SOCIAL SERVICES

The Franciscan Boys Home
Located in the city of Bethlehem, this home looks after Christian children with special needs in Bethlehem and those who suffer from serious social, psychological and economic problems, to provide them a safe and caring shelter and to look after them from the different educational and spiritual sides. Therefore, the Home affords them a convenient environment that would help them in the process of social adaptation in their life in a natural way. This happens according to sound professional scientific programs in cooperation and coordination with their parents, supervisors and specialists to achieve the best service to this targeted group. The Home relies in its work and philosophy on the values of respecting the human rights, love and forgiveness according to the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the call of St. Francis of Assisi.

Franciscan Family Centers – Bethlehem and Nazareth
The Franciscan Family Center was established in Bethlehem to provide professional counseling to those Christian families who have suffered psychological trauma. They also provide sponsored educational programs for children and adults. The Center collaborates with the Franciscan Parish in Bethlehem to promote services and assistance for Christian families. FFC also created programs for employment for the Bethlehem community as well as working with the marginalized Christian families to assist in house renovations.

Children without Borders – Jerusalem
The mission of Children without Borders is to cultivate and invest in children everything that is creative, constructive, and industrious; to empower and enhance their vision of peace, coexistence, and gender equality; and to expose them to new experiences in their own lives, and those of other children living in other parts of the world. Children without Borders seeks to ensure a mental, moral and physical empowerment of children living in the different cities of the Holy Land. The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land funds the program at a cost of $500/child/year.

Franciscan Social Services
The Franciscan Social Services Organization (FSSO) was established to care for the financially, psycho-socially and medically needy individuals and families in the Bethlehem area. The organization does its utmost to reach all needy families and individuals by making home visits and taking care of cases recommended by the parish priest. This past year, FSSO asked the FFHL to assist them by funding the needed medicines for those who are unable to pay.

Catholic Action Center – Bethlehem
The Catholic Action Center is a place for all ages to gather. Here one finds a theater, swimming pool, teaching classrooms, a computer lab, dining facilities, offices, a new physical fitness room, a conference center, and a new sports center. Every year the Center organizes a summer camp for children during their summer recess. The Center serves as a place of Christian friendship, community and fellowship, vital to the needs of Christians in the Holy Land.

For more information, please contact:
Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land
9924 Cedar Ridge Drive
Carmel, IN 46032
Tel: 866-905-3787 (toll-free)
Email: info@ffhl.org
www.ffhl.org

FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND

Program Summaries

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR THE CHRISTIANS IN THE HOLY LAND

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) is a worldwide ecumenical organization that seeks to keep a Christian presence in the Holy Land by providing education, employment and housing.

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the United States. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.
PRINCIPLE PURPOSE AND MISSION

Founded in 1994, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) was created and established by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land to help stem the Christian exodus from the region. Through numerous humanitarian programs and projects, the FFHL is working tirelessly to provide the needed incentives for the Christians to remain in their land.

THE CHALLENGE

Today there are approximately 150,000 – 160,000 Christians living in the Holy Land. Due to severe political and economic hardships, an estimated 300 Christian families leave the Holy Land each year. This steady emigration suggests that one day the Christian community and the Christian church may cease to exist in this part of the world. As the Christian population struggles to survive in a volatile political environment of ethnic distrust, the FFHL uses every available resource to help the poor and unemployed to meet their needs.

Church leaders predict that if the current exodus continues, Christianity could easily cease to exist in the Holy Land within 50 years.

One of the solutions to this problem has been providing financial assistance towards higher education which eventually leads to economic advancement. We believe that our University Scholarship Program is the cornerstone of the solution.

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP / SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL GRANTS PROGRAM

The program initially aspired to award 75 full scholarship grants. Since 1997 FFHL has given full university scholarships to over 350 students who were economically marginalized but had strong academic talent. The Franciscan Foundation pays for 4 years of college including tuition and books. Hence, through the generosity of Christians in the U.S., FFHL is holding the ‘educational doors of opportunity’ open for the Christian community in the Holy Land.

