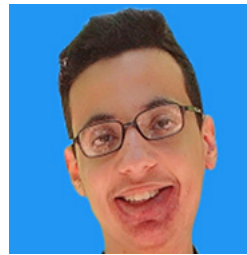




Nour Kanaan is a graduate of Nazareth UNRWA High School in Baddawi refugee camp in Tripoli, Lebanon. She never let being a refugee stand in the way of her dreams. Faced with limited opportunities to receive a quality education, she took advantage of the ones she found. Nour never thought she would have a chance to visit the United States, let alone study at her dream university, but her efforts and determination paid off when she was accepted into Duke University. Nour plans to pursue her passion for neuroscience. While not sure what her next step will be, she thinks that it will involve research, because there's so much in neuroscience she would like to explore. "Duke is an inspiring place for academic and personal growth. I'm very thankful that I now belong there," she observes. "Thank you, AMIDEAST, for making this possible. Your guidance, moral and financial support have been incredible."



As a registered refugee from Gaza, Lana Sabbah attended UNRWA schools before moving to a public governmental school for high school. She was introduced to AMIDEAST as a participant in the English Access Program, where she stood out for her thoughtful comments about language, culture, and history in class discussions. She also participated in civic engagement campaigns and volunteered at Saja Center for Brain Paralysis in Gaza to help Gaza's many children who suffer from war-related traumas. That's why she believes that pursuing her higher education in psychology will put her on the right track to achieve her dream of helping her community, especially its children. Lana is now a psychology major at Smith College. "My passion toward studying psychology in the U.S. has bloomed. I believe that pursuing my future career in the States will put me on the right track to build a concrete experience and achieve my dream of helping children in Gaza. This dream wouldn't be true without AMIDEAST's help and support."



Belal Shaheen is a registered refugee in the Gaza Strip. Although he spent his early childhood in Beach Camp, his family eventually moved to Gaza City, where for most of his education, he attended governmental schools. Belal's strong academic performance was matched by his leadership skills, which he used to promote digital literacy, innovation, and entrepreneurship while a leader of his high school's IT club. That included forming a team that developed Dislep, an application, featured at Gaza's Startup Weekend, to assist people with disabilities. In addition, he participated in Al-Nayzak's programs in Gaza and won his school's nomination to represent the Ministry of Education schools at Expotech, Palestine's Technology Week. Belal is excited to be able to advance his computer skills at Hamilton College: "I have always dreamt of studying in the U.S., but the financial situation in Gaza didn't help, until AMIDEAST came and helped to make this dream come true."



Farah Suboh graduated with high grades from International Independent Schools in Amman, Jordan. A hard worker with clear goals, she loves outdoor activities, such as volleyball and riding horses, and being on stage, whether to perform in a play or to give a speech. She also enjoys meeting people from different backgrounds and cultures. She has engaged in a variety of community service activities, which she says have taught her to accept different opinions and to focus on finding common ground. She is attending Coe College, where she plans to major in biology. "I would love to thank the AMIDEAST for making my dream possible of going to one of the best colleges ever. I'm having the time of my life and the AMIDEAST name is always going to bring me unforgettable memories!"



A Palestinian refugee living in Lebanon, Saleem Solayman spent his early years in Dubai, where he attended a private school. After his father was fired from his job because he was a Palestinian, his family moved to Lebanon, where he completed his schooling at Al Galilee UNRWA High School in Burj Al-Barajneh camp in Beirut. AMIDEAST, the Competitive College Club, and the Hope Fund helped Saleem discover opportunities for college in the United States and guided him through the difficult application and testing process. Saleem is thrilled to be studying applied physics at Bridgewater College, a major he dreamed of pursuing since he was a child: "With the help of AMIDEAST, I got to learn a lot of new skills. They made my character stronger and taught me how to be a well-rounded student. It was totally worth it because of that moment [when] you realize all your hard work paid off."

