

Olive Kids - improving the lives of Palestinian children

Olive Kids had somewhat of a re-birth on the night of its 3rd annual fundraising dinner on November 29 in Melbourne. Internationally recognised as the United Nations Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the event certainly proved there is enormous support and solidarity for the long suffering Palestinians raising \$18,398.95.

The two principal goals of the evening were to highlight the ongoing and very dire circumstances that continue to befall Palestinian children and also to hopefully secure sponsorship for 50 orphans from Gaza.

Based upon this, we are extremely proud to announce that the night was an enormous success.

The generosity of the 300 plus (sell-out) crowd in attendance who dug deep to ensure each of the 50 children were successfully sponsored cannot be understated. This wonderful sponsorship success means \$30,000 will be going directly to Palestinian orphans in Gaza annually. These children now have a very real chance of improving their lives thanks to our members and friends.



Not an empty seat in the house.

The evening's proceedings began with a humbling summary of the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territories by the event's MC, Mr. Taimor Hazou. Taimor told all those in attendance that the Israeli assault earlier this year increased to more than 50,000, the number of orphans in Gaza. The orphan's plight was well and truly addressed by Mr. Tarek Abu-Shaban, the *Olive Kids* Gaza orphans relationship manager. Thanks to his extensive insight, the crowd were fully aware of just how terrible the circumstances in Gaza are for Palestinians.



MC for the evening, Mr Taimor Hazou.



Mr Tarek Abu-Shaban from Olive Kids.

We were honoured to have Professor Paddy Dewan give a short presentation on his very personal experiences with Palestinian children. Professor Dewan has travelled to Gaza a number of times and operated on these children who lack access to the medical expertise that Professor Dewan has. During his slide-show presentation Professor Dewan also showed how he was able to train some of the local staff in Gaza. Finally, in association with Moira Kelly's Children's First Foundation and with the assistance of Kind Kuts for Kids, collectively, we have been able to bring out children whose circumstances are so dire, they were flown to Australia and treated here as part of our emergency child evacuation program.

In keeping with the Palestinian theme, the El Rozana Dabkeh Troupe put on a wonderful performance of traditional Palestinian line dancing known as Dabkeh. The girls, and one young boy, practise weekly to ensure that the cultural aspects of Palestine are not lost even though we're some 14,000kms away.



The Dabkeh troupe.

Marym Alagha a first generation Palestinian-Australian, who earlier this year visited two UNRWA refugee camps in Jordan with her sister and mother, gave a very personal account of how difficult it is for Palestinians living outside the occupied territories. Earlier this year, *Olive Kids* facilitated the collection and shipping of a 20 foot container full of new and near new clothing for Palestinian refugees. This clothing directly benefited 353 families in the Zarqa & Marka refugee camps in Jordan. In addition, another container has literally (November 2009) has just been sent also.



Marym Alagha speaks about her visit to the refugee camps.

Still bearing in mind the children of Palestine, it was important that we also provided some light-hearted entertainment in the form of a comic duo from two great supports of the evening's events, Nazeem and Aamer as well as a raffle and auction, which thanks to the exuberance of the auctioneer for the night, Mr. Nasser Mashni helped us raise thousands of dollars.

It was a truly fantastic evening that really showed just how much compassion there is for the often forgotten victims of war, the children. Thankfully though, *Olive Kids* and its many generous supporters played a small part in making the lives of some of these deprived children a little better.

We would like to thank all those who attended, signed up for sponsorship of orphans, the venue (Aurora Receptions), the many generous sponsors who gave money as well as products to raise funds and the families of the *Olive Kids* board members for their tireless efforts to make the evening such a great success.

Further information about *Olive Kids* including our [2008/9 AGM](#) report is available on our website, www.olivekids.org.au. If you wish to contact us, please email info@olivekids.org.au.