

# Our life at Anta Akhi

*At the service of a life of dignity of the person limited by disability*



April 2016



*Yvonne Chami*  
*Founder President*

**Dear friends,**

Let us rejoice in the springtime of life,  
Let us rejoice because through the cross sadness is abolished,  
and joy floods the world.

Let us rejoice because the Lord descended  
deep in the heart of men, where lurks anxiety;  
He visited them, he has illuminated them...

**Let us rejoice because He is Alive, resurrected,  
Christ our eternal joy. Alleluia!**

**From the family of Anta Akhi  
and the project "Handicap and Life in the Church"  
We wish you a Happy Easter**

**Queen of Heaven, rejoice, Alleluia!  
For the one You deserved to bear, Alleluia!  
Has risen, as He said! Alleluia!**

**Dear Friends,**

Today we live in a time where war, violence, murder, strife, sorrow and tears prevail...

We stay there, arms crossed, appalled by what is happening around us, from lost, fear of the future, as if our Savior, Jesus Christ did not come into the world, and did not walk the way of the cross for us, to forgive us, and set us free.

Jesus is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, it is He who told us and repeats today: "Fear not for I am with you." It is He who said twice to his disciples: "Peace be with you", after his resurrection from the dead. It is He who told his Father when the time came, "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them." *John 17: 13* and, "I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You have loved me may be in them, and I in them" *John 17, 26*.

Why are we then frozen? Why this fear? Why this lack of faith? He is with us, forever present. Didn't He also say: "that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent me." *John 17, 21*.

By our union with Him we can overcome death, fear, and by the force of His love, we can sow peace in us and around us.

When we believe and accept to unite with Jesus, we probably will see with His eyes, we will love as He loves, we will bow down to

wash the feet of one another, as He did, a sign of humility and compassion for the suffering and pain of others, we will become the heart of this world, disciples of peace, love and hope in his example.

Give us Lord to call you at every moment, to discover and live with You the love and peace, despite the difficulties of life.

Give us the power to recognize and accept our faults, having the inner desire to forgive, with a merciful heart; so we can build the culture of peace in this world which is in search of truth, which is Jesus.

We will then be worthy to live with you and to witness your death and your resurrection.

The Lord is risen, He is risen indeed!



*Roula Najm*  
*General Manager*

## *Our Easter Schedule*

- Holy Thursday:** Mass in Saint Maroon Church - Jeita with Sesobel's family at 10:00  
Night of worship at the Home of Tenderness with our young adults from 20:00 to 23:00.
- Holy Friday :** Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the House of Tenderness from 10:00 to 12:00.
- Easter Saturday:** Ambulant Easter "Jesus comes to us" visiting our young adults limited by disabilities and their families from 8:00.  
Evening of prayer at 20:00, followed by a Mass at 23:30 at the house of Tenderness.
- Easter Sunday:** Our house is open to welcome our friends
- Easter Monday:** Mass at 11:00 am at Our Lady of Lebanon - Harissa to congratulate Mary.

*Our House of Tenderness is always open to welcome you and to Share together beautiful moments! We are waiting for you!*

## Did the life of Vrej have a meaning? Was it worth living?

**Vrej, young adult with multiple disabilities - left us to the world of the Father on December 29, 2015 at the age of 28 years. Although he did not speak, and even if he lived his youth in his house, unable to be moved because of the heaviness of his disability, Vrej's life had meaning ... Below is an experience few days before his death.**

**"Vrej entered our lives and changed them."**

*From the letter written by Amelie to her friends in January 2016*

"The New Year Celebrations were beautiful. On Christmas Day we went with a small team to meet young adults with disabilities and their families, that are not able to participate in the Christmas Mass. We were a small team of eight, accompanied by a priest who was giving the Communion, and Santa Clause. The atmosphere was full of joy and simplicity. I realized that some young adults never leave their beds as their handicaps are heavy and as their living places are unsuitable for their needs. I think of Vrej who lives on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and cannot enter the elevator that is too small for him. When we got home, his mother and sister received us in their living room. They

accompanied us in their room. The beds surrounded a mattress on the floor on which Vrej was laying. His face and his eyes were bright. He seemed pleased and surprised by our visit. With Sveta, a Ukrainian volunteer, we squat next to him. He held my finger, and kept on looking and smiling to the image of the Virgin that I showed him. Vrej entered our lives and changed them just in one meeting; he opened our hearts and our eyes.

I send you my kisses, and wish you a happy feast of the Epiphany and entrust you Vrej in your hearts and / or prayer, I just heard that he answered God recalled him.