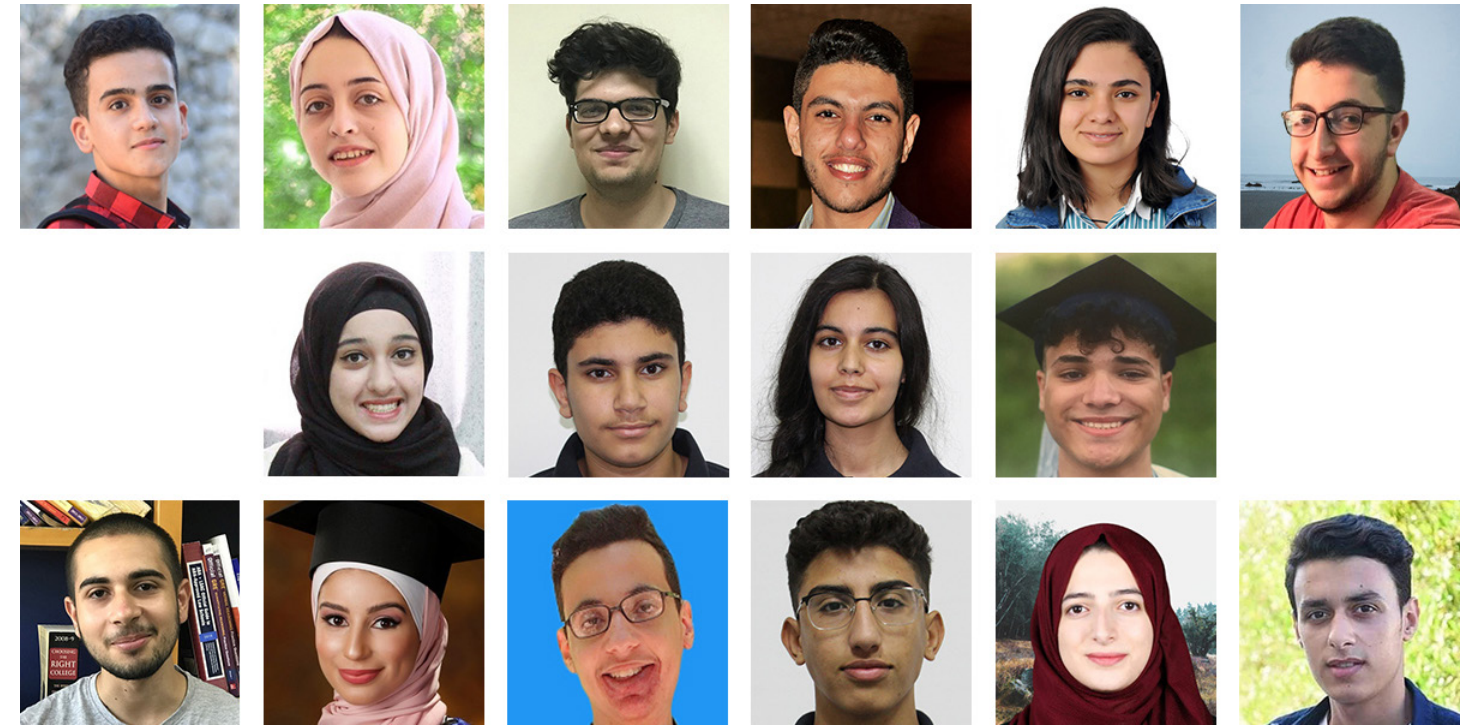


HOPE FUND

NEWSLETTER



December 2019



Dear Friends,

Almost five years ago, AMIDEAST made the decision to assume full responsibility for the Hope Fund in order to keep alive its mission of providing Palestinian youth a bridge to higher education in the United States. Thanks to the generous support of the friends of the Hope Fund, the program is finding its footing while the number of students has grown to a record number of 54 undergraduates at colleges and universities across the United States.

The cost to AMIDEAST is about \$10,000 per student each year until they graduate. The Hope Fund must also find the means to cover our costs of helping close to 20 bright young men and women in the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, and Lebanon to apply successfully for the U.S. college admissions and scholarships that will enable them to begin their studies in fall 2020.

Today is GivingTuesday, a global day that was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Over the past seven years, it has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity. Consider the Hope Fund as you celebrate this day of giving. Your help is vital to the Hope Fund's ability to help deserving Palestinian youth realize their dreams of higher education!

Theodore H. Kattouf
President and CEO

HELP PALESTINIAN YOUTH REALIZE THEIR DREAMS BY DONATING TO THE HOPE FUND!

