

People Are Born To Shine!

A newsletter rooted in the Christian faith created to inspire and support all people, irrespective of nationality, race, and religion.



ACTS OF KINDNESS

Christmas Caroling for a Cause . . .

Sharing the joy of Christmas with the less fortunate

With an initiative from Mrs. Patricia Cherfan, and in collaboration with The Naji Cherfan Foundation, family and friends have gathered this year to celebrate Christmas with the less fortunate, but this time with a special twist! Three generations of children, mothers, and grandmothers formed a choir. They trained for two months with choirmaster and composer Reverend Father Khalil Rahme and performed live on stage of the Jesus And Mary School on Dec 17, 2010. The audience was comprised of 300 spectators, among them more than 130 children under 12 years of age, who were the honored guests of the ceremony. The children came from vulnerable groups and less fortunate families (la Colonie du Groupement Social Scout Jounieh, Mission De Vie, and Christian Charity Association Hadath), to celebrate Christmas and enjoy Christmas prayers. More than 220 children received presents, candies, chocolate and food from Santa Claus!



“What brought us together was the true spirit of Christmas”

“What brought us together was not our beautiful voices” says Mrs. Patricia Cherfan, “What brought us together was the true spirit of Christmas”!

The sparkle of the event was the astonishing dance performance by the students of Father Roberts Institution for the Young Deaf, who presented three of their most amazing dances in spite of their hearing impairment.

“When we extend a helping hand to the

less fortunate, we adopt the true spirit of Christmas, and we become much stronger human beings. What a beautiful way to celebrate Christmas!” said Dr. Mary Choucair Traboulsi, as she thanked all who coordinated the event, especially the grandmothers and children who participated in the choir.

This event was dedicated with love to the soul of Naji Cherfan. There will be a short video posted to the NCF website soon so please check it out!

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Peace on Earth?

I wouldn't want to pick a fight with a sky full of angels, but I must admit that I've always wondered...



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Knowing Your Vitamin D Levels May Save Your Life

MORE AND MORE STUDIES are revealing the benefits of having plenty of vitamin D as well as the dangers of having too little. For decades vitamin D was known to help the bones absorb essential minerals. However, recent studies show that D does much more! "There is a vitamin D receptor on every one of our cells," says Michael F. Holick, PhD, MD, author of *The Vitamin D Solution*. This could be the key to preventing everything from migraines to cancer.

Recent studies reveal that 53 percent of women, 41 percent of men, and 61 percent of kids have insufficient levels of D. Our bodies naturally produce the vitamin through exposure to the sun's UV-B rays, however, we don't absorb nearly enough sunlight to manufacture an adequate amount. Fortunately, you can boost your D levels. See helpful tips on page 4.

HIGH LEVELS OF D ARE LINKED TO:

GREATER RESISTANCE TO VIRUSES

People with high levels of vitamin D get sick less often than those with low levels, and when they do, they recover much faster. Vitamin D instructs your white blood cells to manufacture a protein that kills infections.

LESS CANCER

People with adequate D levels have a 30 to 50 percent lower chance of breast cancer, and a 50 percent lower chance of colon cancer. D regulates some of the genes responsible for cellular growth and survival, and "helps shut down out-of-control growth to prevent malignancy. If that doesn't work, it will help kill the cell. And if a tumor grows anyway, it will work to cut off blood supply."

HIGHER CANCER SURVIVAL RATE

At the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, researchers found that colon cancer patients with high levels of D had a 39 percent lower chance of dying from the disease. This may actually apply to all cancers, says Edward Giovannucci, MD, ScD, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health.

REDUCED RISK OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Researchers believe in D's protective effect on the brain: It regulates calcium levels, enhances the conduction of electricity through neurons, and detoxifies cells, in addition to other benefits.



LOW LEVELS OF D ARE LINKED TO:

HEART DISEASE

People with insufficient D levels have an 80 percent greater risk of narrowing of the arteries according to a long-term study at Johns Hopkins. This might have to do with D's role in regulating more than 200 genes, controlling inflammation, and its possible involvement in modulating blood pressure.

DIABETES

Since D stimulates insulin production, it's no surprise that too little is associated with diabetes. Research has also shown that kids who are deficient in D have a 200 percent greater chance of developing type 1 diabetes.

CHRONIC PAIN

A 2008 study showed that more than 25 percent of chronic pain patients have low D levels, which could be attributed to the fact that D helps control neuromuscular function. A 2010 study correlated low levels of the vitamin with migraines and headaches. A dearth of D may prevent blood vessels from constricting and dilating properly, which can lead to throbbing pain.

DEPRESSION

Vitamin D may help to stimulate serotonin production, which could explain why people who don't get enough are more susceptible to the blues.

