

Anta Akhi Newsletter

Serving a life of dignity for people with disability



Jesus is here and now. Christmas is everyday starting today. You can dream, you can hope...

. Tu peux rêver, c'est-à-dire, espérer...

*of Peace Today Jesus gives it,
welcome it to sow it;*
*of Love Today Jesus offers it to you,
take it to give it;*
*of Joy Today, Jesus gives it,
may it overflow from your heart,
to attain him who thirsts;*
*of Life Today, Jesus gives himself,
Welcome the Source of Life.*

Have a good year 2014

*Yvonne Chami
Founder - President*

Dear friends,

The days run but they are not alike.

December 2012... It was Christmas...

December 2013... It's Christmas again!

Twelve months have passed, twelve months during which the large family of Anta Akhi had the desire to live and transmit the joy in everyday life, despite all the difficulties.

Our year at Anta Akhi was a rich and successful year, although difficult. Our youth, the whole team without exception, the support committees, our friends, all of us, formed one large family around a single mission: to give our youth with disabilities a life of dignity on a daily basis, through the living together, different and complementary, in peace, joy, and love, as brothers.

Yes, it is a phrase that is often repeated, an important sentence for each of us, so we can learn to position and say "Yes!". Like Mary, to say "Yes!"... I am here for you my brother, a loving presence.

Together, our family was able to overcome the challenges, and show that it is possible not to live these challenges in complaint or in fear, but rather in a process of hope that makes us able to develop solutions to any problem: health, economic, or even relational... This is possible thanks to a breath that helps us live together, certain of the presence of Mary, Queen of the Impossible,

in our daily lives. This breath, Yvonne Chami, our founder, continues to devote her life to spread it around her.

A breath! A call, inviting us to work our heart to let the Holy Spirit transform it and live in it, because that is how we can taste the fruits of love and peace.

Dear friends, may we welcome the birth of Jesus with a heart that sings the joy, love and peace, may we take the time and the habit to praise the Lord, thank Him and glorify Him for His wonders; may we be a source of life for all those we meet and with whom we live.

A Merry Christmas for a Happy New Year 2014!

Roula Najm
General Manager



10 years and more... Let's celebrate!

For over 10 years they are members of the large family of Anta Akhi. The 1st of October, which also marked the beginning of the year 2013 to 2014, was an opportunity to say thank you to 17 people who liked our youth by disabilities and helped form a Home of Tenderness, a family where life is good!

Beginning of the year **"Fidelity and Belonging"**

Anta Akhi team

Under the patronage

of **Ste Therese of the Child Jesus and Saint Francis**

Ballouneh, Tuesday 1st of october 2013



From left to right (standing) : **Colette Massaa** (11 years) – **Arzen Naer** (15 years) – **Noha Toubia** (15 years) – **Hala Slim** (12 years) – **Bourane Saad** (19 years) – **Charlie Akiki** (12 years) – **P. André Najm** (10 years) – **Claire Moussally** (13 years) – **Samira Akiki** (13 years) – **Maya Ghosn** (10 years) – **Chantal Haddad** (11 years) (seated) : **Dany Nohra** (11 years) – **Fady Younes** (10 years) – **Jeannette Fahed** (13 years) – **Aziz Sfeir** (20 years) – **Kamil Yaacoub** (10 years) – **Jacqueline Sakr** (11 years)

Christ is born at the Home of Tenderness! Halleluiah!

For many, Christmas is the most beautiful time of the year. To prepare to celebrate with joy and peace the birth of our Saviour, it is a month of celebration that is lived in the Home of Tenderness! This fest is felt in the whole atmosphere of the month, through the thoughts and actions towards others, the gathering of the small and the large family, the prayers of the Advent, Masses, but also the decoration, songs, games ... Each of us has memories of Christmas, and our young people with disability keep beautiful ones!

They were there gathered in this afternoon, and they were discussing what they like the most during the Christmas period. A simple dialog took place, but it also revealed little treasures buried in the heart of our youth. Let's savor this moment with them:

Tony, the "mayor" of Anta Akhi is the most eager to share his thoughts:

- **Tony:** What I like the most? Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by Midnight Mass, because we would be celebrating the birth of Christ, and we return to ourselves. He is the celebration! I also love the Christmas spirit that exists in our families and with the team Anta Akhi. I also love outings and receiving gifts, although they are not the most important!

