

DO ONE THING

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Volunteering Diary of a field trip to Jerusalem
Research RAAB and Peace for Sight updates



**St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group**

JERUSALEM SCENE

Winter 2019

Treatment for all regardless of ethnicity, religion, or ability to pay



Never losing sight

EMERGENCY APPEAL UPDATE ON PAGE 4

QUALITY EYE CARE FOR ALL



Treatment for all regardless of ethnicity, religion, or ability to pay

I'm proud to have been part of the St John Eye Hospital family for almost 30 years. My roles have ranged so much over this time. I started out as a staff nurse, and then became a nurse tutor and eventually director of nursing. I have learnt so much working closely with six chief executive officers during this period and have gained such great insight into the unique challenges the hospital faces. With the hospital's support I completed a master's degree in public health management and a PhD in advanced nursing practice. In 2009 I became the hospital's first homegrown nursing and allied health director and executive committee member.

As some of you may know, I was recently appointed chief executive officer of the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group at a time when we've reached an exceptional level of quality care and patient safety. Our recent reaccreditation by The Joint Commission International (see p 8) confirms that safe, quality care has become a core value of our mission. We continue to reach out to even more disadvantaged people and treated close to 150,000 patients in 2018 – almost double the amount treated over the past decade. We couldn't have done this without our dedicated and hardworking staff.

Starting now, the senior management team and I will continue this great work by steering and inspiring the team through a unified strategic vision, and, most importantly, by upholding the hospital's mission, which is to deliver quality eye care to people who need it. One of my main objectives over the next five years is to enhance the sustainability of the hospital and its services, which includes our much-needed mobile outreach service. Private practice schemes for Jerusalem-based patients who can afford to pay for their care are also underway. I'm also aiming to revisit agreements and contracts with both Israeli and Palestinian Ministries of Health, UNRWA and other health insurance firms. However, first and foremost we will continue to build on delivering quality eye care to those who need it most.

Strengthening our much-valued partnerships with the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem and Moorfield's Eye Hospital in the UK is also essential – we must prioritise the training, education and development of our clinical staff. Currently we have 268 personnel caring for over 147,600 patients, every year.

Clearly, we must continue to invest in our staff – they are the heartbeat of our organisation. Without their expertise our patients would not receive the vital ophthalmic care they deserve. ○

268
PERSONNEL
CARING FOR OVER
147.6K
PATIENTS
EVERY YEAR



Staying focused

Researching preventable blindness

The Palestinian population has a rate of blindness ten times higher than in the West, yet there has been little research into the causes. Meaning that those attempting to combat preventable blindness in the region have little understanding of where to focus their efforts.

The Rapid Assessment of Avoidable Blindness (RAAB) is a population-based survey of adults aged 50 and over, which emerged through a partnership with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 2018. This collaborative research project has situated us as leaders of thought in the ophthalmic field. During this study we screened 3,848 patients in their homes using cutting-edge clinical techniques. The project concluded in May 2019, the findings of which have shown some invaluable data.

This latest research tells us that 38% of the people that we researched have untreated cataracts, and 24% suffer with diabetic retinopathy, which are the main causes of avoidable blindness across the region. This reveals interesting data when compared to earlier findings by St John Eye Hospital in 2008. Our 2019 research shows that in the course of a decade less patients are suffering with untreated cataracts, yet there's a significant increase in diabetes-related eye damage.

The startling upsurge of diabetes within this age group is creating serious impact on eye health, which services in the region are struggling to keep up with. This clearly shows us that ophthalmic care needs addressing urgently. We must continue to develop effective strategies for tackling avoidable blindness.

Dr. Nahed Mikki explains the importance of these results

"The results of this study prove what we have suspected for some time – that rates of diabetic retinopathy are growing, alongside the increasing rates of diabetes across the region. It's clear that this condition is a concern for Palestinians. From this data we can develop a best-practice model to tackle it – within our unique constraints – and help us understand where best to focus our efforts in the coming decade. Although we're in a strong position, we urgently need further investment to help us continue this important work."

