



Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation
مؤسسة الأراضي المقدسة المسيحية المسكونية

PROGRESS REPORT JANUARY 2016

BIRZEIT SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER (BSCC)



"You shall rise up before the gray headed and honor the aged "

Leviticus 19:32

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Monthly Overview

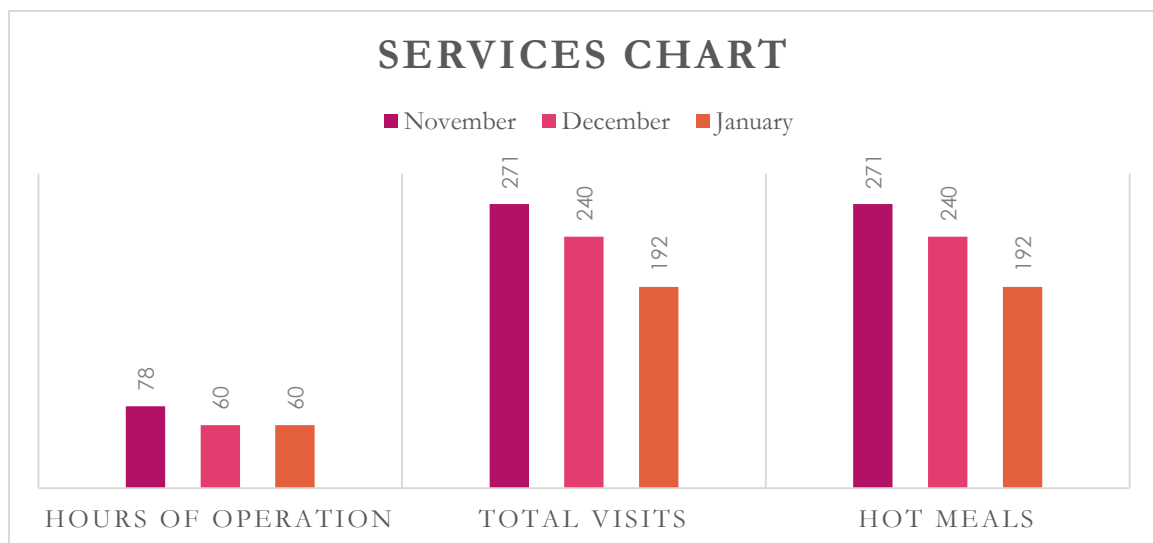
Birzeit Senior Citizen Center is open 3 days a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday), from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, offering services to the elderly (BSCC members) 10 days in January 2016. The center organizes social, educational, and spiritual activities, offers health and transportation services, and provides entertainment to local senior citizens. These activities and services **fulfill** the HCEF vision and mission of the center by providing a safe place for the elderly to come together in community, to know they are honored and not forgotten.

Despite the bad weather in January, BSCC managed to keep our doors open for the elders of Birzeit. In addition to lots of daily programs and activities, we continue to develop programming that builds meaningful social interaction between BSCC Elders and the local community. These activities maintain good physical, mental and social health for the Elders.

The following statistics offer a glimpse of some of the center's activities in January 2016 as compared to previous months:

