

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please make a tax-deductible donation payable to **The Gaza Mental Health Foundation Inc.** to support the critical work of providing vital mental health support to the traumatized families of the Gaza Strip.

NAME _____

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The Gaza Mental Health Foundation Inc. will forward your donation in its entirety for the mental health work being carried out in the Gaza Strip. Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent provided by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Please send a check with this form to:

The Gaza Mental Health Foundation
PO Box 380273
Cambridge, MA 02238

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THE GAZA MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION Inc.



Photo by Cristina Ruiz Cortina

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The Gaza Mental Health Foundation Inc.
www.gazamentalhealth.org



THE GAZA MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

HEALING THE SPIRIT • INSTILLING HOPE

The Gaza Mental Health Foundation Inc. was formed in 2001 to support the critically important work of providing mental health services for the people of Gaza, especially the children who are its future. It is difficult to imagine any future in which Palestinians and Israelis can one day live peacefully together without the efforts of mental health workers who are endeavoring to heal the spirit of a people subjected to decades of violence and deprivation.

Among the organizations we support is **The Gaza Community Mental Health Program** (GCMHP), which was established in 1990 by the renowned psychiatrist **Dr. Eyad el-Sarraj** (1943 - 2013) to meet the mental health needs of people who are exposed to violence and the loss of freedom on a daily basis.



Dr. Eyad el-Sarraj

In addition, we assist the three women's empowerment groups which had their start within the GCMHP: **Aisha, Al Zahraa** and **Wefaq**. They provide family-focused counseling and training to marginalized women throughout Gaza.

We also support **Afaq Jadeeda** in the Nusseirat Refugee Camp. Its therapy program, **Let the Children Play and Heal**, enables thousands of children to express themselves through art, music, dance, story-telling and theater.

Programs like these are urgently needed because of the dire living conditions in the Gaza Strip. Just 26 miles long and a few miles wide, it is home to 1.8 million Palestinians, more than half of them children. Two-thirds are refugees who live in eight densely-crowded refugee camps.

Restrictions imposed on Gaza since Israel's military occupation began in 1967 have condemned Palestinians to a life of extreme poverty and wholesale violation of their human rights. The first *intifada*, an unarmed uprising against the Israeli occupation, began in Gaza in 1987. Some 1,200 Palestinians were killed and more than 100,000 imprisoned, including children. Many were subjected to torture.

During the second *intifada* that began in 2000, Israel used tanks, helicopter gunships and F16s against a defenseless civilian population. Nearly 700 of the 3,000 killed were children.

After Hamas prevailed in the 2006 election and took control of Gaza the following year, Israel made the Gaza Strip a locked prison.



Worse was to come. In late December 2008, after an 18-month blockade that brought portions of the population to the brink of starvation, Israel launched a 3-week military campaign that left 1,400 Gazans dead, including 300 children. Thousands of homes, hospitals, schools, the major municipal buildings and the infrastructure were damaged or destroyed.

Since then, Israel has maintained its blockade. Gazans have faced subsequent military attacks that have killed hundreds of residents, further traumatizing a civilian population that has no place to hide. The massive physical and psychological injuries, the devastation of the land, homes and economy, and the ongoing siege are bound to have a lasting and severe impact on Gazan society.



Funds donated to **The Gaza Mental Health Foundation** will be used to support programs for women and children who are victims of violence, and GCMHP interventions and training programs that expand the number and capacity of mental health workers to provide quality care in the Gaza Strip.