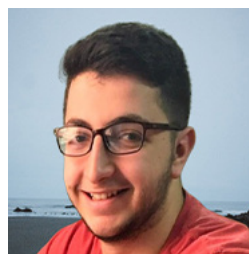
BY MAIL to AMIDEAST Contributions, 2025 M St. NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20036-3363

ONLINE at www.amideast.org/SupportTheHopeFund

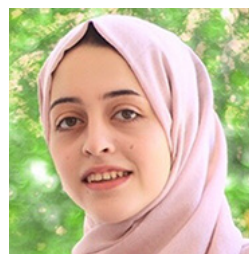


Welcoming the Incoming Class of 2019!

The Hope Fund added 16 new scholars this year from Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, and Lebanon, the result of their successful applications with the support of the Hope Fund for admissions and scholarships to Brigham Young, Duke, Harvard, Lehigh, Stanford and Whitworth Universities; Bridgewater, Coe, Hamilton, Roanoke, Smith, Stillman, Swarthmore, and Whitman Colleges; and the College of Idaho. Congratulations to our new scholars for their success!



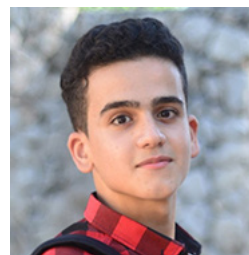
A registered refugee from Al Nosairat camp in Gaza, Abdallah Abu Al Kheir attended UNRWA primary and elementary schools, then moved to a government secondary school, where he excelled academically and showed strong leadership abilities. He won second place in a country-wide English language contest and was selected for the U.S. Department of State-funded English Access Microscholarship (Access) Program, which allowed him to perform community service and advocacy work promoting technology literacy amongst his peers. Now a freshman at Whitworth University, studying computer science and business, he is grateful to AMIDEAST and the Hope Fund for these opportunities: "I would have never made it this far without AMIDEAST's help and guidance. I know that a lot of people would want to be in my place now, and I'm grateful for it."



Rulan Abu Nahla attended UNRWA schools for nine years before moving to a government high school, where she maintained high grades and was always one of the top students in her class. In tenth grade, she participated in the Scientific Research Competition, with her team earning a high ranking for their research into obesity. Rulan was selected to participate in both the Access Program and a second competitive, U.S. Department of State-funded program, the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program, which enabled her to spend a year of high school in Oregon. Now studying business administration at Stillman College, Rulan notes: "Despite the stress about traveling abroad, the expenses and the separation, thank you, AMIDEAST, for letting me live my dream."



Ismail Basel Ajjawi attended Deir Yassin UNRWA School in Al-Buss camp in Tyre, Lebanon. He is passionate about science and enjoys a wide variety of hobbies and interests, including reading mystery novels and the classics and playing soccer. Ismail received some of the highest scores on Lebanon's baccalaureate and Brevet exams, making him an academic star in his community. He is studying premed at Harvard University on a full scholarship, in pursuit of his dream of becoming a doctor and medical researcher. "With the tremendous help of AMIDEAST, I now have the opportunity to learn more about chemical and physical biology and to unravel the scientific laws governing everyday life. Thank you, AMIDEAST, for making such a dream attainable."



Rashed Alfarra is a registered refugee from the west-camp of Khan Younis, where he spent his childhood before his family moved to Khan Younis city in the Gaza Strip. He attended governmental schools, where he excelled both academically and as a student leader. A passionate student of languages, he qualified for the English Access Program and, after learning the basics of French at school, prepared himself for internationally recognized exams, receiving one of the highest scores in Gaza on the Diploma in French Language Studies. Thrilled to be majoring in computer science at Bridgewater College, he notes, "As a Palestinian student, I have always dreamed of joining one of the U.S. universities. AMIDEAST has helped me to make this dream come true."



Ruslan Al-Jabari, a registered refugee, spent the early years of his life in Beach Camp before moving to Gaza City. He attended governmental schools and was a top-ranked student throughout high school, with a near perfect GPA. Besides earning a spot in the Access Program, he participated in science competitions, served as the president of his high school's physics club and co-president of the technology club, and was a fellow at Gaza Sky Geeks, an entrepreneurship hub and tech business accelerator. He also mounted knowledge-sharing campaigns in order to advance STEM fields in Gaza. Ruslan is thrilled to be pursuing his passion for computer science at Stanford University: "I always daydreamt about studying in the most supreme universities in the world; thanks to AMIDEAST, the Hope Fund, and EducationUSA, I don't have to anymore. I get to live it!"



