



# ULYP Spring Newsletter

April 2018, Issue 26

Welcome to ULYP's first newsletter of 2018. Since our last publication, we launched a new program, grew existing programs and published our 2017 Annual Report. We thank each and every one of you for your continued support of our work and mission. Please find the Annual Report on ULYP's [website](#).

In this issue, we highlight ULYP's activities with children, youth, parents, women, university students and teachers.



# Change Starts With Education

ULYP's newest program, CHANGE, builds on the lessons learned and best practices we have extracted from our work opening doors through education.

CHANGE works with 75 Palestinian refugees from Syria and Syrian refugees currently in grade 12, working to unlock potential and supporting them through the door to higher education successfully. Over the course of two semesters, the CHANGE students engage in intensive English courses, soft skills training, university counseling and assistance with university applications.

The program team conducted an extensive community outreach activity, interviewed over 100 potential candidates and selected the final 75 who exhibited enthusiasm for investing their time and energy to improve their situations. The participants come from 15 schools located between Beirut and Saida. The program was launched in February and very quickly a culture of cohesion and motivation was established. The students made friends, found commonalities and supported one another to reach a higher standard of English. The students show commitment to their education, to the program and to themselves, their peers and their teachers. Although the program is still new, we are already noticing the change. With every class we hear more English and witness the unlocking of more potential. The program's slogan says it all: Change starts with education.

CHANGE is in partnership with The Asfari Foundation.

**CHANGE**  
...starts with education



## G is for Goat



Rain or shine, HAPPY students kept warm hearts and minds through a changing winter. 100 children inaugurated our new preschool, where they enjoyed learning new letters and vocabulary, engaging with classic children's tales and exploring their creative sides! Students began and ended each day with a joyful song and dance, and practiced cooperation and healthy behaviors at snack time and recess. This season, students particularly enjoyed reading their own books on the carpet or exploring outside. Using goats eating grass to demonstrate the letter G was a particular hit! Their teachers also appreciated learning new teaching methods which they are eager to implement back in their own classrooms.

HAPPY is run in partnership with United Palestinian Appeal.

## Sharing Joy

A new year means a new semester of SHARE! With its different components, SHARE continues to be true to its name: Spreading Hope and Reviving Education. This semester, a new cohort of students joined the sports and arts component of the program and were excited by the various activities they have engaged in so far. In addition to playing basketball and football, the students enjoyed art, drama and circus classes to explore their creative sides.



SHARE also welcomed students back to its English component, where they continued to learn and discover in the positive, supportive environment they have built together. Beyond improving their English, SHARE students have formed strong friendships and shown great personal growth. Students ventured on a field trip to the circus for the first time ever, where Circ-en-ciel put on an impressive performance to the delight of the students. One group also attended a science class at the American Community School Beirut (ACS) where they collaborated with peers to conduct experiments relating to density, volume, lung capacity and more.

The parents of the SHARE children support the program and participate in awareness sessions on supporting the education and development of their children.

SHARE is funded by Foundation Beit Jiddi.



## Coding & Caring

Building each other up: according to our TLC participants, “That’s just what girls do.” Through a series of coding and computing workshops, 100 middle-school girls transform from computer novices into aficionadas, becoming familiar with both hardware and software. They study the fundamentals of coding, then convert their new knowledge into making art, music, logos and virtual worlds. The girls also apply their lessons to the real, ‘offline’ world – for example, by realizing how following exact instructions helps avoid missteps!

TLC Code Club empowers girls by exposing them to and training them in a cutting-edge field from which they are often excluded, boosting their ambition, confidence, conflict-resolution and creativity. Expert sessions reinforce these skills and emphasize celebrating diversity and staying healthy through good body image, nutrition and exercise. Just as importantly, the girls balance their many accomplishments with supporting and appreciating each other!

TLC Code Club is funded by TheirWorld.



## Student Spotlight - Malak, TLC

Malak started TLC Code Club in February with very little exposure to computers or the English language. Her education has been interrupted since her family fled their home in Syria, but she has sought out opportunities to continue studying even outside the formal system.

TLC Code Club has been an exciting opportunity for her to learn about computers and coding for the first time. Although Malak initially found it challenging to work with the Kano Kits, her persistence and excitement to learn meant she never gave up. With the support of her peers and the TLC team, Malak is already much more confident and skillful when using computers. This opportunity to not just access a computer, but to learn how it is built and how to code, is “life-changing,” as she describes it!