The medical research was only made possible with the generous support from the Fred Hollows Foundation, CBM and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We also thank the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine for their coordination and training, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics for their technical help with the data collection. ○

SAVING SIGHT CHANGING LIVES

Targets achieved but financial challenges continue

A recent and very difficult challenge for the St John Eye Hospital was in October 2018 when the US Administration announced it would cut funding to Palestinians across the region. As a long-term recipient of USAID, this left the hospital cut from this funding, and with an immediate funding gap of £500,000 to try to replenish.

FUNDING CRISIS

We were forced to call for support to ensure that we'd be able to continue our services, and in November 2018 we launched an emergency appeal. We were overwhelmed by the incredible show of solidarity and financial support received from our closest supporters and the St John Pories, globally. We raised an unbelievable £551,425 which filled the funding hole. However, this doesn't mean our financial struggles are over. We now face the challenge of replacing the withdrawn funding quota that was due this year. Our main concern is seeing how these cuts have impacted on our vital mobile outreach programme.

REACHING REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Due to this sudden cut of critical funding, we had no option but to decommission both our mobile outreach vans in the West Bank. We have managed to secure enough funding to get one van back on the road, but we urgently need to get the second van back in action, fast.

Since 1980, these vans have enabled our mobile outreach teams to travel across the region each week, delivering free eye care and health education to people who otherwise would not be able to access it. This mobile service is crucial, as the teams are able to share health care knowledge within these remote communities – treating people who would otherwise not be able access eye care

ACCESSING CRUCIAL HEALTH CARE

Outreach programmes such as these are essential across the region as currently people living here are 10 times more likely to go blind than those in the West. This is primarily due to lack of health care access, alongside poverty and genetics. Thousands

**PEOPLE IN THE
REGION ARE**

10x

**MORE LIKELY
TO GO BLIND
THAN THOSE
IN THE WEST**

of people live in cut-off communities and refugee camps and a large proportion of intrafamily marriage has resulted in a rise of inherited retinal disease.

Regular eye screening is the main solution in ending preventable blindness, as patients can be taken care of on-the-spot and simple eye conditions are detected and treated before they develop further. Medical intervention of children with squints before they reach 7-years-old is also fundamental in creating change, if simple issues aren't corrected, it can result in irreversible blindness. Regular screening and treatment leads to healthier and happier children and adults who will be able to contribute positively to their community and families.

HOW HAS THIS AFFECTED LIVES?

These cuts are directly affecting the lives of thousands of Palestinians. In 2018, our mobile outreach services reached almost 20,000 patients, a third of whom are children. Currently, we are only able to treat less than half this amount. Withdrawing this much-needed service is not an option. Getting our decommissioned van back on the road – as fast as possible – is vital. This means we will be able to visit our 320 locations across the region once every six months and not once a year. It is critical that we are able to screen children as often as once every six months so we can detect and treat their eye conditions before it's too late.

"Our free outreach programme is the main tool treating more of the people who need us most" explains outreach manager, Khaled Zuaier.

We are hugely grateful to everyone who has helped support this invaluable work, which we hope to continue with further fundraising. We are dedicated in ending preventable blindness for thousands across the region. ○



A child in the West Bank has eye screening at one of our outreach clinics. It is vital that children in this region are screened every six months.



Established in 1980, our Mobile Outreach vans bring free medical aid to the most remote and disadvantaged communities throughout the West Bank and Gaza.



Sight for sore eyes

Staff case study Ophthalmic specialist, Dr Mohammed Daraghmeh


Throughout the past year I've been working as a clinical assistant in our busy paediatric department. This is the area of ophthalmology I'd like to specialise in. I'm passionate about being able to treat and care for children who suffer unnecessarily. Did you know 80% of blindness in our region is preventable or curable through early intervention? In 2018, we treated 43,910 children across our services. Many of these cases were complex, so these children needed close monitoring post-treatment to maintain the results. This is a challenge professionally if there isn't enough funding for training.

With support from the St John Eye Hospital's medical residency programme I qualified as an ophthalmic specialist in 2017. And, I recently started my paediatric fellowship training as part of the St John Joint Teaching Programme in collaboration with Moorfields Eye Hospital, London, which has been generously sponsored

by the Knights Templar. The St John Eye Hospital has enabled me to develop my medical skills to an incredibly high standard. I feel honoured to be part of this family as there have been many special moments.