PROGRAM GROWTH

Since 1997, FFHL has given over $6 million in both university scholarships and special educational grants to marginalized Christian students. The current graduation rate is approximately 95%.

MOST POPULAR FIELDS OF STUDY

- Business Administration
- Accounting
- Medicine
- Engineering
- Pharmacy
- Law
The Economic Landscape

• The majority of Palestinians live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Most of the Christians living in the Holy Land are of Palestinian decent and are severely handicapped by the political side effects of aggression on both sides of the Moslem-Israeli conflict.

• Politically motivated “closures” to Israel proper have had a strong negative impact on the Palestinian economy which directly affects the local Christians. Millions of dollars in revenue are lost every day within the West Bank and Gaza because Israel controls all the borders, preventing imports and exports from coming into or out of those regions.

• Income:
  - Israelis in the Holy Land – average income is $23,000-$24,000 per annum.
  - Palestinians in the Holy Land – average income is $4,000-$6,000 per annum.

• Sixty-five percent of Palestinians live below the poverty level (under $3,000 per year), affecting 2 in 3 Palestinians – of which 3% are Christians.

• Currently, 50% of Palestinian men and 85% of Palestinian women are unemployed.

FINANCIAL BACKGROUND
The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is principally supported by Individuals, Benefit Dinners, Religious Organizations, and other Public Relations Efforts.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT
- Individuals
- Public Relations Efforts
- Religious Organizations
- Benefit Dinners

FOUNDATION PROGRAMS
The focus of FFHL is to keep a Christian presence in the Holy Land by providing education, housing and employment.

EDUCATION
• University Scholarship and Special Educational Grants Program: Provides funding for tuition and books for four years. Depending on the university, scholarship costs run between $4,000 and $6,000 per year.
• Vocational/Trade Educational Grants: Provides funding for tuition and books for a two year program to learn plumbing, electricity, metal works, carpentry, auto mechanics, hotel management, telecommunications and food cuisine. The two year program costs $2,000 per year.
• Child Sponsorship Program: Provides primary and secondary educational financial assistance for economically marginalized families. A child sponsorship is $3,500 funded over seven years.
• Music Scholarships: Provides tuition for young children who are gifted musically and wish to learn piano, violin, flute or composing.

HOUSING
• Housing Development Program: Provides subsidized housing to Christian families who would otherwise be forced to reside abroad. The Franciscan Custody, with the assistance of FFHL, has already completed over 100 apartment units in Bethlehem and is planning another 120 units in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives as well as 220 units in Nazareth and Jaffa.

EMPLOYMENT
• Job Placement Program: Creates new positions to employ Christians barred indefinitely from entering Israel to work in a variety of fields including administration, clerical and custodial positions in Franciscan schools, churches, parish centers and medical facilities. New jobs are also created in construction trades as FFHL housing developments are built.

Other FFHL Programs:
• Franciscan Boys Home – Bethlehem
• Children Without Borders
• Franciscan Family Center – Bethlehem/Nazareth
• Children’s March for Peace Program
• Bethlehem Christmas Program
• Medical Assistance Program – Jerusalem/Bethlehem
FFHL SOCIAL MEDIA

- FFHL FACEBOOK PAGE -
According to Facebook analytics, the age group between 25-45 years of age is the largest consumer of digital media on the internet. Our greatest number of “views”, however, comes from people 55+. 3/4 of our Fans tends to be women. Like and Follow us by searching Francisca Foundation for the Holy Land on Facebook!

- FFHL YOUTUBE CHANNEL -
One thing is clear and that is that videos drive business. The more engaging the video the more engaging the business. The FFHL has produced a number of videos for non-profit ie the Foranciscan Foundaion and both the shorter and longer version of the videos are available to watch. You can see our videos by searching YouTube for ffhlvideo!

- FFHL PINTEREST PAGE -
Pinterest is a site that enables individuals and organization to share photos and videos of a variety of things they might find interesting, ranging from recipes to motorcycles. The Foundation contains photos of all the great work the Franciscans are doing in the Holy Land. Pinterest enables donors to see the actual people and places their generous gifts are helping. Take a look at our pins by searching Pinterest.com/ffhl!