# Increasing Opportunities for Higher Education

The spring brought new growth for the Bridge Program. 445 currently enrolled students began their spring semester, continuing to serve as inspiration to future university applicants in their communities. Another 255 new scholarship applicants have knocked on our doors, full of hope and ready to take advantage of the opportunity that Bridge provides to pursue higher education. The Bridge team has been providing academic counseling, application support and scholarship matching in order to help these students, who come from refugee and underprivileged backgrounds, remember that everyone has the right to education.

As the number of Bridge students grows, so do the opportunities available to them. ULYP was invited to attend the Education City Regional Counselors Program (ECRCP) organized by the Qatar Foundation in January. ECRP gave the Bridge Team the chance to connect with university admissions offices, foundations and other counseling professionals in order to better support future applicants and Bridge students currently attending university in Qatar.



## Bridge Stars!

We are proud of our students, Mahmoud Al Housary and Nour Rmied, who attended their first White Coat Ceremony after completing the first year of Medicine at Yeditepe University!

Mahmoud and Nour received scholarships to study Medicine at Yeditepe in Istanbul. They are pursuing their dreams after their unrelenting efforts in high school and commitment to education. Their hard work and success is definitely proof that anything is possible!



## A Fresh Look

ULYP's campus in Dibbiyeh is brighter and more welcoming thanks to the help of student volunteers from the American Community School Beirut (ACS). As a part of their 'week-without-walls,' ACS students and teachers joined the ULYP team and volunteers to undertake a number of campus beautification projects. Campus was buzzing with ACSers painting the walls and stairs of our preschool, designing new posters for the common areas in and around the campus and organizing the stacks of generously donated books we receive each term. The day was a triumphant success, and the results speak for themselves.

Not only is our library now beautifully organized and re-stocked, but the much-needed injection of color into both the preschool and the common areas has brought smiles to every person who comes to ULYP. It just goes to show how much can be achieved when we all get together and work as a team! Thank you, ACS, for all



## Spring Cleaning

Are you doing your spring cleaning and looking for a place to donate some of your things? While our caring coats campaign is over now, we continue to collect clothes donations through our new partnership with FabricAid. ULYP now is one of the first organizations to join hands with FabricAid and houses one of their blue collection bins. For every kilogram of clothing we collect, we get \$0.50 that we will put towards growing our pool of beneficiaries. The initial amount collected will go towards the HAPPY program to help more children enter schools with a strong foundation. Through this partnership, we will also be part of FabricAid's network and benefit from other donations as they materialize.

Bring your clothing donations to ULYP and we will put them in the blue bin. Once the bin is full, FabricAid will proceed with pick up and our beneficiaries will feel the impact.



## Breaking the Glass Ceiling

ULYP's founder, Melek, was honored in Istanbul on the 10th of March for her work with underprivileged youth and for being a committed social activist. She was celebrated as an exemplary Turkish woman who 'broke the glass ceiling' at the Cam Tavani Delen Kadınlar Platform conference meeting.



## Volunteer Spotlight - Claire Diederichs

As we made our way to ULYP's campus in Dibbiyeh for my first day volunteering with HAPPY, I realized that I had no idea what to expect or whether the few words of Arabic I had mastered would actually get me through my first day of preschool. By the time we arrived on campus, I was beset with questions like: What if no one likes me? What if I do something embarrassing? What if I forget the Arabic words I learned?

With my anxiety rising, I nervously entered the classroom only to see 25 children's faces all laden with the very same expression as mine. As each of us looked around the room, recognizing ourselves in one another, we became united and I started to notice courage replacing the looks of doubt. I sensed the eager excitement in the room growing as the nervousness slowly disappeared, and before I knew it, as we all joined hands to sing the hokey-pokey. Any worries I had before were replaced by feelings of opportunity and hope.

Now, I wake up every morning confident that it will be another HAPPY day, motivated by the smiles on the children's faces as they have fun learning and exploring. I am halfway through my time volunteering on ULYP's HAPPY Program, yet I already find myself struggling to imagine returning to my 'pre-HAPPY' life in the UK.

