

## **Bethlehem University Graduate completes Masters Degree at Georgetown University With Honors!**

Thanks to the significant financial support of an anonymous donor and with her own superior academic achievements as an English major at Bethlehem University, Raphaela Fischer Mourra (BU'07) completed her Masters in Journalism at Georgetown University in Washington, DC in June 2009 – with highest honors!

Of course, while this accomplishment itself is something to celebrate, Bethlehem University is even more delighted to announce that Ms. Fischer is now back in Bethlehem and is a member of the Faculty of the English Department at Bethlehem University, helping us to develop our journalism program!

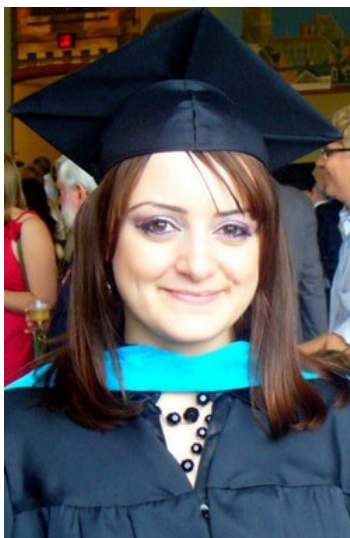
Raphaela and her husband Munir, also a graduate of Bethlehem University (Social Work in 2000) have a 3 year old daughter Ariana who is attending Talitha Kumi School (where Raphaela also attended as a young girl).

The memoir that Raphaela wrote a part of her Georgetown masters degree program (<http://www.welcom.org.nz/?sid=1092>) was personal and powerfully startling. Raphaela's father, Dr. Harry Fischer, a German medical doctor, volunteered to come to Palestine in 1980 to work at Life Gate with people who are disabled. It is there that Harry met Norma, a social worker at the Bethlehem Social Welfare Directorate, with whom he fell in love and married a year later.



In the year 2000, when Raphaela was in her early teens, her town of Beit Jala became a place of intense violence with frequent gun battles and clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians. “When the political upheaval started,” recalls Raphaela, “Dad refused to abandon what had become ‘his country’ and ‘his people.’ He felt he could help his patients even more during such hard times.”

Raphaela and her parents and siblings were like many of the people in the Beit Jala, Bethlehem, Beit Sahour area in the year 2000, they lived their lives dodging bullets during some of the most intense fighting in the Holy Land in recent years.



On 16 November, when some neighbors cried for help after their home was bombed by an Israeli fighter jet, Raphaela's father, Dr. Harry, ran out to help. However, tragically, while he was attending to the medical needs of a person who was shot in the street, Dr. Harry was also hit by rocket fire from the Israeli military and died. “‘Harry’ was the last word uttered by my Mom before going into complete silence,” Raphaela wrote for her graduate course thesis paper, “...we understood everything. And everything meant nothing. Nothing was left of him. We became fatherless.” Dr. Harry's funeral was attended by more than 10,000 people.

Bethlehem University is proud to have Ms. Raphaela Fischer Mourra, daughter of Dr. Harry and Norma Fischer, wife of Munir, and mother of Ariana, as a faculty member.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harald\\_Fischer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harald_Fischer)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/11/17/world/arafat-differs-with-barak-on-chances-of-peace-deal.html>

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