- FFHL TWITTER PAGE -
Twitter is yet another social networking avenue the Foundation is using to reach out on behalf of the Palestinian Christians. Created in 2006, Twitter allows users to send or receive text-based messages that can include online links and photos. Online resources show that, as of 2012, Twitter has over 500 million registered users. The Franciscan Foundation is now one of them sending out daily tweets related to the Holy Land the work of the FFHL. Our Twitter handle is @ffhl_hq.

- FFHL GOOGLE + PAGE -
Google+ is a “social layering” framework, as Google calls it, and resembles the idea behind Facebook. Users can add or be added to created “circles” that allow sharing within those circles or to the public. For example, FFHL has add hundreds of priests to our list by using Google+ to their “Priests and Religious” circle. The Foundation also has a circle for former Holy Land pilgrims. Check ous out by putting Francisca Foundation for the Holy Land into the Google+ search!

- FFHL LINKEDIN PAGE -
Linkedin is the social network for work professionals created in 2002. There are 161 million professionals worldwide who have connected with Linkedin since its official launch in May 2003. Every second that number grows by two more memberships, according to company stats. That makes it an important place to be. See our company page posts by searching LinkedIn for Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land!

- FFHL eNEWSLETTER -
The last digital arena into which the Franciscan Foundation has entered thus far is the e-newsletter. The Custodian, as it is called, allows the Foundation to email current news, testimonies and upcoming Holy Land pilgrimages to specific recipients. Filled with pictures and video, the monthly e-newsletter keeps recipients up-to-date. It also facilitates secure, online donations. The e-newsletter can be subscribed to by anyone by simply visiting the FFHL homepage (ffhl.org) and clicking the “subscribe” button at the top of the page.

- FFHL BLOG -
A daily blog is an important part of the Franciscan Foundation’s attempt to reach as many audiences as possible. Blogs began in the late 1990’s and have grown ever since. Online resources show there are more than 156 million blogs now. What draws readers to a particular foundation’s blog is content and cause. Come see our blog posts at: www.ffhl.org/media/ffhl-blog/
The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land was created to inform and educate the general public about the plight of Christians in the Holy Land, where inadequate housing, high unemployment and greatly reduced educational opportunities are causing widespread suffering and a mass exodus of the indigenous Christian population. By increasing awareness of the complex human rights issues involving Christians in this part of the world, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land seeks to establish equality of opportunity for this unrepresented minority group and safeguard their right to remain in their homeland.

Caught in the middle of an intense religious and ethnic power struggle, Christians in the Holy Land are the forgotten victims in the current political crisis in the Middle East. As a minority population in the Holy Land, Christians in Jerusalem and other Holy Land cities are often among the first to suffer when conflicts between Palestinian and Israeli interests bring new hardships to the area.

Specific Human rights issues concerning Christian Palestinians include:

- **Unemployment**: Frequent disruptions of the local economy due to religious and ethnic conflicts have taken their toll. A recent study indicates that 30 percent of all Christians living in the Holy Land (Israel, West Bank and Gaza) are unemployed. Unemployment in the area is exacerbated by the on-going closure of the West Bank and Gaza to principal Israeli cities where the majority of Palestinians had been employed. The average annual income ranges from $4,000 - $6,000.

- **Education**: The vast majority of Christians cannot afford the cost of higher education. The closures of territories due to the long-standing ethnic conflicts in the Holy Land completely disrupt the educational system for Christians and Muslims. During the closures, children and teachers may not be permitted to attend school for extended periods, and university students are also prohibited from pursuing their studies at schools outside the closure area.

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land addresses these issues through educational opportunities for Palestinian Christians. In order to further their success, FFHL will give each student their own tool kit based on their particular field so they will be able to immediately secure work in their communities.

"We are supremely proud of this new endeavor," exclaimed Fr. Pizzaballa, OFM, Chairman of FFHL. "It now gives an opportunity, as well as hope, to these young Christian students who have different gifts and capabilities which in the end will prove beneficial for them and the Christian community."

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is very excited about the FFHL graduates who have completed their studies and received their certificates of expertise in the various fields of training.

