

The NID Parish Nurse Network had the pleasure and privilege of “adopting” Raeda Mansour, parish nurse at Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem (Palestine). This special bond began in 2007 when Marcia Schnorr (parish nurse at St. Paul in Rochelle) was serving as Coordinator, LCMS Parish Nursing. Marcia developed a distance learning course that allowed them to work together to equip Raeda to become the first parish nurse in the Middle East. There were no role models so Raeda was brought to the USA and completed an internship at St. Paul in Rochelle that included several visits and gatherings within the NID to meet and discuss parish nursing with others in the NID Parish Nurse Network and was “adopted” into their network. Raeda remains the only parish nurse in all the Holy Land.

The NID Parish Nurse Network has continued to fund a biannual trip for Raeda to come to the USA and join then at the annual Parish Nurse Conference at Concordia University Wisconsin and/or a conference hosted by the NID Parish Nurse Network. Additional on-site visits are arranged that has been useful to the Raeda as this is her only opportunity to network and participate in continuing education opportunities for parish nurses. It is also a good experience for the parish nurses in the NID as they gain insights into life in Bethlehem and the challenges of Christians in Palestine.

The cost for the biannual trip is approximately \$2000-\$2500 for the roundtrip travel. Individuals provide the on-site hospitality in the USA. This may not seem like much, but it is a challenge. The cost is paid for by funds remaining in the NID Parish Nurse treasury after expenses are paid for the regular events on the NID Parish Nurse Network Education Schedule each year. Two of these events provide approved continuing education recognition points that are required to maintain the RN license in Illinois. The cost of the application continues to increase. The last one was double the previous costs. Winter storms and COVID19 made it necessary to provide some of the gatherings by Zoom instead of on-site. While Zoom was a blessing because the meetings still happened. Many of the parish nurses are less comfortable with the technology so did not register. It also a change in payment habits since the usual cost included lunch and materials (and with Zoom there is no lunch and there was no “pay at the door” option). The decrease in attendance and related fees and the increase in continuing education application costs has created a deficit.

We have a plan to avoid this in the future, but if the status of the pandemic allows, 2021 is the year for Raeda’s trip to the USA and funds are short. Any assistance that can be provided will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for considering this need. For more information, contact Marcia Schnorr, Education Coordinator and Treasurer (NID Parish Nurse Network) at marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com

Photo: Raeda Mansour and Marcy Schnorr speaking with the annual parish nurse team and the Ajyal (seniors group) in Bethlehem.