- **Carole:** Me, even if I grow up, I am always pleased to receive gifts!

-Me too! replies **Aida.**

- So you put me out? answers back **Tony.**
laugther

- **Joanna :** The main purpose of Christmas is Christ! He is present in each one of us, not just for Christmas. But it is true that during this period, I return to myself and see where I am, what is the purpose of my life. At the moment, one of these goals is catechism: I receive a lot of Father André, and in my turn, I give what I receive to 10 children, 10-12 years old, in my neighborhood.

We all appreciated what Joanna is doing, and Elie who wanted to talk for a while says:

C'est Tony, le « maire » de Anta Akhi qui est le plus empressé de partager ses pensées :

- **Elie S.:** I love being with my parents at Christmas, especially when we are all together, and happy with Jesus. But I also like ambulant Christmas, when the team and the volunteers, accompanied by a priest, visit our homes to bring us Jesus . When I was a kid, I use to participate in these visits. And last year, when I was in the hospital and saw the priest arriving with my friends, I was so happy!

- **Rita:** That's true! My heart is very happy when I receive my friends with the priest

for communion at home!

- **Carole:** I love the midnight mass, but also, the Mass with Sesobel, our sister organization, I love the living manger and the choir , led by the children themselves!

- **Aida:** Yes, it's very beautiful!

- **Carole:** I want to add that I enjoy the Christmas decorations, especially the game of

hidden friend. Last year my friend was Tarek: I used to speak with him and send him greetings. But the year before there was Gharib, and my God, I have done so many things for him! I recall sending him treats and messages that my life companion wrote on a piece of paper!

- **Gharib:** Ah, but the best hidden friend I ever had was Tony! *Laughing he said:* He asked Samira "Please can you give Gharib a cucumber on my behalf?"... He had not noticed that I was there next to him! But I also remember when Carole was my friend, some years ago: I brought her a bag full of chocolates and spread it on her bed!

- **Samo:** I like Jesus. Christmas is beautiful. I also like Santa Claus because he brings me presents. Last year, it was green pajamas and slippers. This year I want a small radio because I want to hear "Ya Umma El Lah " *hymn to the Mother of God.*

- **Elie K.:** I love to celebrate Christmas here and at home. And ... I love it when people pray together, I feel that I am happy. I like the midnight mass. I like to celebrate people and I want to tell them: Happy Easter ... noooo! Merry Christmas!

- **Aida:** I love to joyfully welcome all who come to Anta Akhi : Ahla Fikon *welcome!*

- **Madonna :** L... I love praying... for mom and dad who are in heaven - *she shows the sky.* Me... I remember mom during



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family. And now what I like the most? After a moment of thought: my mom. I want to send her a heart and a flower. *She began to cry.* Madonna, you pray for her? Yes. You know she's in your heart? Yes *and she points her finger,* in the Blessed Sacrament.

We were all moved by Madonna's tears, and moved by Joanna who was trying to comfort her...

- **Barbara :** What I like most ? When we visited the institution for the elderly and we gave them gifts. I was very happy. It's true, when I give a gift to someone, it will have a meaning. But also, I love receiving gifts yet, I like to give them more!

- **Gharib:** Everything is beautiful during Christmas but my favorites are three events: the Mass with the family of Anta Akhi and Sesobel, midnight mass here, and the day before Epiphany spent with the team: it is for us the opportunity to be thankful for the year spent together, and thank especially the team and our life companions who left their families to stay with us! We really appreciate it! Christmas is not only for us but also for those who care for us.



- **Fadi:** I thought a lot of things I like to live at Christmas. Initially, my thought goes to our Lord who became flesh and came to earth for us. I like to think and live Christmas because His birth gives me a big joy. Before He was born, we felt that God was far from us, but today He is close to each one of us and he was made flesh, just like us!

