



February 14th, 2010

World Cancer Day Celebration

Under the Patronage of HRH Princess Dr Nisreen El-Hashemite, the Royal Academy of Sciences International (RASIT) celebrated the World Cancer Day in Iraq. The Celebration titled “Love Makes Life”, was held at the Central Children’s Hospital in Baghdad, to celebrate the lives of Iraqi children affected with cancer.

At a time when Cancer still remains the leading cause of death among Iraqi Children, and at a time all politicians, political parties, and civil society organizations are so busy in the Parliament Election in Iraq, our celebration titles - Love Makes Life - may sound a bit strange, more so as cancer still remains taking the lives of the Children of Iraq. For this reason, it has been a constant endeavor by RASIT and its programs in Iraq to address the burden of cancer, and give support for children, their families, and the medical staff.

Although the 4th of February of each year is dedicated as World Cancer Day, the celebration was organized on St. Valentine’s Day aiming to give Unconditional Love and Support for these children and their mothers, particularly that most of the children receiving treatment at the Central Hospital are orphans! The celebration program, which took place at El-Sharifa Fatima Children’s Library, continued for 3 hours included: music entertainment, paint children's faces, and a theatrical show, presented by University Students and Farah Theatrical Entertainment Group for Children. At the end of the ceremony, a rose of Love was presented to every child.

“I cannot believe that we are in Iraq.. children are smiling and laughing.. families as well.. is this happening in Iraq”;this is what the hospital’s Public Information Director said. Mustafa Al-Dabbagh, Director of El-Sharifa Fatima Children’s Library said: “Today we really put life in the soul of these children and their families.. We gave them hope through the spirit of love.. look at Mustafa that the boy who never smiled since we have seen him in November 2009, here he is now laughing and playing and singing, and all of them as well .. Look at the faces of children you will know we made it, and yes Love Makes Life”. “The Children of Iraq are in need for someone to give them unconditional love”, Ahmad Jawad said.

Haidar Al-Naimi, a journalist, said: “Today I saw the real Iraq.. These Volunteers who came together just to put a smile on children’s faces are from all sects and ethnicities in Iraq, you hardly know who is the Sunni, Shiite, Sabii or Christian.. You do not know who is Arab or a Kurd.. they came together for the children regardless of ethnicity or religion, they came together because they just saw Iraq and the Iraqi Children”. He added: “Today I learned the meaning of the love from Her Highness Princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite .. I've learned that love is giving, I strongly believe this is how to bring the Iraqi people together to re-build Iraq.. I never saw such event before in all

Iraq, Thanks to Princess Nisreen and RASIT's team for teaching me the meaning of life in a country that is full of human destruction".

Noof Al-Falahi, a student of Fine Arts Academy said:"all through the period of sectarian killings and terrorism that we face in Baghdad, we have forgotten our humanity, however, through RASIT's programs in Iraq particularly El-Sharifa Fatima Children's Library, our hope in a better life is back to our hearts.. Although we managed to give joy to children today, but they gave us back life and love".

The theme for 2010 World Cancer Day looks at a key facet - Prevention of Cancer. The parents and audience asked Her Highness Princess Dr. Nisreen whether it is possible to prevent the spread of cancer in Iraq. The Princess Dr. El-Hashemite - Executive Director of RASIT, said that cancer is one of the major causes of death in children in Iraq, and according to WHO studies, it is possible to avoid 40% of cases of cancer in general, if early detection and treatment is available.

In this context, Princess Dr. El-Hashemite (a renowned doctor and researcher in genetics and cancer) explained that by saying; "cancer prevention is possible in Iraq if there is an integrated strategy, which must begin in creating a national registry showing comprehensive and accurate statistics of cancer cases in Iraq... The national registry will help to develop scientific research to reveal causes of cancer in Iraqi people and therefore establishing programs for early detection, prevention and treatment of all kinds cancers... with a focus on promoting health awareness to cancer among Iraqi society, the risk factors leading to programs for early detection and integrated health care at all three levels according to the principles and methods based on scientific evidence in order to reduce morbidity and mortality with the participation of all governmental and private institutions within the concept of partnership in community health... I am here to stress the importance of focusing on the discovery of the disease in its early stages as most of cases in Iraq are not detected until the later stages of the disease which is difficult to provide appropriate remedial service to them".

It is worth mentioning that thousands of children in Iraq are living with cancer and birth defects as a result of wars imposed on them. There are no accurate statistics on the number of such cases or even the types and areas of spread. However, according to doctors in Iraq, new types of cancer were registered in Iraq since 1991 and have risen following the war in 2003.

El-Sharifa Fatima Children's Library is one of RASIT's Programs in Iraq.

RASIT, an International Non-Governmental Organization Associated with the United Nations, working on serving Education & Humanity since 1969

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