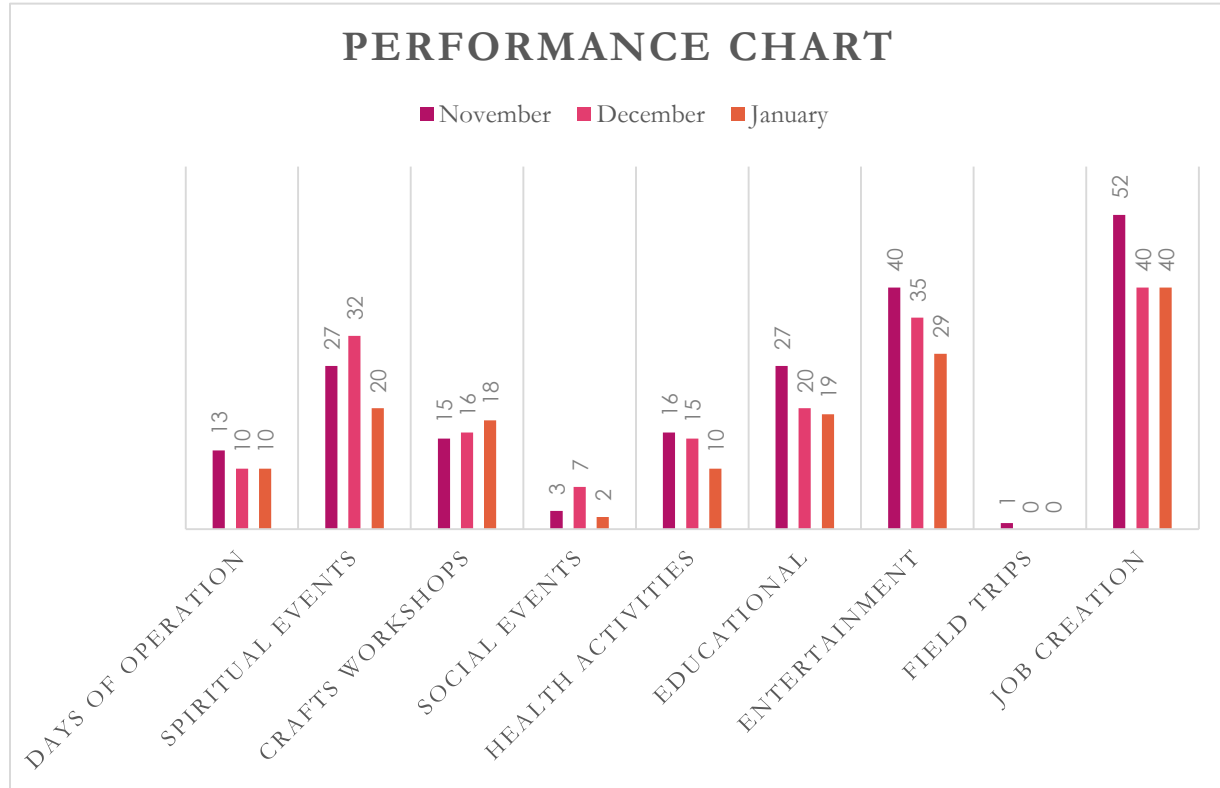
BSCC Statistics for January

Days of Operation	10	Social Events	2
Hours of Operation	60	Visits from Medical Professionals & Health Activities	10
Total BSCC Member Visits	192	Educational Activities	19
Hot Meals Served	192	Entertainment & Sports Activities	29
Spiritual Events and Activities	20	Field Trips	0
Craft Workshops (Cooking + Knitting)	18	Number of Employee Work Days Generated	40





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Services

1. Transportation Services

The Center provides free transportation services for BSCC members to and from the facility and to and from church on Sundays when coordinated. The Center also provides transportation for any urgent needs that arise.

2. Nutritious Meals

- ❖ With the support of the World Food Program (WFD), the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs, and other local organizations, the BSCC provided hot meals for every day that the Center was open, totaling to **192 hot meals** for the month of **January**.
- ❖ Snacks such as tea, coffee, milk, biscuits and fruit were also provided to BSCC members each morning that the Center operated.



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3. Daily Activities

BSCC members took part in daily games such as bingo, card games, dominoes, and trivial competitions, all of which provide healthy mental stimulation. They also continued working on personal projects, such as knitting and embroidery, and took part in spiritual activities, such as praying and devotionals.

Aside from providing entertainment, BSCC's daily activities also contribute to the overall good health of the Elders. By participating in these activities, they keep their memory and dexterity functions active and sharp, combatting common physical ailments resulting from advanced age. The activities also provide an important social outlet, since the Elders usually participate in pairs or groups, talking and laughing while they play/work.





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Programs & Activities

1. Spiritual Events

BSCC provided 3 main spiritual activities:

- ❖ **Daily bible study** in which elders read and discuss the bible, extracting lessons for their daily lives.
- ❖ **Daily Rosary** in which all the elders devote the day's rosary prayer for a cause or a person such as peace, hunger, disease or for a friend or family member.
- ❖ **On Saturday, January 16th, 2016** Fr. Louis Hazboun offered Holy Communion to BSCC members and led a group prayer session. During his visit, he also offered his blessing on the occasion of the Feast of the Epiphany to the Center and its Elders.

During his visits, Fr. Louis relates parish news and invites BSCC elders to participate in upcoming parish and community events.





