

A message from a volunteer at the Lazarus Home for Girls in Bethany

Eileen Russell, a McCabe pilgrim, felt challenged during Lent last year to “leave her comfort zone and do something for the good of others.”

Having just spent the past eight weeks as a volunteer worker at the Lazarus Home for Girls in Bethany, Eileen now appreciates the full meaning of her vow. During her last week she witnessed the home going through a particularly difficult period with limited water and no electricity.

Eileen writes, **“It has been a tremendous privilege living and working in Palestine among the girls at Lazarus. An experience that has made me re-assess the priorities in my life.**

What are life’s priorities?



Bedouin families. Others have been abused, both physically and sexually, often by their own family. There is nothing beautiful about the girls’ backgrounds, yet out of the ugliness, these young lives are being transformed by the unconditional love offered by the home.



I felt privileged to work with Samar Sahhar, the lady who founded Lazarus twelve years ago, and her team of devoted Housemothers.

At present the girls are living in very cramped conditions but are looking forward to moving to their new home, which, with the help of the McCabe Educational Trust, is currently under construction. I watched the builders completing work on the pointing of the exterior walls. Very soon, work will commence on the interior.



Palestinian time is so much slower than ours. There is an attitude that if it doesn’t happen today, maybe it will happen tomorrow. Why worry? I learned that work comes to a standstill if the weather is too hot, if it is wet, or if money has not been paid up front.



My principal task, as a volunteer, was to teach conversational English to the Housemothers. I also supplemented the teaching received by the girls at the Russian Orthodox School which they attend. I quickly realised the problems of our language and we had so many laughs over misinterpretations!

I was also able to introduce various crafts, including knitting, which proved very popular.

It was so hard to say “Goodbye” to this delightful family, but I know I will go back. My lasting memories are of the fun and laughter we shared, and the caring and sharing and compassion which was clearly foremost in their lives. They have so little, in monetary terms, but what they have they share.

Every day each child is given a treat. On one occasion it was a chocolate. I was humbled, when a girl bit hers in half and shared it with me. The love they show is beyond measure!

Please remember the girls of Lazarus in your prayers. Life is not easy for them. The constant uncertainty over water availability, electricity and phone lines, when there are thirty three children needing to be fed and their clothes washed, makes for no easy task!”

The McCabe Educational Trust supports Lazarus with a monthly contribution and is currently committed to raising £400,000 to complete the new Lazarus Home for Girls. In Bethany.