Amir Amer, from Nablus in the West Bank, is majoring in finance at Lehigh University. He participated in the YES program, representing his country as a scholar-ambassador and engaging in community service. Amir continued to volunteer after his return home, while maintaining an outstanding academic record and actively participating in extracurricular activities, including Model United Nations (MUN), debate, and racial and ethnic diversity clubs. With the help of the EducationUSA Competitive College Club at AMIDEAST, he gained admissions and a scholarship to attend Lehigh University, where he intends to major in economics and business administration. "Never have I felt this gratified from a decision I've taken than the decision of applying to AMIDEAST to help me set my future. Thank you to everyone who helped me."



Nader Almadbooh, a registered refugee from Bethlehem, is majoring in astrophysics at Swarthmore College. A graduate of Terra Sancta High School, where he was on a scholarship, Nader was selected for the English Access Program. Then, determined to achieve his dream of pursuing his higher education in the United States, he joined the Competitive College Club at AMIDEAST. In addition to standing out as one of the brightest and top students in his school, Nader won the "Best School Debater" award at the national level in 2015 and was selected in 2016 to represent Palestine in the World Schools Debating Championships (WSDC) in Qatar. He also received a Yale Young Global Scholars-FMS scholarship to attend a summer leadership program at Yale University. Reflecting on his experience, Nader says, "In an ever-growing world, one needs more than smartness and skill to achieve his/her ambitions; tools and guidance are as important. AMIDEAST's role in my journey has been essential in helping make the choices and the decisions that put me where I am today."



Noor Assi, a registered refugee from Ramallah, is majoring in computer science at Brigham Young University. Noor attended an UNRWA school through the ninth grade before moving to a public school. She is an alumna of the English Access Program and the Competitive College Club. Passionate about technology, she was involved in several programs related to programming and IT, including An-Nayzak's "Badir" program and TechGirls, which opened the doors to her participation in the Intel ISEF competition, for which she developed a device that enables blind and illiterate people to vote in elections without the help of others. Reflecting on her journey, she says, "Climbing the ladder of education takes time, effort, and sacrifices. AMIDEAST helped me and hundreds of students climb our ladders and reach places that at some point felt unreachable."



Nadr Elhelu is a hard-working student and an involved member of his Gazan community. His feelings of connection to his Palestinian roots are even stronger now that he is representing his country while pursuing his dream of studying computer science at Whitman College. Although he has always been passionate about learning, he finds his coursework at Whitman especially thought provoking. In his free time, Nadr also makes a point of participating in campus clubs, including Students for Justice in Palestine, Men of Color, and Whitman's archery club, in order to stay connected to his homeland and to help him integrate into his new community. Nadr notes that, "With the poor financial situation in Gaza, I have never dreamt to study in the U.S., but with AMIDEAST's help the dream became a reality."



Yousef Hanafi is a registered refugee from Al-Amal Camp in Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip. Yousef attended UNRWA schools from grades 1-9 and then transitioned to public/governmental schools from grades 10-12. Always a top student, his outstanding academic record helped him earn a place in the English Access Program. Yousef demonstrated a particular interest in IT and computer science. Through the IT club in his school in Gaza, he developed courses on programming, logic, and game design. At the College of Idaho, Yousef is excited to major in computer science while seeking a broad liberal arts education through the university's unique degree program that he will design: "It has always been my dream to study in a U.S. college. I wouldn't have possibly achieved it without AMIDEAST's guidance and funding."



Huda Hashash, a registered refugee from Balata Refugee Camp near Nablus, graduated from Pioneer Baccalaureate School, where she was on a full scholarship all through high school. She joined the Competitive College Club at AMIDEAST in order to pursue her dream of studying in the United States. An academic achiever, she earned top grades and numerous awards, including certificates of achievement for distinguished character, outstanding behavior, and outstanding performance in mathematics. Her quest to study in the United States was further helped by a full scholarship to attend a summer exchange program at Lehigh University in 2017 and a scholarship to participate in the EducationUSA Academy at CU Boulder-Colorado in 2018. She is looking forward to starting her program in neuroscience at Roanoke College in spring 2020. "I have always had the dream to be an independent, strong, young woman who would travel and study abroad, and my dream has become a reality. I would like to thank everyone who has helped me to reach my dream!"