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2. Community

As a part of BSCC's effort to encourage Birzeit's elderly to engage in their community, BSCC arranges monthly visits from local organizations, societies and community members to meet with elders and discuss issues in the community. These exchanges enhance community relationships and give BSCC elders a sense of belonging and importance. On Saturday, January 23rd, the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the Birzeit Women's Charitable Society visited our Center, receiving a warm welcoming from the elders. During the visit, the Chairwoman sat with the Elders and discussed the challenges they face. Mrs. Mary 'Ayed commented on the visit: "It was a great meeting, giving us the opportunity to meet with our Elders and hear about their experiences. We can see the happiness on their faces and we appreciate the role they have played in our community and nation over their lifetimes. These are the people who contributed to building our city and to making it a better, healthier place. Respect, care and visits are the least that we can offer to repay them."

Mrs. Mazouzeh Shaheen, one of BSCC elders commented: "The ladies of our society visited us today. It was a great pleasure to sit and speak with them. We appreciate those people who dedicate themselves to carrying on our message. It is clear that our visitors are devoted, hard-working people. We love their regular visits. They are great, lovely and caring."

In addition to visits from the community, elders also pay visits to their homebound friends, to whom they minister. Community building among BSCC elders and beyond creates a sense of purpose that is mutually beneficial to the elders and to the larger Birzeit community.





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3. Crafts

BSCC's craft program provides a safe and comfortable environment for Birzeit elderly to pursue and enhance their creative spirit. Through the craft program, members engage in activities such as knitting, preparing traditional Palestinian dishes, and painting. These artistic outlets allow them to express their thoughts and emotions, providing an important and therapeutic activity. Often, their projects depict important memories, reflect spiritual ideas, and help them cope with the passing of friends.

4. Health

BSCC has been cooperating with various health institutions providing the elders periodical health check-ups and medical tests. Birzeit university nursing school and Ibn Sinai nursing schools are the main two institutions that offer health programs monthly for the elderly.

On daily basis we have a special program that offers our elderly educational health and medical essential information need for them to survive and help them maintain good health and balanced food system.





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5. January 2016 Main Events & Activities

BSCC Organizes a Community Breakfast for its Elders

On Wednesday, December 27th, 2016, BSCC organized a **Christmas community breakfast for its Elders**. The purpose of this breakfast was to break the routine of our regular BSCC meal times and to take time to discuss news of Birzeit, hear the exceptional life stories of the Elders, and celebrate the season together.

US children wish Palestine a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

January 30, 2016 - BSCC elders rung in 2016 with a little extra cheer this year from children in the U.S., made possible, in part, by HCEF's partnership with National Presbyterian Church of Washington, D.C. BSCC elders received handmade Christmas cards from children at the Unique Learning Center in Washington, D.C. The cards offered messages of love, happiness and best wishes for the New Year. The cards, which included hand colored images of the Holy Family at the nativity, the three wise men honoring baby Jesus, and the shepherds gazing at the holy star over the manger, lifted the spirits of BSCC elders, lighting a candle of hope in their hearts. The arrival of the cards added to BSCC's New Year's celebrations, which included singing and dancing.

Regarding the Christmas cards, Mrs. Adla Jacir commented: "we were surprised at first. However, after opening and reading the cards, we felt happy. These children are the same age as our grandchildren. They truly carry the message Jesus taught us: to have faith and to make this world a better, safer, more loving and caring place."

Mr. George Abu Dayeh added: "We join our voices to those of these sweet children, and we pray that God will allow their wonderful wishes to come true. We also would like to thank each and every one of them for their love, care, and kindness."





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Conclusion

In January 2016, the *Birzeit Senior Citizen Center* had the privilege of serving **25 senior citizens in Birzeit**, providing them with access to important services including transportation, leisure activities, nutritious meals, spiritual, healthcare and health education, as well as other opportunities including community building events and job opportunities. From the first until the end of the month, the BSCC operated for 10 **working days**, providing more than **60 hours of service** and **192 meals**.

BSCC increased the number of its members and continues to look for ways to expand programming. One way to increase the number of members at BSCC is by executing social events that involve both BSCC Elders and the local community, which gives us the opportunity to introduce our Center to the local community, informing them of the services and programs that we offer, and encouraging them to join the Center.

Through various spiritual, educational and recreational programs, the BSCC has provided its senior citizens with necessary resources while also connecting the elderly with the surrounding community, particularly with the younger generation. BSCC is dedicated and to providing a place for elderly citizens of Birzeit to come together in a community and to give them a sense of belonging.