One particular case was a seven month old baby who came in for routine check-up. We discovered she had a rare eye cancer called bilateral retinoblastoma, which had spread to the optic disc in one eye. We were able to advise her parents how to manage treatment under expert supervision. We're delighted to have caught the cancer early, which shows the importance of regular eye check-ups.

All of us in the paediatric team work closely together to ensure all aspects of care are delivered to a high standard. We also offer all paediatric services to the hospital group's branches throughout the region, as well as providing screening services for new-borns at the Order of Malta's Holy Family Hospital. This is especially important for premature babies, as in these cases the retina is often under-developed. Working in this field can be tough, but can be extremely rewarding as I get to solve life changing problems every single day.

The St John Eye Hospital is the main centre for eye care, and the only centre which offers complete ophthalmic services in the region. Dr Daraghmeh's salary is generously sponsored by the St John Priory in the USA. 

Dr Daraghmeh with a paediatric patient in our East Jerusalem Hospital (May 2019)

DID YOU KNOW?

80%

of blindness in the region is preventable or curable with early intervention

43,910

children treated across our services in 2018

INVEST IN THE BEST

STAFF CASE STUDY

STAFF NURSE RAWIA KAMAL



I graduated from the prestigious Sir Stephen Miller School of Nursing at St John Eye Hospital in 2000 and have been working at the hospital since 2001.

This nursing programme is dedicated to its training and produces specialists in the field whose core objective is to provide eye care to those who need it most. Without this foundational training I wouldn't have become the triage and senior staff nurse of the outpatients department in 2010.

This year I gained a master's degree in psychotherapy from Al Quds University. This has been invaluable in helping me have a deeper understanding of psychology. My patients trust me, which in turn encourages them to follow my instructions and take an active role in their treatment plans. It also allows me to better understand my role as carer. I'm now able to provide the very best care to our patients, even in the most challenging of circumstances.

The St John Eye Hospital is the leading provider of eye care in the region, which invests in the local Palestinian population to ensure a sustainable and consistent provision of world-class eye care. We offer up to 10 places each year to study on this revered nursing programme. Those who stay with us have opportunities for further career development, and a number of our graduates are now in upper management positions across our organisation. In 2018, eight nurses graduated from the course, and five medical residents continued their studies.

It's important to emphasise that a career in nursing not only helps save lives, but brings happiness and comfort to patients and their families. Quality and expert nursing

care is much-needed by the community.

A recent memorable case for me was 18-year old patient, Ibrahim, who has severe developmental disabilities as well as congenital analgesia syndrome. Patients with this syndrome never feel physical pain when injured. This lack of pain awareness can lead to multiple wounds, bruises and broken bones. Ibrahim couldn't walk and had an amputated hand, a scar over his left eye and keratoconjunctivitis sicca (severe dry eye) in his right eye, which caused near blindness. Despite these issues his smile continued to shine brightly.

As a senior staff nurse in the outpatient department my dream is to prepare a room for women to breastfeed. This can cause great anxiety for nursing mothers. The waiting area in the medical retina clinic also needs attending to, as it lacks air conditioning. It's too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer, which leads to discomfort our elderly diabetic patients. Furthermore, I believe that we need more investment in training for our nursing staff. It's vital that the team are up-to-date with best practice in order to deliver the highest standards of care possible. Only through financial support can we improve treatment conditions and facilitate training.

A huge thanks to the American Priory of St John for sponsoring my journey. Your contribution is helping me provide a high quality of care for ophthalmic patients. Staff Nurse Rawia Kamal is generously sponsored by the St John Priory in the USA. ☺

Nurturing expertise

The St John Eye Hospital continues to be the primary provider of expert ophthalmic nursing training in the Middle East.



Palestine has a nursing shortage with only two to four nurses per 1,000 people across the region. Although it can be difficult for Palestinians to leave the region to access ophthalmic nursing training, the St John Eye Hospital continues to be the primary provider of expert ophthalmic nursing training in the Middle East. We train between six and ten nurses every year who once qualified go on to treat thousands of patients. This program has produced over 200 graduate nurses, 65 of whom currently work for the hospital. ☺

"Training doctors and nurses is a vital part of St John Eye Hospital's mission to develop professional expertise. Blindness in Palestine is ten times higher than in the West. This visual impairment and blindness can be avoided if there are appropriate resources. Sadly, due to unprofessional practice, blindness can also be caused, particularly with cataracts – the major cause of blindness worldwide. This is why proper training is critical. All students on our nursing programme are contributing to eliminating blindness across the region. Everybody deserves proper eye health care, regardless of race, religion, age, gender, ethnicity."

