that she had half a heart. As you might imagine, this was a huge shock which really turned our world upside down. Bethany required a series of complex surgical interventions if she was going to stand a chance of survival. Thereafter, she would need regular expert check-ups and a daily drug regimen.

"There was no going back to life in Africa. We had a calling, a job, a home in Gulu, a church, friends, social capital, and momentum, but that all evaporated in an instant. None of this made sense, but God's presence and love sustained us through some fairly dark times. Bethany did a good job of surviving a series of open-heart surgeries and continues to be a force of nature in her mid-teens! Among the tumult, I was offered a job at the BMS head office just south of Oxford."

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE NAZARETH TRUST?

"So, here we are at the Nazareth Trust. There are a lot of Christians leaving the Middle East at present. Conflict, exclusion, and poor economic prospects are all big push factors. I can identify with this. However, as followers of Jesus, we are called to bear witness. Nazareth is a unique place with a unique history. The Nazareth Trust has been bearing witness to the transforming power of Jesus in his hometown for several generations. It is the vision of local Arab Christians to continue doing this that inspires me. In a part of the world which has been marked by so much conflict, Christians play a vital role as those who stand in the gap as agents of peace, justice, restoration, and healing."

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Support NPI through your credit card donation during ExtraGive on NOVEMBER 21, 2025. NPI will be eligible for extra bonus gifts.

The 100-Day Miracle Twins

Twins Abdul Karim and Lynn were born prematurely at Nazareth Hospital at just 27 weeks of age. The twins weighed less than two and a half pounds each and spent 100 days in the Neonatal Unit under continuous medical and nursing care. After three months of care in the special gynecological and childbirth unit, the twins left the hospital in good health, showered with love and care.

The twins' parents expressed their gratitude and happiness, saying: "We named our two babies 'The 100-Day Miracle Twins,' because from the very first moment they came into life, they have been fighting for survival with courage and determination. Thanks to meticulous medical and nursing care, we have seen them grow and develop as they should!"



The 100-Day Miracle Twins ready to leave the Neonatal Unit at Nazareth Hospital

Former NPI Board member and family provide a \$10,000 grant for Maana

Bonnie Zehr and Jerry Hess met 30 years ago during the November 1995 bike ride in Israel. To celebrate their meeting, they have donated funds for the printing and distribution of a book for West Bank children. West Bank communities are experiencing separation and violence due to

the wall and checkpoints, and an increase in military incursions into their towns and villages. Children see violence almost daily, and many suffer from childhood trauma.



The book, *The Light Never Goes Out*, was written by Najla Asmar, a clinical psychologist who leads the Maana Center at Nazareth Hospital. This book encourages readers to draw on inner strength during difficult times.

Bonnie and Jerry married three years after they met in Israel and live in Lancaster, PA. They are both healthcare professionals: Bonnie is a pediatrician with Lancaster General Health Physicians Roseville Pediatrics and Jerry is a retired registered nurse who previously worked in the Emergency Department at St. Joseph's Hospital later known as Lancaster Regional Medical Center.

Bonnie's mother, Pearl Zehr also participated in the \$10,000 contribution for Maana. Pearl visited Israel in 2018 on an NPI-sponsored tour to Israel/Palestine. Bonnie also served for nine years on the NPI Board of Directors during 2009 - 2018.



Jerry Hess and Bonnie Zehr



Pearl Zehr



Tour guide Ibrahim Emtanis, center, responds to a question from Bob Martin (left) and his grandson, John Martin

Nazareth Project is sponsoring a tour to Israel April 15-25, 2026

The tour will be led by Ibrahim Emtanis who grew up in Nazareth and has worked as a professional guide since 2013. Pastor Wayne Speigle, chair of the NPI Board, will serve as the tour host.

A family foundation has pledged \$30,000 to be matched by NPI donors. Give to the Scholarship Fund, West Bank Doctors Fund, or to support Maana...and help us match the pledge at the same time.



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INSIDE

Nazareth Hospital's
Neonatal Unit ranked **#1**
in Israel

\$1.15 million of ASHA
funds "unfrozen" for
School of Nursing

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new International Director
role for Nazareth Trust

Former Board member
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Giving opportunities:
ExtraGive 2025, \$30,000
pledge to be matched

