

Surmounting Obstacles ... An Inspiring Story from the Holy land

posted on Friday, August 15, 2008 01:46 PM

This is an inspiring story from the Holy Land. A story that started with a **Hope**, stumbled on some **Obstacles** on the way, continued with courage and **Determination**, and ended with a **Triumph**. It's the story of ten students from Gaza, who realized the need of educated and qualified Occupational therapist in Gaza and decided to join the Occupational Therapy Program at Bethlehem University.



Hope : The story started with the 10 students from Gaza applying to the Occupational Therapy Program at Bethlehem University. They hoped to gain knowledge, skills, and a degree in a field that is greatly needed in a conflict area such as Gaza. They were all eager to come to Bethlehem University, finish their study, and go back to Gaza to server their community.

Obstacles : These hopes were shattered just few weeks after being admitted to Bethlehem University. Five of the students were denied permission to travel from Gaza to Bethlehem (through Israel) to start their study. Several requests to the Israeli Authority were made to grant permits to the students, but they were all denied. Even a case to the Israeli Supreme Court by an Israeli Human Right Group to grant the needed permits to the students was also rejected after long delays.

Determination : It was feared that this was the end of the students dreams. But a group of dedicated and determined BU faculty members refused to give up on the remaining students dreams. They insisted on delivering their training and teaching to those students using any possible means. They started to use alternative and innovative methods of learning: online courses, video conferencing, DVDs, and international lecturers who were able to travel to Gaza or Egypt to teach the students.

Triumph : Several years later, determination, dedication, and hope prevailed. Overcoming all obstacles and hardship, on March 27th, 2008 a graduation ceremony (of course) through video conferencing took place. The students at Islamic University in Gaza, and Bethlehem University administration, faculty, and peer students at the Audiovisual Center at Bethlehem University. It was an emotional ceremony with mixed feelings of happiness, pride, and concerns for the future. It was a fairytale end of a story that had all the reasons to end with sadness and frustration, but with determination and dedication it became a story of hope and inspiration.