Nasrallah Khalileh

Senior Lecturer at the Sir Stephen Miller School of Nursing, St John Eye Hospital

"We don't just train for the hospital, but for the community also."

Dr Ahmad Ma'ali

CEO




We're delighted to announce that the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital has been awarded the three year Joint Commission International (JCI) re-accreditation for quality and patient safety. This is wonderful news for us.

This demonstrates we are continuing to build on strengthening standards and maintaining our primary goal: to deliver quality eye care to those who desperately need it.

The JCI is a US-based organisation committed to best practice and patient safety – the gold standard in global health care. We're thrilled that they have recognised the results of our labour. We're committed to clinical quality, safety and delivering a positive patient experience, for everyone.

Of the 1,200 measurable elements of the JCI survey, we achieved almost 98% – our best result yet.

We're the only charitable provider of expert eye care across the region working toward preventing blindness. We believe this can be done by treating patients regardless of ethnicity, religion or ability to pay.

We can only function as a leading training facility for ophthalmologists and ophthalmic nurses with this ongoing accreditation. This is the hospital's third round of accreditation since 2013. This means that the hospital will now be certified until 2021. We couldn't have done this without the help of our loyal and dedicated staff. 

To receive such a high rating is a reflection of combined efforts to increase standards across the organisation ... high quality patient care and safety standards are top priorities for us. It's fantastic to see that we're improving. I would like to thank all our staff for their continued dedication. This is an achievement we can all be proud of.

DR. AHMAD MA'ALI, CEO



Seeing a way forward

Ground-breaking research in to retinal disease

Unfortunately, inherited retinal disease in Palestine is above average. This is due to almost half of all marriages in the region being intrafamilial. Without ground-breaking research into retinal disease, we are unable to help those who need it. This is why the Peace for Sight project was founded in 2016 by the St John Eye Hospital and the Hadassah Medical Center, with the help of German humanitarian organisation Johanniter Unfall Hilfe and the EU Peacebuilding Initiative. It is disappointing that due to the termination of EU funding, The Peace for Sight project has been forced the run on minimum expenditure, ceasing any further research developments.

However, we believe this is a temporary hurdle – exploring how to manage this impact on eye health drives this project forward. Our team of researchers have worked tirelessly

toward ascertaining a clearer understanding of these diseases, particularly through collaboration. To date, over 340 families are working with us to help see a way forward.

Some fantastic opportunities have developed through this innovative project. Colleague and friend Dr Yahya Sweity and I have received invaluable education through our training at the Hadassah Medical Center, where we specialised in retinal medicine. This training enabled us to not only establish invaluable partnerships moving forward, but also allowed us access to a robust data bank. Without their support we wouldn't have been able to even begin our research. Since the project's inception we have published two joint research papers with our colleagues in Hadassah – with more to follow – and have formed vital connections with fellow retinal researchers, globally.

Without funding, we would have been unable to recruit crucial team members, such as project coordinator Alice Aslainan, and lab technician Manar Ismail. Manar recently completed a course in next-generation research techniques at the Radboud University in the Netherlands. This training has helped us, as a team, diagnose patients more efficiently.

A large proportion of the families we work with were genetically diagnosed with the help of organisations across the region here and in Europe. These collaborations have proven to be invaluable. It is through these connections that we now have a much better chance at reaching breakthroughs and new diagnoses.

Working in this area of research can be frustrating as the results are not instantaneous. We are often the bearers of bad news, which has emotional impact on all of us. The conditions we treat seldom have an easy solution. Despite the challenges, we know we are leaders of the field with one goal: to create new ophthalmic breakthroughs, little by little.