Fr. Pizzaballa, Chairman of the FFHL, further stated that "We must continue to open all avenues of work for the Christian youth especially those who have graduated from high school in order to give them opportunities for higher education whether it be on a college level or at a vocational school level. Each will provide them a means of securing future employment and thus giving them hope."

**YOUR DONATIONS HELP:**

- **$2000**: Provides an entire year of vocational training for a young Palestinian Christian.
Housing: The current shortage of subsidized housing is a major factor in the ongoing exodus of Christians, for whom rent costs, even for the inferior living arrangements, are prohibitively high.

Medical Care: Decreased income and high unemployment have left a great many Christians unable to afford even basic medical care for themselves and their children.

To stem the tide of emigration and protect the rights of the minority Christian population, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is appealing for support that will enable the organization to provide humanitarian aid to Christian Palestinians.

As the Christian minority strains to survive in the volatile political situation of the Middle East, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land uses every available resource to address their basic needs while undertaking a communications campaign to tell the story of their ongoing dilemma. By informing the general public of the present crisis situation for Christians in the Holy Land, the organization intends to secure the humanitarian aid and financial support necessary to guarantee Christians equal opportunity in their homeland.

During the past 800 years, the Franciscan Custody has ministered to the Christians and maintained the Holy Sites and Shrines in what is now the state of Israel. Because of their long-standing presence in the region, the Franciscans are extremely knowledgeable concerning the plight of the local Christian community. In order to help a Christian population that receives little foreign aid and is without an organization to voice its concerns on a worldwide scale, the Christian churches of Jerusalem - including Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, and Presbyterians - have come together with the Franciscans to formally express support for the goals of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land. Created in July 1994 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land was established to inform and to educate as many Christians in the United States, not only about the plight of Christian Palestinians living in the Holy Land, but also of the ongoing emigration from the region.

**MAGNIFICAT OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of the Magnificat Institute is to foster encounter, dialogue, peaceful coexistence, and human and social development amongst people and children of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds in the Holy Land. Learning music provides a very worthwhile alternative to otherwise difficult living situations in many families throughout the region.

The reputation of the Magnificat Institute is continually growing thanks to the great professionalism of the teachers and the new possibilities that have enabled the school to award academic diplomas which are recognized in the European Union following the agreement made with the "Pedrollo" Conservatoire of Vicenza, which guarantees and supervises the standards of quality to be observed.

The characteristic of the school of music run by the Custody of the Holy Land, however, is also that of effectively being a laboratory for peace and sharing, with teachers and pupils who are Israelis and Palestinians, Jews, Muslims and Christians, all united by music to build up a new Jerusalem of peace. This is why the Custody of the Holy Land considers the Magnificat a very important activity in its mission.

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- **$5** - Buys small objects for the students, like sheet music.
- **$25** - Buys larger things like rosin, reeds, brass oil, and violin or guitar strings.
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- **$2500** - Sponsors a student for a whole year
- **$6500** - Sponsors a music festival

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The Franciscan Custos of the Holy Land, Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM, has set religious education as one of the highest priorities in order to preserve the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

**University Scholarship Program**

FFHL has given full scholarships to over 261 university students with strong academic talent, paying for all 4 years of college at a cost of $6,000/student/year. Hence, through the generosity of Christians in the U.S., the FFHL is holding the “educational doors of opportunity” open for the Christian community in the Holy Land.

**Child Sponsorship Program**

Due to economic stressors, the FFHL established a child sponsorship program to assist families who are no longer able to pay their children’s tuitions to Franciscan schools. The Foundation has paired hundreds of children with sponsors for the remainder of their elementary school years, and some through their secondary education. The program encourages individuals to assist with the cost of tuition, books, and uniforms. Yearly sponsorship of $500/child is an investment in the future of Christianity in the Holy Land. For those who make this commitment, we ask that you sponsor each child for a seven year period whenever possible.