HIGHER RISK OF DEATH

After analyzing the D levels of more than 13,000 people, researchers at Johns Hopkins found that those with the lowest levels had a 26 percent greater overall chance of dying—from any cause.

Source: Nancy Kalish, *Oprah.com*

*We know at times there will be strife;
On this we must agree —
When conflict drops into our lives,
We'll solve it peacefully.*
—Fasick



OUR DAILY BREAD

Peace On Earth?

Read: Luke 2: 8-14

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. — John 14:27

I wouldn't want to pick a fight with a sky full of angels, but I must admit that I've always wondered about the promise of peace the angelic host made to the shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem. For the last 2,000 years, peace on our planet has been, at best, a rare commodity. Wars continue to ravage innocent lives, domestic violence is a growing calamity, divorce rates soar, churches split, and peace in our restless and wayward hearts seems to be an elusive dream.

Where is the promised peace? Actually, on reflection, we can see that Jesus brought all that is needed for peace in our world. He taught the principles of peace, calling for people to love their neighbors as they love themselves. And as He was leaving this planet, He promised, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you" (John 14:27). He told us to turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, forgive offenses, reject greed, tolerate each other's weaknesses, live to serve and love one another as He has loved us.

It seems that, in large part, peace is up to us. Paul verifies that in Roman 12:18 "As much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." This Christmas, let's make peace our gift to the world in which we live as we reflect the Prince of Peace.

When we experience peace with God, we can share His peace with others.

Source: Joe Stowell, *Our Daily Bread*, odb.org

Happy New Year

Happy New Year
from the Naji Cherfan
Foundation to all of our
friends around the globe.



May the new year shower you with blessings and much love. . .

NUTRITION

Vitamin D: Dos and Don'ts



Vitamin D Deficiency Risk Factors

- If you live in a country where the sun doesn't always shine, your body can't produce enough vitamin D.
- You over-apply sunscreen which will completely block helpful UV-B rays.
- You have a dark skin which means you absorb less sunshine due to elevated amounts of melanin.
- You rely on a multi-vitamin for your daily dose of D. Multi-vitamins do not contain enough D to satisfy your daily needs.
- You are obese. Vitamin D is stored in fat, and people who have a greater amount of fat tend to have less D circulating in their blood for use throughout the body. In general, the higher your BMI, the lower your D levels.

Source: Nancy Kalish, Oprah.com

DO GET TESTED

Unless osteoporosis is suspected, doctors rarely order this test. Everyone should get tested, especially those with a family history of cancer or autoimmune disease.

DON'T ASSUME YOUR DIET GIVES YOU ENOUGH

Foods such as fish, eggs, some cheeses, and liver containing vitamin D are generally not enough to cover your daily needs. You'd have to eat 95 eggs to come close! Keep in mind, not all foods claiming to contain vitamin D actually do!

DO GET SOME SAFE SUN EXPOSURE

General recommendations are ten to 15 minutes of sun exposure on arms and legs every day.

DO TAKE A SUPPLEMENT

2,000 IU daily for adults and 1,000 IU for kids is the safe dosage generally recommended by physicians.

PRAYER CORNER

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

Robert Louis Stevenson

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Simple Keys to a Joyous Life

Being happy is a choice we make every day. We wake up every morning and decide “I am going to be happy today.” At least this is what experts on happiness say. However, the fact is, some people manage to control their mood and have inner contentment, while others cannot manage to put a smile on their faces most of the time.

It seems that being happy or unhappy depends on many factors, some of them essential. Some key examples were mentioned in a wide scale search, such as states of relationships, career-related, health-linked, etc.

Inna Segal, creator of *Visionary Intuitive Healing* and the best selling author of *The Secret Language of Your Body*, presents seven keys which can be used by anyone to enhance their life, and experience more joy and happiness.

VALUE YOURSELF

Treat yourself well, just as you treat the most important person in your life! Appreciate, and be kind and loving to yourself. When you make a mistake, forgive yourself.

BE COMMITTED TO HAPPINESS

Commit to happiness. Recognize that happiness is your right, and choose to be happy every day. Make a list of what makes you happy and make it a priority to fulfill your list every chance you get.

BE OPEN-MINDED

Being open minded means being flexible. Being flexible can lead to unique experiences which can change your perspective on people and encourage you to embrace life.

LOOK AFTER YOUR HEALTH

It is much easier to feel happy when you have great health and vitality versus feeling ill. Respect your body and take a time out if you feel tired. Follow a healthy diet and exercise whenever you can.



KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR

Practice laughing whenever you can, especially when a situation gets tough. Work on developing a sense of humor and seek originality in life.

BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF LAUGHTER

Someone who laughs a lot simply keeps the channels to joy open! And it is contagious!

APPRECIATE THE LUCKY CHARM OF HAPPINESS

Happy people attract attention; it's like having a lucky charm! Happiness can help us combat fear, handle obstacles, accomplish our goals, and enjoy great relationships!

Source: Inna Segal, innasegal.com, beliefnet.com

Will You Further NCF's Work?

If you like the work NCF is doing and would like to participate, we invite you to join us as members of our Board with the goal of duplicating our activities in your country. Please contact us for more information.

NCF@najicherfanfoundation.org

Quoteable!

Many people mistake our work for our vocation. Our vocation is the love of Jesus.

— Mother Teresa

FAMILY & PARENTING

Teaching Children How to be **TOLERANT**



Tolerance is when religion, race, ethnicity, or gender do not play a role in the way we judge people.

TOLERANCE IS WHEN prejudices are put aside and diversity is welcomed and accepted. Tolerance is when religion, race, ethnicity, or gender do not play a role in the way we judge people. Tolerance is when we rely on our common humanity rather than our differences and choose to live in harmony. How a person treats people depends largely on what he or she was taught as a child. Here are some ideas that can begin to teach tolerance to children.

HELP YOUR CHILD GET USED TO NEW PEOPLE

Young children are blessed with a particular skill that keeps them unaware of differences! However, they soon learn to differentiate between their parents, with whom they feel safe, and strangers toward whom they may feel anxiety and uncertainty. Parents can help their kids feel safe next to unfamiliar faces by encouraging them to spend time with them in the parents' presence at first, then gradually leaving them with trusted caregivers.

INTRODUCE DIVERSITY

Curious about everything, kids notice differences rather quickly. As they grow older, traits like short, tall, thin, fat, skin color, and gender differences become apparent. Parents can encourage curiosity by pointing out differences in hair, color, etc. and by giving the child the opportunity to experience games, dolls, puppets, books and toys that reflects various characters, cultures and races.

HANDLE EMBARRASSING MOMENTS

Kids can be very loud when commenting on people's differences. "That man is very fat, mom!!" or "Why is that lady so short?" Of course no malice is intended. How parents respond is important. The reply should be simple, clear and always positive. "She is short because her mommy and daddy are short." It is also crucial to teach children to make comments about appearances in a discrete way or wait until they are home because they may hurt the feelings of others.

GET BEYOND STEREOTYPES

Kids in elementary school often think in black and white terms. To them, other kids are either good or bad, best friends or worst enemies. Girls and boys might no longer play together, and kids can exclude other children who don't look or act like them. You can help kids review their all-or-nothing thinking by commenting on their statements in a positive manner. For example, pointing out that "not all boys are bad" by naming a kind male friend or by saying "not all girls can't do math" and reminding that practice makes perfect.

CHALLENGE PREJUDICED WORDS

Teach children from a very early age that name-calling and judgmental comments are cruel and wrong. Parents should monitor and put an end to "hate" words against other people. Give children positive alternatives and help them see the positive aspects of every person.

EXPOSE KIDS TO DIFFERENT CULTURES

The more children are exposed to different cultures and traditions, the more comfortable they become with all types of people. Parents ought to create opportunities for children to be with people who are different from them and get them involved in other families' traditions and holidays. Explore differences through food by cooking a traditional meal from a different country while talking about the culture and traditions.

WORK TOWARD A COMMON GOAL

Encourage children from different cultural backgrounds to work toward a common goal, which can increase cooperation. Activities encouraging cooperation could be environmentally-friendly such as cleaning neighborhoods or planting trees, or charity-related such as volunteering at an elderly person's house or raising money to help orphans.

Source: beliefnet.com

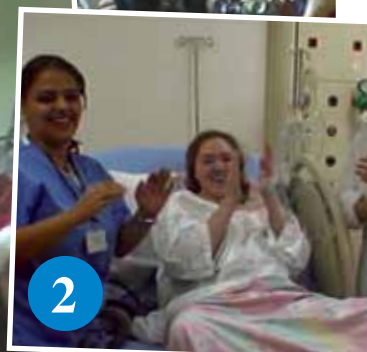
THE NAJI CHERFAN FOUNDATION CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Christmas Mission 2010

For the second consecutive year, volunteers of the Naji Cherfan Foundation (NCF) toured hospitals on Dec 25th on a mission to celebrate Christmas with those unable to celebrate the birth of Jesus in the comfort of their homes. The Choir of St. Elie Church Antelias, led by Brother Ziad Khalil, along with volunteers from "La Chorale Des Jeunes" choir have led this group of family and friends to share the joy of the birth of Jesus.