We are saddened to see, first-hand, how the withdrawal of funding influences the lives of families that need our help. But we will not give up. We will continue to seek – and welcome – funding support to continue our primary aim: to provide retinal healthcare for hundreds of people in our region. Sustainable healthcare and productive livelihoods are basic human rights. We believe, with ongoing and loyal support, we can achieve both. 🟡

Healthy eyes + Healthy minds = Healthy children

Patient case study Kareem

It comes as no surprise that there is a psychological and social impact on children with severe squints and visible eye conditions. Being 'different' in this way can be devastating for families. Not just with confidence and self-esteem issues, but also how such a visual impairment can alter opportunities as young people enter adulthood.

Sadly girls, in particular, are more likely to suffer. Due to their impairments they are often excluded from school, unlikely to gain the education they deserve. This negatively impacts on their career opportunities, as well as having a family and contributing to their community.

This highlights how important it is to treat children with squints before they reach 7-years-old. If left untreated a squint – and other eye conditions – can cause permanent partial blindness. As our new CEO Dr. Ahmad Ma'ali states: "It's very sad to have this kind of negligence. If children aren't treated by this age, they'll have a whole life ahead of them with visual impairment or blindness. This is why we're focussing on paediatric care across the region. This is a critical issue."


St John Eye Hospital's core objective is to boost confidence and change the course of these children's lives by diagnosing and treating them as early as possible. An intervention by this age is crucial. We're the only paediatric specialist in the region, providing a critical service to many of the population's two million children who need eye care support.

One of the children we cared for is Kareem, who had a squint. He was picked on at school for being 'different' which knocked his confidence. Kareem is a sensitive child with dreams of becoming a robot engineer. All he wanted was to be accepted for who he is.

Kareem was initially treated with eye patches and glasses, but, as it later transpired, his case was more severe. He was referred to our paediatric specialist, Dr. Habes Batta at our Jerusalem hospital for surgery. Thankfully, this was a great success, although he may need further procedures down the line. Despite this, his squint is almost fully amended and his visual impairment



and pain are almost completely gone. Most importantly, his confidence has increased, and he can now focus on more important things like becoming a robot engineer!

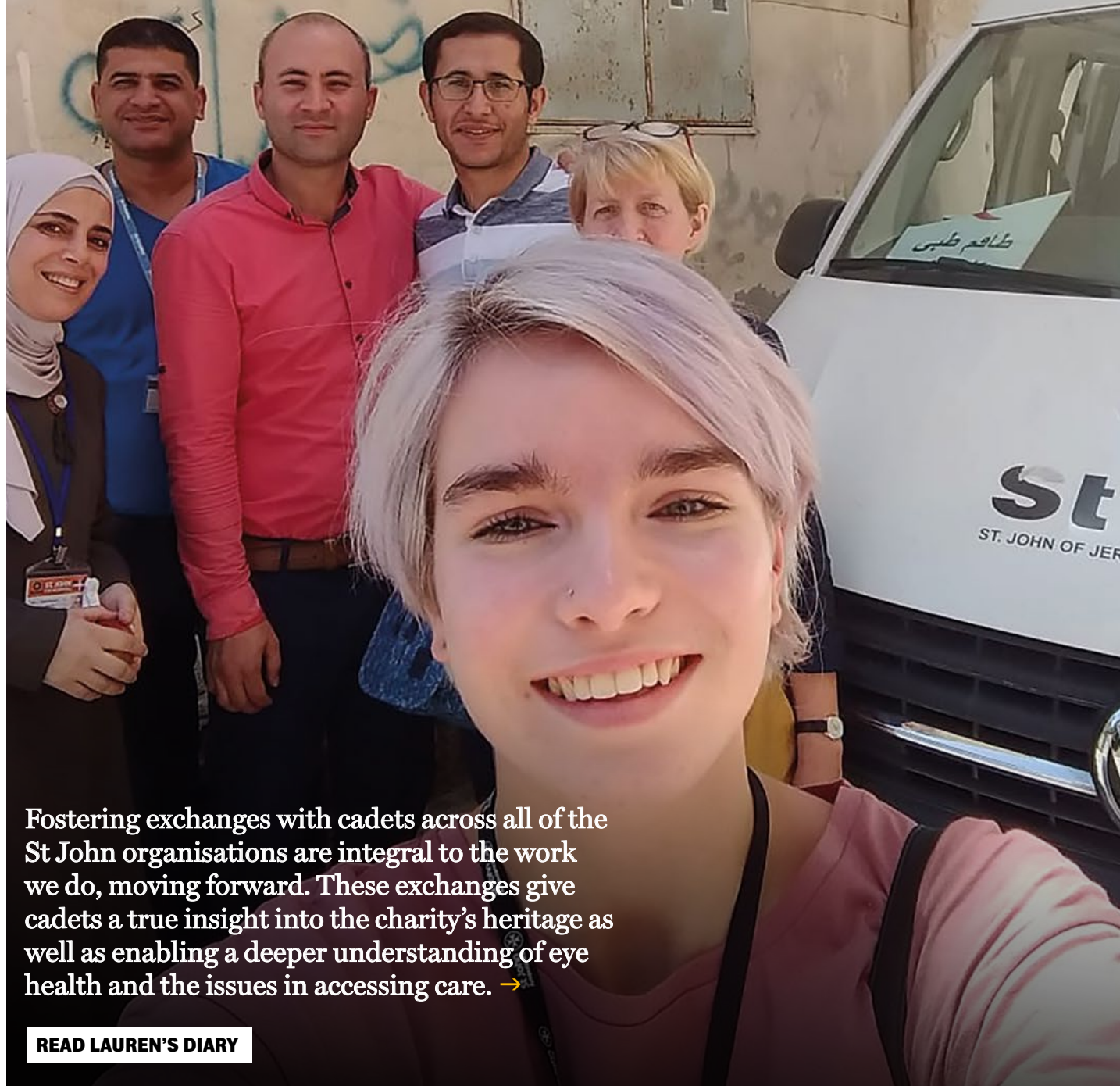
A case like Kareem's shows how important our work is with children. We can help them regain confidence and become happier, healthier adults who are able to contribute to their families and communities. 

