

OUR LIFE AT ANTA AKHI

Serving a life of dignity for adults with a disabilities

April 2022



*O Virgin, we promise You not to forget
that you are our mother
and that we are Your children,
and that You are able to accomplish in us the project of Jesus,
for our life to be a sign of joy
and hope in His Resurrection,
and that we transmit His joy and His peace.*

Yvonne Chami, Founder

Dear friends,

It will soon be three years since Lebanon started experiencing one of the most difficult periods: economic, political, social and health crises emerged one after another. But today, we can no longer just think about our fight. The whole world is in a state of chaos, and thus we are not the only ones suffering the consequences of wars, hatred, power...

At Anta Akhi, our gaze is more than ever turned towards the whole world, our hearts vibrating totally with the theme of the Synod organized by Pope Francis: "For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission." This is indeed the mission of Anta Akhi: to live in unity with the secular and the ecclesial society, both in Lebanon and abroad; to bear my brother's concern, to participate in

his joy and in his sorrows; testify that life is beautiful and that together we are able to overcome difficulties with joy.

Living our mission inevitably involves prayer; we are present alongside the whole world through the prayer of our family. Our young adults with disabilities, whatever their abilities, put all their heart into joining in their daily rosary all those who suffer, those who are displaced or who have emigrated, those who are hungry, those who are in pain, those who are dying...

If the season of Lent is a return to God, a time of sharing, a time of being present for others, a time of sacrifice and renunciation, we can testify that every day we live this period in unity with the whole world.



But we do not lose hope in the resurrection! The Lord Jesus has suffered; He died for us; but he rose to give us life in abundance.

We fear nothing by turning our gaze to Him. In the midst of distress as in the midst of joy, we believe that He holds our hand and leads us with joy in the path, heading to the fullness of life.

Christ has risen ! Hallelujah !

Roula Najm

Our daily fulfillment within the “Home of Tenderness”



Anta Akhi is like a beehive that does not stop its activities: from waking up to lunch time, the team members and volunteers take care of the daily needs of our young adults and their development. This year, we have focused on ensuring the presence of Lebanese volunteers, who put all their skills at the service of our young adults. There are nine volunteers coming to the “Home of Tenderness” regularly to give their time and skills with all their hearts, and in return, they receive much love!

Kinda leads a Zumba workshop and young adults, who can, are delighted to be able to move their hands and feet to the rhythm of lively music. Angela, judge, gives lots of legal information to the young adults. It is Tony who is the most interested and who wants to know everything that is happening in the world of disability in Lebanon. Dancing sessions are scheduled by Laura and music workshops are led by Ghinwa: these are always exceptional moments of relaxation and fulfillment. Fatima, for her part, targets life companions and young adults by allowing them to be entertained by a monthly art therapy session. It works in particular on the imagination and intuition of the young adults and thus promotes the expression of their feelings and emotions. Said and Léa lead a personal development workshop together and offer sports sessions.



All this does not make us neglect nor forget our spiritual life. Since December, Yasmina has been coming once a month to allow our young adults to learn more about Teresa of the Child Jesus. Yasmina, answering a question relating the handicap to a path of holiness tells us: “By understanding the simple way of Saint Teresa, we can confirm that God raise us to him, regardless of our abilities. It is by abandoning ourselves in his arms that he carries us, elevates us and makes us saints singing his mercy forever.”

And it is Joy who expresses her love for Saint Teresa “*I discovered Saint Teresa for the first time by myself, while reading about her life. I didn't understand everything, but it interested me. Then, with the lessons, I immediately understood her mission. I made a lot of connections between her life and mine. We have both suffered, but we never stopped believing! The Saint Teresa workshop is one of my favorites at Anta Akhi!*”

We give thanks for the presence of all our Lebanese and French volunteer friends who are present today with our young adults with disabilities. Thank you for the time you give us and a special thanks for all the love you shower us with!

With you, life is more beautiful!

They joined the Father

During this season of Lent, we are preparing for the most important feast, that of Easter. Inhabited by the hope of the resurrection of Christ, and assured that death is not the end, we entrust **Elie Abi Younes and Philippe Sfeir**, whom we lost in March, to the mercy of the Father and to the maternal tenderness of the Virgin Mary.

Elie born in the love of the Father on March 20, 2022

Elie was one of the young adults benefiting from the program of home support. He had multiple disabilities, he could neither speak nor move. He had, however, an important and essential role: he was full of light and joy. This joy that was in his heart and on his face, he transmitted it to everyone who met him. By his patience and his faith, he gave us the example and the strength to hold on despite all the difficulties.