**Magnificat Scholarship Program**

The Magnificat Institute in the Holy City of Jerusalem has as its goal the promoting of knowledge about music with particular attention to the cultural heritage of various local communities in the Holy Land. For these and other reasons the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land has been providing music scholarships to our young Christians attending the Magnificat Institute in Jerusalem. Yet another approach to establishing peace and preserving the Christian presence in the Holy Land, the Institute was initiated by the Franciscan Custody.

**Magnificat Goals**

The target goals at the heart of the Magnificat Institute of Jerusalem are as follows:

- Prepare teachers capable of teaching and transmitting love for music in schools in the Holy Land.
- Sing and play in the shrines and parishes of the Holy Land, in particular the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, the Holy City.
- Create opportunities, both choral and instrumental, to break down the cultural, religious and linguistic barriers and promote peaceful and friendly relationships in the Holy Land between children of different backgrounds, and in particular in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Given the critical social context in which the Magnificat Institute of Jerusalem finds itself, only some of the students are able to pay the tuition to attend the Institute and that is the reason for outside support for the musical scholarships.

**Vocational/Technical Scholarship Program**

Based on the success of the University Scholarship Program, it was felt that there should be other educational opportunities for those who prefer vocational school over college. Here young Christian adults learn the trades of electricians, carpenters, mechanics, plumbers, telecommunicators or even chefs. That dream is becoming a reality. Each school offers a two year study program. Upon graduation, students receive a diploma attesting to their skills and expertise in their respective fields.

**Why?**

Music is an art that unites people of different languages and belief systems. Music overcomes differences and establishes a common purpose achieved by working together. The Magnificat Institute of Jerusalem was founded in 1995, thanks to the work of musician and composer, Fr. Armando Pierucci. Currently, the Magnificat Institute in the Holy City of Jerusalem counts among its ranks 200 Muslim, Christian, and Jewish students, mainly children, who are studying various disciplines.

The musical activities outside of school provide great opportunities and hope for the children throughout the Holy Land and for their families. The Institute has over 20 teachers and three choirs, who also fulfill the liturgical requirements of the Custody of the Holy Land for the most important liturgical celebrations. Currently it is housed in the Monastery of St. Saviour in Jerusalem but it is expanding. The school also has to its credit publications, recordings of musical CDs, foreign tours, concerts and the organization of competitions.
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The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL), in conjunction with the Custody of the Holy Land, is enrolling students at the Lutheran Federation Vocational Technical School as well as students at the Notre Dame School of Cooking, both located in the Jerusalem area. Each school offers a two year study program and upon graduation, they will receive a diploma attesting to their skills and expertise in their respective fields. In addition, in order to further their success, FFHL will give each student their own tool kit based on their particular field so they will be able to immediately secure work in their communities.

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**YOUR DONATIONS HELP:**

**$2000**

Provides an entire year of vocational training for a young Palestinian Christian.
HOUSING PROGRAMS

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

One of the fundamental goals of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is to provide housing for Christian families. The Foundation partners with Christian construction companies to develop two and three bedroom apartment buildings. Currently there are subsidized housing units in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Bethany.

- St. Francis Village in Bethphage, a suburb of Jerusalem has 78 units completed in 2006 and opened in 2011.
- Child Jesus in Jerusalem has 36 units completed in 2005.
- Beit-Hanina, a suburb of Jerusalem has 10 units completed in 2001.
- Ram Housing in Jerusalem has 13 units completed in 1999.
- Friendship Housing in Bethany has 20 units completed in 1994.

HOUSING RENOVATION

There are many houses in Bethlehem and in the surrounding areas that are in dire need of repair. The Emergency Job Creation Program was established by FFHL’s Franciscan Family Center to accomplish two purposes. One is to provide employment for local Palestinian Christians and the other is to upgrade houses so that the inhabitants can reside in improved living conditions. One of the projects that was recently completed involved a family of four whose bathroom and kitchen were in poor shape. $3500 enabled the FFHL to replace old tile, rusted water and sewage pipes, broken fixtures and the floor in the bathroom as well as install new kitchen cabinets.