I can't thank the St John Eye Hospital enough for how they have helped my son. In spite of the miserable political situation we're in, the quality of their service is tremendous. I hope they can continue their mission and help the millions of Palestinians who desperately need eye care.

MOHAMMED FARES, KAREEM'S FATHER

VOLUNTEERING, DIARY OF A FIELD TRIP TO JERUSALEM
ST JOHN AMBULANCE FIRST AIDER, LAUREN WILKINSON

PEACE IN SIGHT



Fostering exchanges with cadets across all of the St John organisations are integral to the work we do, moving forward. These exchanges give cadets a true insight into the charity's heritage as well as enabling a deeper understanding of eye health and the issues in accessing care. →

[READ LAUREN'S DIARY](#)

DAY 1

SCRUBBED UP AND READY FOR SURGERY



DAY 2

EXPLORING THE OLD CITY

DAY 3

WITNESSING OUTREACH IN ACTION



In July 2019, with support from the Durham Knights Templar, I was given the opportunity to visit the St John Eye Hospital with my unit manager, Sheila Thorpe. This was an experience I will never forget! I learnt more about the hospital and its important work in the community, as well as gaining a better understanding of practices and traditions different to my own.

QUALITY EYE CARE FOR ALL

The St John Eye Hospital has several departments, including a large outpatients department, specialist eye units, operating theatres and 24 hour eye emergency services. It's the only public hospital in the region specialising in ophthalmology, and people travel from all over the country to access its services. During our visit, we were able to see their vital and life-changing work, first-hand.

Throughout our visit, we were able to learn more about the lives of people across the region. At first glance, Jerusalem seems like a peaceful and idyllic place, with its beautiful architecture and rich historic past. Although these elements attract tourism, we soon learned that locals have a different experience. Through speaking with staff and patients, and visiting the other clinics and outreach centres, we were able to see the struggles patients endure to receive treatment. Due to these challenges conditions go undiagnosed for so long that they manifest into a range of complications. This highlights the important work that the St John Eye Hospital undertakes. Its services focus on making eye health care accessible to all, which creates a meaningful impact on people's lives.

DAY 1

On our first day we visited the nursing school with Nasrallah Khalilieh, who manages the programme. With his support we delivered life support and CPR training sessions to the staff. This was a great way for us to get to know the team. After this we jumped into our scrubs and observed a number of operations.

