

Dear fellow Alumni and Friends,

Jamhour Alumni US started in 2003, as a New York-based not-for-profit organization with 501-c3 status, following an appeal from Père Daccache, sj, then Recteur of the Notre Dame de Jamhour College. The school was in dire need of support, as a large number of students' families did not have the means to pay their tuitions, and the College always said: "we cannot reject a student because his/her family does not have the financial means to support him/her. Over the past eight years, JAUS, with the help of our Canadian fellow Alumni, raised over \$1.2M in funds supporting students' tuitions. This action bore fruit, as we have created a following with other Alumni, in particular in Lebanon, who started to provide enough funds thru high-level donations from prominent Anciens. The pressure on the College itself had abated. However, the Jesuit education mission is now focused on a broader scope. The Réseau Jamhour was created to use the leverage that the College has to help other schools under Jesuit sponsorship in the Bekaa. Three schools, previously managed by the Sisters of the Holy Hearts are now under Jesuit supervision thru the Réseau Jamhour. Père Marek Cieřlik, sj is in charge of the Bekaa schools. He has appealed to us earlier this year. The schools are in the situation as the College was years ago in terms of tuitions and other infrastructure needs, and we can make a difference.

Père Marek gave us a short history on the Bekaa schools:

There are three Jesuit schools in the Bekaa since May 2012: The Technical Institute of Our Lady of Consolation in Tanaïl, Notre-Dame de la Consolata School in Jdita and St. Elie School in Taalabaya. They are now part of the Notre Dame de Jamhour network. They were each founded at a different time and with a particular perspective. The Technical Institute of Our Lady of Consolation in Tanaïl was launched in 1922, serving first as an orphanage. Notre-Dame de la Consolata School in Jdita, founded in 1944, was initially a vocational school for the village's women. As for the Saint-Elie School in Taalabaya, initiated in 1890, it started as a primary school. Changes in the historical context of these schools have led them to become either a semi-free primary school as for the school of Jdita and Taalabaya or, like Tanaïl School, a private school with three cycles - primary, secondary (technical or academic) and higher technical.

These schools have always been under Jesuit responsibility, but they were managed, and this for almost 50 years, by the Sisters of the Holy Hearts (Sœurs des Saints-Cœurs). Ten years ago, the Jesuits noticed a steady decline in their Bekaa schools. They even considered withdrawing their involvement in these schools. This is when a committee of the Bekaa Jesuit schools was formed. This committee included Père Daccache, the former Recteur of the College Notre-Dame de Jamhour, now Recteur of the Université Saint-Joseph. The committee quickly identified the causes of the decline of these schools and designed a plan to remedy the situation.

Lebanon's instability has impaired the operations of all schools in the country. The partly government-subsidized schools have particularly suffered as they lost their subsidies and faced a fierce competition from subsidized denominational schools. A new agreement with the Sisters of the Holy Hearts was reached: It allowed the Jesuits to control the administrative, educational and financial aspects of the schools. A weekly board meeting is held that includes Père Bruno Sion, sj- the current Recteur of Notre Dame de Jamhour. Over half of the faculty and administrators body is new. The core curriculum is set according to the Jamhour standards. The teachers' continuous education program is supervised by Jamhour coordinators and prefects. In addition to that, the accounting is overseen by Jamhour's accountants.

It is important to note that a significant positive effect has taken place once these Bekaa schools became part of the Réseau Notre Dame de Jamhour: teachers feel more supported, and student enrollment is increasing. This year we have 1416 girls and boys –60 more students compared to last year. A greater integration was accomplished thanks to coordination with the Jamhour Colleagues. The plan for the future is a stronger integration with the Jamhour School and a closer cooperation with its faculty.

We have enclosed for your review, the list of the students we plan to sponsor along with a brief description of their social situation.

We are counting on your support for the Education in Lebanon and especially in the Bekaa schools, where it is much needed.

Sincerely,

Jamhour Alumni US
Karim Awad, Gabriel Sara, Christian Rizk, Nada Sara, Elias Sayegh, Bud Zehil