YOUR DONATIONS HELP:

- $100  -  Covers utility expenses for 1 month
- $250  -  Pays a Christian family’s rent for 1 month
- $3000  -  Pays a Christian family’s rent for 1 year

FINANCIAL BACKGROUND

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is principally supported by Individuals, Benefit Dinners, Religious Organizations, and other Public Relations Efforts.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

- Individuals
- Public Relations Efforts
- Religious Organizations
- Benefit Dinners

FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

The focus of FFHL is to keep a Christian presence in the Holy Land by providing education, housing and employment.

EDUCATION

- University Scholarship and Special Educational Grants Program: Provides funding for tuition and books for a two year program to learn plumbing, electricity, metal works, carpentry, auto mechanics, hotel management, telecommunications and food cuisine. The two year program costs $2,000 per year.
- Vocational/Trade Educational Grants: Provides funding for tuition and books for a two year program to learn plumbing, electricity, metal works, carpentry, auto mechanics, hotel management, telecommunications and food cuisine. The two year program costs $2,000 per year.
- Child Sponsorship Program: Provides primary and secondary educational financial assistance for economically marginalized families. A child sponsorship is $3,500 funded over seven years.
- Music Scholarships: Provides tuition for young children who are gifted musically and wish to learn piano, violin, flute or composing.

HOUSING

- Housing Development Program: Provides subsidized housing to Christian families who would otherwise be forced to reside abroad. The Franciscan Custody, with the assistance of FFHL, has already completed over 100 apartment units in Bethlehem and is planning another 120 units in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives as well as 220 units in Nazareth and Jaffa.

EMPLOYMENT

- Job Placement Program: Creates new positions to employ Christians barred indefinitely from entering Israel to work in a variety of fields including administration, clerical and custodial positions in Franciscan schools, churches, parish centers and medical facilities. New jobs are also created in construction trades as FFHL housing developments are built.

Other FFHL Programs:

- Franciscan Boys Home – Bethlehm
- Children Without Borders
- Franciscan Family Center – Bethlehm/Nazareth
- Children’s March for Peace Program
- Bethlehem Christmas Program
- Medical Assistance Program – Jerusalem/Bethlehem

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FFHL is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the U.S. All donations are tax deductible.
Today, Christians represented 25% of the population in the Holy Land: (Including Israel proper and the Territories)

- Israel: 6.6 million
- Moslems: 3.9 million
- Christians: 150,000 – 160,000

In the 1950’s, indigenous Christians represented 25% of the population. Today, Christians account for less than 2%.

- Jerusalem: ~ 1945 – 31,300 Christians
- ~ 1967 – 24,200 Christians
- ~ 2014 – 15,000 Christians

- Bethlehem: ~ 1946 – Christians 70%
- Moslems 30%
- ~ 2014 – Christians 10%
- Moslems 90%

Today there are approximately 150,000–160,000 Christians living in the Holy Land. Due to severe political and economic hardships, an estimated 300 Christians leave the Holy Land each year. This steady emigration suggests that one day the Christian community and the Christian church may cease to exist in this part of the world. As the Christian population struggles to survive in a volatile political environment of ethnic distrust, the FFHL uses every available resource to help the poor and unemployed to meet their needs.

Church leaders predict that if the current exodus continues, Christianity could easily cease to exist in the Holy Land within 50 years.

One of the solutions to this problem has been providing financial assistance towards higher education which eventually leads to economic advancement. We believe that our University Scholarship Program is the cornerstone of the solution.

Founded in 1994, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) was created and established by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land to help stem the Christian exodus from the region. Through numerous humanitarian programs and projects, the FFHL is working tirelessly to provide the needed incentives for the Christians to remain in their land.

PROGRAM GROWTH

Since 1997, FFHL has given over $6 million in both university scholarships and special educational grants to marginalized Christian students. The current graduation rate is approximately 95%.

MOST POPULAR FIELDS OF STUDY

- Business Administration
- Accounting
- Medicine
- Engineering
- Pharmacy
- Law

The majority of Palestinian Christians have been and continue to look to the tourism industry for employment. Many Christians work as guides for pilgrims or provide transportation and others are hotel managers or shop owners. There has always been a special connection that many pilgrims find upon meeting their brother Christians in the Holy Land in an atmosphere of service reminiscent of Christ serving his apostles.