Three hospitals were visited in the Maten district: **Abou Jaoudei, Arz, and Middle East Hospital.** Father Joseph Abdel Sater joined the group and sang Christmas songs while praying for each patient. "What was so special about these visits were the ones we did in the pediatric and nursery department; praying for the newborns and dancing with the sick children deeply touched my heart," said George Daher, NCF volunteer. Prayers were distributed along with sweets and chocolate to everyone. Patients and families, nurses and physicians celebrated Christmas with joy and laughter. Brother Khalil said he felt the true spirit of Christmas while touring the hospitals. "I felt like Jesus was born!" he said.

The Naji Cherfan Foundation would like to take this opportunity to extend a special thank you to our dedicated volunteers, who are among the first to support the NCF Christmas Mission, and whose contribution and dedication to the NCF activities has been exemplary! Thank you Marleine Nassrany, Zeina Costantine, Joyce Abou Jaoudei, George and Jad Daher, Diala and Michel Nassrany, and Sylvana and Marc Karam!



1. Students signing songs with Brother Ziad 2. Woman in labor during hospital tour 3. Part of the team singing 4. Choir singing

Christmas Celebration with the Poor and the Needy

The NCF teamed up with the Christian Charity Association, Hadath to organize a Christmas event on December 27th for more than 600 children of needy families. "Christmas wouldn't have been present in their homes if they hadn't celebrated with us this year," said Mrs. Malvina Tarraf, president of the charity. The event was animated by a talented team led by Giselle Hachem Zared, Odeon Theater, who was a main contributor to the

artistic side of the theater, performing the beautiful play called White Ball, and also gave a very special discount for the event! Santa Claus also joined the crowd and distributed toys and sweets to all children!

This event was also made possible due to the generous contribution of Mr. Fadi Khalife, a member of honor at the Christian Charity Association's board, and who has contributed the expenses of the gifts, theater, media, audiovisual material and much more!



I WAS IN A ROOM full of people I did not know, and the youngest was at least 15 years older than me. I had reddish hair (not serious!), and was wearing a dress of rainbow colors (not suitable!). That room felt way too big, and I was way too small inside. Then, out of nowhere (or actually through the door) you came inside and saved my night, and maybe my whole life. From that very room, from that charity dinner, a great school in Zambia and a great friendship, a timeless one, came about!

You taught me how to feel comfortable in a room of black-tied grownups, even though I was wearing the dress of a 15 year old! Then again, that's how life is. Whoever you are, whatever you do, wherever you go, it's you that counts. Once you learn to love yourself the way you are, then you become the sunshine! Once you learn to be

HOW I REMEMBER NAJI...

happy, happiness comes all the way to you no matter what. And once you love, you are being loved... So loved! That's what you taught me, Najji, and what I am trying to spread around now.

One thing I still regret is postponing our weekly gatherings and that dinner at SkyBar; postponing our daily life and not giving ourselves to the exact moment. I remember you telling me, "You are not here when you are here and if you don't stay here when you are here, then you are lost." I was lost, Najji mou, trying to catch my life, trying to find the best career opportunity, the best one to have kids with, the best house and the best of everything. That was until I found the happiness in small things and in God. Now I just welcome every day as my last, and I cherish the moment, because you did this, and I know that you lived happily! It's not surprising that each time I remember you, I smile!

I want to thank you for continuing to visit me in my dreams, for making fun of Greeklish and saying "boro na miliso me to manager", for crossing my mind every now and then when I need a friend, for making me remember Athens and Kifissia with the best memories, and for all those I could not really tell. Thanks for appearing in the room that night, and then in my life and now in my dreams. Thanks for being there, Najji. I really

hope I am in your sky each time you need me around. I miss your eyes and your friendship, and that freaky toy making freaky sounds in the back of your car!

*Thanks for appearing
in the room that
night, and then in my
life and now in my
dreams. Thanks for
being there, Najji. I
really hope I am in
your sky each time
you need me around.*

We just grow older apart now, but we do not grow apart Take care Najji, till we meet again.

— Aspa Onay

People Are Born To Shine!

People are Born To Shine is a bi-monthly, electronic newsletter owned by The Najji Cherfan Foundation focusing on spirituality and health. The objective of *People are Born to Shine* is to raise awareness among our readers on health challenges and disease prevention, while inspiring them to live a fuller, more abundant life guided by Christian values. This newsletter is dedicated to those affected by brain injuries.

The content has been carefully selected from sources considered reliable and accurate, however The Najji Cherfan Foundation assumes no responsibility for inaccurate information.

For subscriptions, comments, contributions and suggestions please contact us: info@najjicherfanfoundation.org

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