Philippe born in the love of the Father on March 27, 2022

Since the beginning of the year, Philippe's health had deteriorated sharply due to a liver cirrhosis, diagnosed with severe anemia. This situation required hospitalization which weakened him enormously.



Philippe left an emptiness here at Anta Akhi, especially in the hearts of his two brothers Pierre and Elie. We will never forget his sense of humor. Philippe liked to tell jokes and tease people in order to show them how much they meant to him. He hid his feelings for years, but showed a very beautiful smile the last two years of his life. We know that he was welcomed into the maternal arms of Mary "Set el Beit" and that he now contemplates the face of the Father, in eternal peace and joy.

"Even though we no longer see you with us, you are always present in our prayers and in our thoughts. I miss you. Who's going to make jokes now?" Carol

"Philippe, you were the first person I met when I visited Anta Akhi fourteen years ago. I was going through a period where I was searching for my identity. You played a very important role in my human and spiritual life, a role that allowed me to choose my path afterwards. Today you can get up from your chair and fly far away and fill Heaven with your smile as you have filled my life and that of many others." Jad, a friend of Anta Akhi.



Easter at Anta Akhi

At the "Home of Tenderness", we are living the season of Lent in our own way: instead of depriving ourselves only of the things we love, we have decided to work together in order to improve the weak traits in ourselves and that we very often ignore. To do so, each week, we target a theme that translates our Christian life into actions: taking care of the body that God has given us, training ourselves on a daily basis to give and share, and practicing seeing the positive in all things...

This year, Anta Akhi will participate in the rite of the washing of the feet, during Maundy Thursday, with the parishioners of the Church of Saint Elie – Ballouneh. This event is celebrated in order to continue to spread Anta Akhi's mission, which is to change the perception of the able bodied on the world of disability and to promote a "Living Together". Our young adults will be able to participate for the first time with the parish choir and 4 of them will be part of the 12 apostles who will receive the washing of their feet.

Giving Tuesday: the second edition!

Anta Akhi, founding member of the Generosity Day in Lebanon, participated again this year in this special campaign in order to initiate and encourage society to direct its gaze towards others. For Anta Akhi, the great success was to renew contact between former volunteers and the young adults and thus to prolong this strong bond that was once created.

Thank you to all the French volunteers, to our friends in Lebanon and abroad, to Anta Akhi France team and to everyone who has contributed to the success of this campaign.



Our volunteers: the wealth of our “Home of Tenderness”: Roy, Verlaine, Nicole, Dr. Mario and Father Sami: thank you for your commitment and loyalty

On March 24, Anta Akhi celebrated five of its generous volunteers, like Roy who is present with us since 2017 to volunteer his IT skills. Verlaine and Nicole make life more beautiful by simply being present and by their great love for our young adults. As for Dr. Mario, he joined the association during the critical Covid-19 period and has always been concerned with our young adults since then. Last but not least, Father Sami, who never stopped coming to celebrate Sunday masses with our family even during the confinement period. We would like to thank them all for their time, their efficiency and their love.



Roy and Pierre Sfeir

Roy spoke to us from his heart and below are extracts from his testimony: “I came to Anta Akhi with a group of friends of which Mirna, who became my wife 6 years ago, was part. The day I entered this home I felt anxious. Despite all my encounters with the young adults, my relationship with them remained cold until the day Steven, my son, was born. After her maternity leave, Mirna had to take Steven with her to work. So at Anta Akhi, they set up a bed for him and Pierre Sfeir took care of our little boy. He took care of him like a brother! He is my Steven's guardian angel. Since 2017, the year I started volunteering with Anta Akhi, this place has become, for me and my family, a place that I proudly call My home”.

Anta Akhi France: Gala Dinner

After two years, Anta Akhi France' team has organized the 17th edition of the Gala Dinner. A charity dinner which, this year, took place at the Buddha Bar Paris on December 1st, 2021.

Anta Akhi wishes to warmly thank all our friends as well as all the sponsors who participated in the success of this exquisite evening, without forgetting each and every member of Anta Akhi France' team, for their hard work and for all the effort they put in order to help us ensure a life of dignity for our young adults with disabilities.



Appeal

Dear Friends, during these difficult times that we are going through, Anta Akhi always needs your support to help us ensure a continuous presence for our young adults with disabilities. We are asking you for the purchase of a new shower trolley, essential for the daily showers and the well-being of our young adults.

A stainless steel shower trolley costs \$7,900 and has a lifespan of about seven years.
Thank you for your generosity.

For your donations in Lebanon or elsewhere

Online payment: www.antaakhi.org

Emirates Lebanon Bank SAL – Ashrafieh, Beirut

Swift Code N°ELBKLBBXXX

IBAN (\$) - in Lebanon: LB46 0092 0000 0000 2331 1772 4200

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