The Holy Land suffers from many challenges from the current situation which has led to drastic numbers of unemployment stemming from a lack of tourism and pilgrims in the Holy Land. Currently, 65% of Palestinian Christians are Unemployed!

It is a constant goal of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land to provide opportunities to keep Christians employed. The Franciscan Press based at St. Savior's Monastery in Jerusalem has been an avenue to provide some employment for the struggling Christians. The Franciscans continue to employ them at 70% of their wage even when there has been no work.

The housing projects funded by the generosity of donors through the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land have helped to curb unemployment. Construction companies working with the Custody of the Holy Land employ Christian workers in the construction of these projects.

Production of olive wood products handmade in the Holy Land has drastically decreased. There has been very little work in this area, especially since many of the olive trees used in production have been intentionally destroyed. This is a painful reality for many families since their livelihood has been diminished.

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Everywhere we went, we were introduced to people simply as pilgrims from the U.S. We were showered with hugs, handshakes and blessings, and without exception, they all said, “Please, pray for us.” However, their stores and businesses are closed - due to a lack of business and tourism. Most of them, especially the Palestinian Christians, are just barely hanging on, with no support from the government. These are a very strong, proud people, that don’t want handouts or charity but a chance to earn a living and remain in their homes. Yet for most, their livelihood depends on tourism - and there is so very little. How it broke my heart to see a priest begging outside his church or to hear an elderly man ask, “Why does your President support only Israel...can’t he see what is happening here?” The situation is extreme and urgent! The Franciscans are doing everything they can to help the severe unemployment problem but they need help... your help!

You can reach out to these Palestinian Christians by helping the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land:

- fund new housing projects employing many Christians
- support the production of handmade olive wood products
- contacting us if there is anyone you may know or a contact that could help provide jobs for your brother and sister Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land

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SOCIAL SERVICES

The Franciscan Boys Home
Located in the city of Bethlehem, this home looks after Christian children with special needs in Bethlehem and those who suffer from serious social, psychological and economic problems, to provide them a safe and caring shelter and to look after them from the different educational and spiritual sides. Therefore, the Home affords for them a convenient environment that would help them in the process of social adaptation in their life in a natural way. This happens according to sound professional scientific programs in cooperation and coordination with their parents, supervisors and specialists to achieve the best service to this targeted group. The Home relies in its work and philosophy on the values of respecting the human rights, love and forgiveness according to the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the call of St. Francis of Assisi.

Franciscan Family Centers – Bethlehem and Nazareth
The Franciscan Family Center was established in Bethlehem to provide professional counseling to those Christian families who have suffered psychological trauma. They also provide sponsored educational programs for children and adults. The Center collaborates with the Franciscan Parish in Bethlehem to promote services and assistance for Christian families. FFC also created programs for employment for the Bethlehem community as well as working with the marginalized Christian families to assist in house renovations.

Children without Borders – Jerusalem
The mission of Children without Borders is to cultivate and invest in children everything that is creative, constructive, and industrious; to empower and enhance their vision of peace, coexistence, and gender equality; and to expose them to new experiences in their own lives, and those of other children living in other parts of the world. Children without Borders seeks to ensure a mental, moral and physical empowerment of children living in the different cites of the Holy Land. The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land funds the program at a cost of $500/child/year.

Franciscan Social Services
The Franciscan Social Services Organization (FSSO) was established to care for the financially, psycho-socially and medically needy individuals and families in the Bethlehem area. The organization does its utmost to reach all needy families and individuals by making home visits and taking care of cases recommended by the parish priest. This past year, FSSO asked the FFHL to assist them by funding the needed medicines for those who are unable to pay.

Catholic Action Center – Bethlehem
The Catholic Action Center is a place for all ages to gather. Here one finds a theater, swimming pool, teaching classrooms, a computer lab, dining facilities, offices, a new physical fitness room, a conference center, and a new sports center. Every year the Center organizes a summer camp for children during their summer recess. The Center serves as a place of Christian friendship, community and fellowship, vital to the needs of Christians in the Holy Land.

For more information, please contact:
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