

HE SAID GO

From Canada to Egypt: Joseph's Story

By Alena Jurek

School activity day! Every year on the holiday celebrating the prophet Mohammed's birthday, the Nile Union Academy Student Association plans a day of sports and fun activities. Morning dawned; a beautiful splash of colors painted the sky. As I walked from my second floor apartment to the school building, I never dreamed how much the day would hold.

We began with a short devotional, followed by instructions about the day's activities. The students were bouncing! Excited and ready to go, they impatiently waited for the fun to start. Oh, what anticipation! The kids crowded together and pushed each other as they got up to begin the activities.

Five activity stations were scattered across the school. This first section of the day found each class, ESL through Grade 12, competing as a class against the other classes. At each station, the kids raced to see who could do the best and the fastest. Ripples of laughter floated on the air. Smiling faces and happy chatter were aplenty. Spirits were mounting high! A quick lunch was rapidly devoured, and the students rushed to pick up their activities where they left off.



Late in the afternoon, the students were happily playing sliding tic-tac-toe. A long strip of greenhouse-like plastic was laid out on the soccer field with bricks to weigh the edges down. Soapy water was added on top. At the end, a tic-tac-toe board was taped out on the ground. Each team would run, slide down the plastic, and drop a t-shirt on a square. But suddenly, the spirit of fun and rivalry vanished. Screams came up from one side of the crowd. In sliding, Mary*, one of the girls from Grade 9, had hit the back of her head against one of the bricks. With their classmate very dizzy and somewhat disoriented, students went running for the closest school nurse. After an on-site assessment, I was asked to take her back to the dorm to

change into dry clothes. Upon returning to the soccer field a few minutes later, I discovered that something worse had occurred in my absence.

Several other staff, the nurse, and many students were gathered around Joseph*, a boy from Grade 11. In sliding, Joseph and another student had collided. While the other student was fine, Joseph had hit his head and was in a dangerous situation. Several seizures shook his body and he was bleeding from his nose. Nothing he said made sense, and he soon faded out of consciousness. Ambulances in Egypt are notoriously unreliable, so one of our Egyptian staff raced for his car to take Joseph to the hospital. Within minutes, Joseph, along with several other staff, was in the car headed for the hospital. I, and the other remaining staff, worked to calm the students from the trauma they had witnessed. Many of them had never experienced anything like this before and were crying and panicking.

What seemed like an eternity later, most of the students had been calmed and were back in and around their respective dorms. We waited as patiently as possible for news from the staff at the hospital. *Was Joseph ok? How serious was his concussion? Would he be hospitalized or sent home?* Finally! Good news came. While he had maintained a significant head injury, all his scans and tests came back clear. After being given medication and strict orders to take it easy for the rest of the week, he was sent home. A week later, you could see Joseph's smiling face appearing in each of his classes. We were all relieved and tremendously thankful!



Life moved on, and the incident began to fade from the students' memories. One evening, another staff member and I were sitting with Joseph. As the sun went down, he commented on how much more real God seemed to him lately. "Ever since the accident," he said, "I have started talking to God. What happened made me realize how important it is to know God myself." A fun day had turned into an emergency, but through it all, God still worked everything out for His glory. For "we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

*Names have been changed.

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