

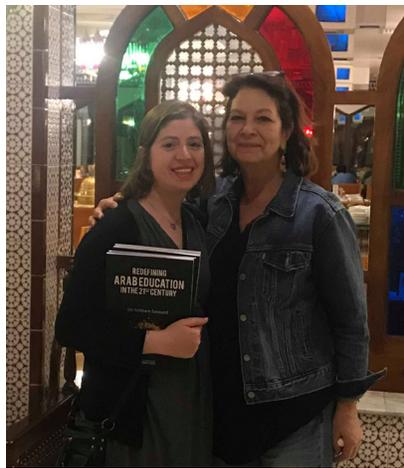
## Deya' shares an overview of her spring trip to Palestine, Jordan, and Lebanon

The purpose of the trip was to meet with the families of our LE•O Scholars, new students, partners, donors, and potential donors. It is important that I make such a trip annually so that we may have a clear vision of the needs of the youth we support.

It was my good fortune to be in Ramallah at the same time as LE•O board member Dr. Farouk Shami. A strong believer in the value of education, LE•O is one of many educational initiatives he actively supports. Dr. Shami invited me to the inauguration of his CHI Academy in Beituna, an academy for hairdressers.

I shared our student success stories with our long-standing supporters, partners, and prospective donors, while I was in the region. I learned about the current cutbacks in scholarships at the local universities and discussed ways to support Palestinian youth with their desires and needs to continue their educations.

ULYP, our partner in Lebanon, shared with me the challenges they now face due to the funding cuts from the United States government and its impact on scholarships for Palestinians in Lebanon. I also shared some of the new



*Deya' meeting with LE•O Mentor Muna in Amman.*



*The generous food packages dedicated to LE•O by the family of one of our students in their camp in Lebanon.*

challenges we now face as we have more students in our care.

In Jordan, I met with LE•O Mentor Muna, who returned to Palestine to teach. She is one of our LE•O Mentor Team Leaders and was instrumental in preparing our incoming female student from The West Bank, who will be joining us this fall. I had the chance to meet with this young lady and her family in Ramallah, following our yearlong communications via Skype calls.

I visited Yazan's family in the village of Beit Omar, near Hebron. A LE•O scholar, Yazan just graduated from Goshen College, and starts his PhD program in medicinal chemistry and molecular pharmacology at Purdue University in June. Yazan served his LE•O Funded Internship at Purdue last summer. His story has been complex and his achievements tremendous, more details about his journey upon request.

I visited Burj El Barajni refugee camp in Beirut for a meal with LE•O Scholar Wael and family. Getting there was a challenge as the taxi driver decided to leave me on the side of the highway after agreeing to take me to the camp. As I walked around trying to find the meeting

point outside the camp, I passed people guarding the area and received many stares as I was obviously out of place! This was my second visit to their home—living conditions were shocking and trying to place this high achieving bright young man alongside his family's reality was, to say the least, mind bending. A donor wished to support the graduate education of a LE•O student, so we were able to match him with Wael's needs to pursue a Master's of Science Management at Lehigh University where he received his BS in Chemical Engineering! Wael is volunteering at the office of LE•O partner ULYP in Beirut this summer.

I am pleased that I made this trip and got an updated view of the challenges the Palestinian youth now face. This fall, LE•O welcomes 8 new students. For the first time ever, we will have more female than male students joining our program!

This trip also strengthened my belief in the value of LE•O resources, our ability to open the right doors of educational opportunity for these bright yet underserved youth, and our unique program of mentoring and support throughout their higher education careers. The success of our program is our very personal approach.

LE•O has created a new website necessitated by the need for more privacy and stronger security. Please visit

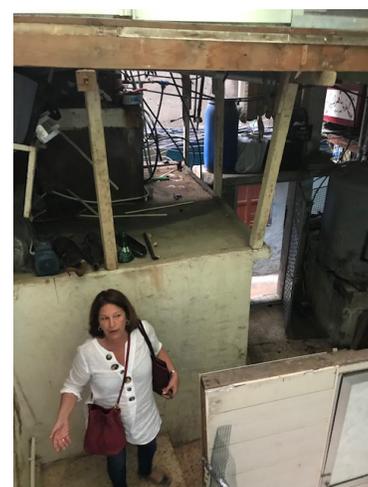
it and share with your friends. We have also established our first online application portal, making it easier for more students to access our process.

For updated information on student activities please visit our Facebook page.

For those of our friends who practice the Islamic faith, we want to wish you and your families an Eid Mubarak.



Wael offering Deya' Arabic ice cream in his home.



Deya' visiting one of the student's homes.



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