## The Operational Team with and for our young adults

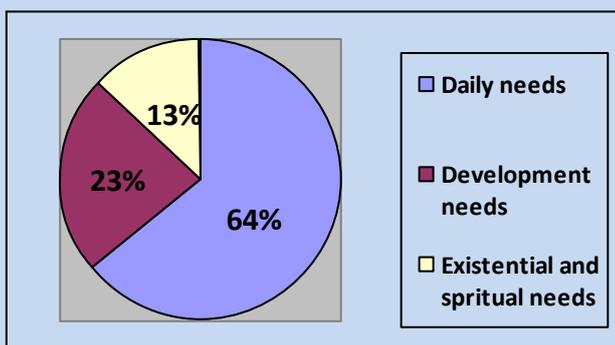
**A team of 56 people are present for our young adults with disabilities. So you can get to know us, we're happy to present to you, through this newsfeed and the upcoming ones, the various units of the team. We will start with the heart, with these people present with and for young adults, which form the operational unit.**

Our team, composed of 17 persons, is in action every day, 24/7 to ensure a continued presence for our young adults who can not in any way be alone. For this, three shifts are in order, day, night, and during the weekend.

With our young adults limited by disabilities, we create a family, an environment that allows us to live with dignity in everyday life, as human being and children of God. It is in this living together that each of us flourishes. Despite our differences; we share our joys, our sorrows, our limitations and potentials, overcoming the difficulties of everyday life.

Our days are very diverse, despite the fact that 64% of our time is for the daily care - basic needs, medical and rehabilitative needs. This time may seem excessive, but is in particular due to the heaviness of disability and lack of independence of our young adults. The other 23% of the time meet the development needs, between activities in the Home of Tenderness, outings, welcoming friends ... as to the remaining time, or 13%, it is for spiritual and existential needs: indeed, to live together in beautiful complementarities despite our differences, the support, based on the Word of God is needed. It is a journey in which everyone, young adults and team, is committed to working on oneself. Each individualizes the training received, to see his limits, accept them, try to change, so that we can be true witnesses of peace and joy in everyday life.

Note that this training is not limited to the values of our Home of Tenderness, it encompasses everything you need to know about young adults and disability: the types of handicap of our young adults, the best approach for each young adult, optimizing our presence with them, how to preserve their dignity in everyday life.



For our work to bear fruit, coordination and sharing our experience is necessary with other units: logistics, administrative...

Note that our action would be incomplete without the partnership we have with the parents of our young adults. We are committed to an effective presence of the parents, siblings, whether in Anta Akhi or at home, for the link to be maintained and well fed. It is through their first family that emotional balance is achieved, and that our young adults continue to receive the love.

Being part of the operational team, means a daily celebration with the young adults, in which each party makes an effort to live the most beautiful moments and appreciate the wonder that is called to be, the wonder he already is!

## News from our large family

### What we are building in Togo

### The life of our family in France

### These tireless ladies and youngsters!



Following two short stays in Togo in 2013 and 2015, the project "Disability and Life in Church – growing together" is taking shape. Yvonne, Elizabeth and Chantal stayed 2 months in the diocese of Atakpamé, joined by Roula and Maya for 13 days, to start this founding project that Yvonne dreamt about for 40 years! It will be implemented in Father Paul's parish, in addition to 2 others. This mission will shed light on the Father's Project, for a living together in church, and for a change of mind to the world of disability. Thank you to Bishop Nicodeme Barrigah, and all the Fathers, for their availability and openness to the action of the Holy Spirit for the growth of the child of God in every man.

Year after year we see our friends from Anta Akhi France defy difficult situations - this year the bombings of Paris - to support the lives of our young adults limited by disabilities.

The Dinner of Anta Akhi France, which took place on 5 December 2015 at the Précateelan -Bois de Boulogne, was a pleasant, simple gathering, in a beautiful setting, and it allowed us to appreciate the love of our French and Lebanese friends and their commitment to the cause of Anta Akhi.

**Their love?  
always bigger...  
Their commitment?  
always firmer...**

Every year, we are meeting with two major events organized by the ladies and the youth committees .

Our next meeting will be held Tuesday, April 19, 2016 at Mandaloun - Beirut.

We are waiting for you to share an unforgettable evening!

## News from our "Home"

### Our family had gathered to celebrate with their friends the New Year's Eve.

The atmosphere was warm, and our young adults were beautiful and radiant in the evening! Men wore tie, and young women a blue scarf ... After dinner and the Mass, we started dancing and playing...

We wish you all a year full of small joys in everyday life.