Also, I think about people in distress ... I hope there will be friends to visit them so they are not alone for Christmas: I think mainly about the poor, those who have nothing to eat or drink, the sick, the disabled, the elderly... all those who need the joy of our Lord. I feel that at Christmas, God wants to give them His joy... no, not just for Christmas, but everyday!

When I look at the human family and I see that war prevails in many thoughts, I think: but why not work for peace? Why not unite? Why persist in wanting to disperse? I pray to God during this holiday, may He change the hearts of persons of good will, of every person, to build the Man, build peace and love among all people.



At the end, our youth like to send their wishes to all those who will read them :

Merry Christmas to all those who help at Anta Akhi (Tony)!

I hope that the year will be good for all, I will pray more for peace in the world (Gharib).

The Child in the manger came to all men, let us welcome Him in our lives (Barbara).

To all those who care for us, who have received the joy of our Lord, may He put His peace in the heart of every man, so that he may live peace. I wish every man lives all the goodness, joy, and love. Christ is born! Halleluiah! (Fadi).



Smiles with Elie...

All those who live in the Home of Tenderness are familiar with him! Elie, a young man with cerebral palsy, is really fun. He says he is shy, but nobody believes it! He loves to talk, and often he comes out with stories that make you wonder... Elie, my brother, life is funny with you!

It is understood, Elie loves to talk , especially when he wakes up, and when practically everyone is still asleep. Mirna, referent, sleeping in an adjacent room, wakes up at the sound of his voice and says, " Elie, you cannot talk that early, as you wake up your friends and me..." Elie understood what Mirna told him. Still, another day, Elie shouts aloud: " Let no one speak, because Mirna will wake up!" And of course, Mirna woke up to his voice! She said: "Elie don't speak at all because you woke everyone!". This time, Elie understood ... But the third day, the phone rang early! Mirna spoke softly but Elie, already awake, heard her voice. At the end, unable to remain silent, he said aloud: "Mirna is awakened but it is not my fault! It is the phone!"

Another day in the theater activity, Elie must answer the question: "In your opinion , what others say about you? " And Elie answered:" Is it not a pity that such a handsome man suffers from disability? "

During the communication activity, which includes our chouchous – youth who are not able to express themselves by words - with other young people, Jessica, a life companion, decides to start the workshop by asking everyone to pray in his own way. Tarek begins : he laughs and make gestures with his hand. Michael releases a few small sounds, and a wide smile. Melanie laughs, looks around her, and moves her hands... And it is the turn of Elie: "Jessy, in what language should I pray? Do I make sounds or words?"



The site of the Home of Tenderness



"For 35 years, we have continued to evolve thanks to Mary, Queen of the Impossible, present in our lives. Today, with her, we do not fear the difficulties of this period, because we know in whom we have put our trust." Yvonne Chami

These words of Yvonne put us in confidence to start a site, far beyond our capacities. Ensuring a large amount in a record time would have been impossible without the intervention of Mary. Having said that, we are moving forward in the works and we will leave for next summer all that cannot be done during winter, mainly all external works.

Does this mean that we do not have any more works? In fact, we have responded to the emergency relating to the safety, but our site is not concluded! The work will extend over three years since the Home of Tenderness needs the management of all floors, including the rehabilitation of toilets, the waterproofing...

Merry Christmas Happy New 2014

Dear friends,

Over the years, you have shown great loyalty, and thanks to your contribution our young people with disabilities live with dignity on a daily basis. For your prayers, for your presence, for your donations, and on behalf of all our young people, thank you!

Today, we call for a prayer for each of you, your families, your relatives, your friends, so they can discover in this beautiful Christmas celebration, how much they are loved, and respond to this love, every moment!

We can only entrust you to Mary, Queen of the Impossible; may She gives you a hundredfold of what you do to her neediest children.

From our hearts, have a Merry Christmas for a great year

How to help AntaAkhi

1. Sponsor a young person from \$ 10 (or € 10) per month, \$ 120 (or € 120) per year.
2. Make a single donation possibly specifying the need that you want to support.

To make a tax exempt donation in the US, please contact sesobelusa@gmail.com

Thank you for being part of what we build together in our journey of life

If you wish to receive our newsletter by email, please notify us on communication@antaakhi.org

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With the glance of Yvonne