INSIDE FOCUS

DAY 2

On our second day we took the opportunity to explore the Old City. It was joyful ambling through the city's many colourful streets and markets before visiting the Western Wall and the Cenacle, a holy site which houses The Room of the Last Supper. It was a wonderful but tiring day!

REACHING OUT TO THOSE IN NEED

DAY 3

Our third day started early. We joined the hospital staff on their mobile outreach programme, which visits remote villages to offer screening for eye diseases. Patients are then referred to the main hospital for further treatment in Jerusalem, or the clinics in Hebron or Anabta – or they are given treatment on the spot. We accompanied the team on their visit to Selet al-Harthieh, a small village more than two hours' drive from East Jerusalem. When we arrived there were 50 or more people already waiting to be seen. This was not a surprise as the St John Eye Hospital is the only hospital and charity delivering free eye care to marginalised communities. By close of day the team had seen over 75 patients and had stayed longer than planned to ensure no-one was turned away. Almost

two thirds of those seen were referred on for further treatment. Many of the patients have complications caused by uncontrolled diabetes, as more often than not, due to lack of medical care, the condition isn't recognised until it has progressed (see page 3).

Furthermore, it's important to mention that the majority of patients seen on this visit were women and children. This is apparently typical of these clinics, due to women encountering difficulties travelling to the nearby towns or cities without their husbands. This only further highlights the importance of the mobile outreach treatment offered by the St John Eye Hospital, as it's not just about treatment, but also about educating the communities in eye care, so they can spot symptoms earlier.

It was an honour to observe the fantastic work the hospital does in providing medical treatment to those who need it. The team works tirelessly to visit each village bi-annually, but it's a struggle. Sadly, due to the cut in USAID in 2018 (see page 4), the programme now runs only four days a week instead of seven. It is clear more funding is needed.

DAY 4

We started off day four by delivering another life support training session to the staff. We then spent the morning on the paediatric ward with nurses Munther and Omayma, who explained to us the conditions these children were suffering from, such as congenital cataracts and glaucoma. Some children had travelled great distances for their surgeries, having to gain a travel permit to cross the separation wall to visit the hospital for their appointment. Despite the language barrier, it was lovely to play with the children who were in high spirits, despite the circumstances. It was inspiring to see how hard the clinical staff work to ensure their patients have the best treatment experience possible.



DAY 4

CHILDREN TRAVELLING FOR CARE

DAY 5

EXAMINING IN ANABTA



DAY 6

INSPIRING HOPE IN THE MURISTAN

PATIENT CARE AT THE FOREFRONT

DAY 5

On day five we travelled to the Anabta clinic where manager, Hani Abdul Haija, allowed us to observe patients being examined, including the use of laser therapy. We saw a range of patients, from babies and children to elderly people, all with a wide range of conditions such as amblyopia, glaucoma and cataracts – as well as many cases of diabetic retinopathy, which is sadly on the rise.

A MESSAGE OF PEACE

DAY 6

Day six began delivering our final session of training of basic life support at the hospital, which was followed by a visit to the Muristan clinic in the Old City, East Jerusalem, run by Marlene Katansho. The clinic is a walk-in centre for emergencies, check-ups and surgery follow-ups. In addition to working at the clinic, Marlene also runs a free school screening programme that helps treat children with eye conditions and which offers advice to parents. This clinic plays a vital role for many local people who find hospital visits a challenge, particularly shop owners and the elderly.

This visit has been invaluable for us. We have learnt so much about how important the St John Eye Hospital's role is in supporting the local communities. In the centre of the Muristan clinic's beautiful garden sits the Tree of Hope, a sculpture by world-renowned British artist, Mark Coreth, which was commissioned by the hospital to inspire the message of peace. This tree represents people of all faiths that have been coming to Jerusalem for thousands of years, and symbolises renewal, rebirth and hope.

PEACE IN SIGHT

DAY 7

On day seven we went to visit the Hebron hospital which since its move in 2015 is now in a more central and more accessible location. The clinic covers a wide range of conditions, including cataracts, glaucoma and squints, and offers a weekly surgery so patients don't have to travel to Jerusalem. Around two thirds of the patients seen here are refugees from one of the four refugee camps near Bethlehem. I spent the morning with Orthoptic nurse, Huda, who showed me how they use different techniques and tools to diagnose eye conditions in children.