### They got engaged ... in Anta Akhi, their second family!

On January 5, the eve of the Epiphany in Lebanon, and when our family gathered in Anta Akhi to say thank you to the team, Joe surprised Marina ... we could read on the screen "Marina, will you marry me???" . After the emotions, everyone was celebrating in joy, songs, speeches and celebration cake! Mabrouk *congratulations* to our two life companions.



### Thank you our dear sponsors...

Our sponsors are the "unknown soldiers" who, discreetly, contribute monthly or by annual payment, to the needs of our young adults. Despite the increasing difficulty of the social, economic and political situation, they remain very loyal.

Thank you dear sponsors, and thank you to all friends and members of the team that have responded positively to our invitation; whether for the **Mass of children** - on 31<sup>st</sup> January – or the **Mass of the newly wedded** - on 7<sup>th</sup> February. Your presence with your children gives meaning to our action, this action that goes beyond financial assistance, to touch the heart of every man. And it is only through the presence of our young adults with disabilities and their testimony that this is possible!

Thank you, because life together in our differences and complementarities, allows us to say, life is beautiful with you my brother!



## A beating Heart

She charmed our young adults and the team with her presence, her smile, her joy of life and love. Amélie, a French volunteer, said to be splashed with light, joy and peace of our youngsters, but the reality is that she added a note of freshness, sweetness and love for the life of our young adults. Thank you Amélie!

I'm in half of my time here. It's been three months since I had the joy and the privilege of living in this home, my home.

When I arrived, I could not move forward. My legs couldn't carry me because of the weight of some sufferings that became too heavy to continue walking. My heart was broken but it was still beating. I felt disabled and I needed help to learn to live with these disabilities.

After changing my career, I graduated last July in special education. My personal experiences made me unable to do this job. I needed time. Need to recharge myself. I looked for a school of life to train me as I wanted to take the time to live, to think about my life and the direction I wanted to follow. A friend told me providentially about Anta Akhi. The more I heard about it, the more I realized how much it was what I was looking for: learning to live in joy, learning to love, to pray, to put Jesus at the heart of our lives. I also wanted to live alongside my Oriental brothers and discover their way of living their faith.

Every day that passes, I felt, like growing up realizing how little I was and that the gifts I receive are made to be placed at the service of others. I have this image in mind: I imagine my soul, so small and fragile, an orphan soul in a crib surrounded by thousand cribs and I see everyone blowing this tremulous soul to give her life. The home of Mary, Queen of the impossible, for me is as a cradle of the soul raised by the waves of love in the heart of the sea of tenderness.

Meeting the people who live here, sharing our life was for me a great privilege. As the days pass, the more I find that by being with them, I'm splattered by their light, their joy, peace, beauty, and I have only one desire, to follow their path, share with them the path of life. These people (like anyone, starting with myself) are not



perfect, but I find them perfect as they are. They are the face of the fragility that our eyes cannot dodge; they shout that our world will become stronger by accepting this fragility, our world will then be reshaped and open, instead of being closed on itself.

These persons will forever live in my heart, as they make it grow day by day. They are witnesses of the invisible presence which renews and transforms hearts and wounded bodies from the moment we accept to host in us what is more vulnerable. They are the lights of our world that guide and brighten the path of the heart, the only joyful way of life that is worthwhile.



Each year Anta Akhi welcomes volunteers from Lebanon and abroad, wanting to spend time and be helpful, offering their expertise in educational, administrative, or other occupation, or seeking a place to relax, away from the artifices of our world...

In adherence to this "living together", all our search of "being useful, being productive, or doing something" fades away and leaves the space for "being happy, being a presence, being a light". Everyone can therefore grow and realize fully his humanity.

Your presence is vital for our youth. Your friendship matters most! A big thank you from our family, for your time and your love.

### Call

*Dear friends, our call this month consists of two adapted wheelchairs meeting the specific needs of Marcelle and Barbara, two sisters suffering from Friedrich Ataxia, a neurodegenerative disease, that deprived them from living independently. The cost of the wheelchair adapted to their needs is \$ 2400, for a total price of \$ 4.800. Thank you in advance for your generosity!*



## How to help Anta Akhi :

1. Sponsor a share of the cost of the accompaniment of the life course of a young person with disability starting from \$ 10 (or € 10) per month, \$ 120 (or € 120) per year.  
Bank Audi - Iban: LB07 0056 0001 6520 8465 0440 1605
2. Make a single donation possibly specifying the need that you want to support.

**Anta Akhi : B.P 70164 Antelias Lebanon – [www.antaakhi.org](http://www.antaakhi.org) - [antaakhi@inco.com.lb](mailto:antaakhi@inco.com.lb) +961 4 415365**