DAY 8

Our last day at the hospital was spent in the outpatient department where we observed nurse technician, Alice, as she completed pre-screening for patients going to surgery later that day. We then observed Judith Musallam, head of paediatrics, work with a nine-year-old girl with a squint. Judith then talked us through the importance of the work they do with children, some as young as one-month-old.

I'm so grateful for this experience working with the St John Eye Hospital. The work they do is a huge inspiration to me. I intend to harness the team's passion and commitment to clinical excellence in my career moving forward. ☺

I'm so grateful for this experience working with the St John Eye Hospital. The work they do is a huge inspiration to me. I intend to harness the team's passion and commitment to clinical excellence in my career moving forward.

**ST JOHN AMBULANCE FIRST AIDER
LAUREN WILKINSON**

MODERN DAY HERO

Marathons, rock-climbing, abseiling and more How Angus Rhodes raised over £5,000 for the hospital

Angus Rhodes has been a passionate fundraiser for the St John Eye Hospital since 2016. He has harnessed the physical and mental energy of Greek hero Hercules, having undertaken a number of physical challenges across the UK, such as running marathons and walking over fire.

Most recently he completed, through sheer grit and determination, the testing Earth Element challenge in Somerset, UK, which involved rock climbing, abseiling and caving across the stunning Cheddar Gorge hills. His Herculean efforts have raised over £5,000 for the hospital. This is fantastic news as this figure translates to 10 much-needed eye surgeries.

Angus was initially motivated to support the hospital and the charity due to his own personal experiences with eye health. Poor vision caused a bad fall in 2014 which resulted in Angus breaking both arms. During his treatment a blood clot was discovered running the length of his right leg, which led to heart and lung failure. Without knowing, his impaired vision was indicating something was wrong. Volunteering for the St John Eye Hospital is a big part of Angus's recovery as he recognises how important accessible eye health care is.

If Angus can take on challenges, maybe you can, too. Raising money in this way not only helps us help those in desperate need of eye care, but can be extremely rewarding, too. "This challenge showed how hard it is for a tall, heavy man with size 15 feet to find footholds and embrace the challenge of climbing a cliff face" explains Angus, reflecting on his recent endeavour. "I admit there were times when I wasn't convinced I could do it, but I found strength by visualising the faces of those I'd seen helped through the St John Eye Hospital. This focus helped me make it to the top."

This is a fantastic milestone. We thank Angus for all his efforts, to date. Forget Hercules, Angus is a modern-day hero! 🍋



Follow Angus's journey or support his challenges at justgiving.com/fundraising/angus-rhodes

CULTURE

**ZAHRA KHALED, HR MANAGER AT ST JOHN EYE HOSPITAL
BASED IN EAST JERUSALEM**

ZAHRA'S FAMILY HUMMUS



This recipe is so easy, but it is so loved in my house. It is my daughter's favourite.

INGREDIENTS

250 grams of dried chickpeas or one can
4 cloves of garlic
½ cup of good quality tahini
Juice of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons of Palestinian extra virgin olive oil
(Zaytoun sell this in the UK)
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon dried cumin

PREPARATION

Soak the chickpeas in water over night. If using canned, no need to do this. Once the chickpeas are tender add to a blender with all the remaining ingredients and blend until very smooth. Spread evenly on a plate and garnish with parsley and a drizzle of olive oil. Enjoy with your favourite baked bread. ○



TOGETHER WE'RE SAVING SIGHT AND CHANGING LIVES



St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group

Make a donation today
to help thousands of
people regain their sight.

1 Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Address

Postcode

Tel/Mobile

Email

2 Gift Aid

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

☐

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years, to St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all of my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

3 Here is my donation of: £20 ☐ £80 ☐ £150 ☐

Or my preferred amount of £

I enclose my cheque/postal order payable to St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group
or please debit my Maestro/MasterCard/Visa (please delete as appropriate)

Maestro only

Card number

Expiry Date

Issue Number (Maestro only)

Signed

Date

4 Join us

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