



▶ ACCLAIMED EGYPTIAN
CARICATURIST
TOUHRAN VISITS
OTTAWA3



▶ JOURNEY BACK TO
BEIRUT7

Arabica

NCCAR

A NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTED BY THE NATIONAL
COUNCIL ON CANADA-ARAB RELATIONS

"The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition." (Principle 5 - UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959)

NCCAR Children of Gaza Appeal

The National Council on Canada-Arab Relations (NCCAR) launched an appeal to raise funds for the "Mental Health of the Children of Gaza," an on-going program that is part of the services that the Gaza Community Mental Health Program (GCMHP) offers.

"In Gaza, where half the population is below the age of 14, one sees children with no hope for the future," Dr Eyad El-Sarraj, head of GCMHP said. "They are not skilled because their schooling has

been so disrupted...they are quite desperate. Their parents transmit a continuous message of helplessness, fear, anxiety... deep despair."

The "Mental Health of the Children of Gaza" program is specifically designed to help children cope with the trauma and stress they experience on an ongoing basis as a result of living under occupation and under siege.

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Canada-Palestine Group on the Hill

The National Council on Canada-Arab Relations welcomes the founding of the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Association. NCCAR congratulates members of Parliament Réal Ménard, Omar Alhabra, Libby Davies and the Honourable Senator Lucie Pépin for spearheading this initiative and carrying it through to fulfillment.

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Marcel Khalife: UNESCO Artist for Peace in Canada

By Julia Tal

About 600 people gathered at Centrepointe Theatre in October for an evening of great music by the unique and charismatic Lebanese musician Marcel Khalife.

At the NCCAR-organized concert in Ottawa, Khalife kept the audience spellbound with his masterful Oud (Arabic lute), accompanied by Austrian bass virtuoso Peter Herbert, and his two sons, pianist Rami and percussionist Bashar.

Khalife reflects in his songs the complexity of the struggles that Arabs are facing world wide in their pursuit for freedom and peace. Through a unique combination of Arabic and Western rhythms, Khalife reached across cultural boundaries to connect with the diverse audience that filled up the theatre.

While remaining quiet during the purely instrumental pieces, the audience couldn't hold back from singing the lyrics of beloved songs sung throughout the Arab world. The participation was so enthusias-

tic that Khalife asked twice during the evening that the house lights be turned on in the theatre, explaining that since the audience was performing, the light should be shining on the audience.

With help from his musicians, and with his warm and, at times, tender voice, he weaved a



spell that carried the spectators through a communal experience. He moved them to tears, with the powerful song "My Mother," through to high energy, with "Motivation." His emphasis on love, peace and justice resonated with the audience.

Khalife began his musical journey at the Beirut National Conservatory where he studied, and then taught,

the oud. In 1972, he created the very successful "Al Mayadine" ensemble in his home village with the goal of preserving Arabic musical heritage.

The musician is also a composer of film soundtracks and has written several books on music.

While respected for his cultural contribution, Khalife's music also serves a greater purpose. In 2005, he was named UNESCO Artist for Peace in "recognition of his fervent and generous commitment in favour of musical heritage".

UNESCO Artists for Peace are internationally-renowned personalities who use their influence, charisma and prestige to help promote UNESCO's message and programmes.

As part of its Cultural Bureau, NCCAR strives to bring such talented artists to Canada to encourage Canadians to learn more about the multi-faceted Arab world.

**THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION**



**LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO**

In July 2007, the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations and the Ontario Trillium Foundation signed an agreement to create, by June 2008, a network of organizations to serve the Arab-Canadian communities in Ontario.

The network seeks to improve awareness amongst Arab-Canadians about services available to them, and to increase Arab-Canadian participation in these groups.

NCCAR will be reaching out to organizations across the province to take part in this initiative. If your group would like to take part, please contact us at (613) 238-3795

Acclaimed Caricaturist Visits Ottawa

Photo Courtesy The Ambassadors Online Magazine



Fans of political cartoons in the Arab world were treated to the works of acclaimed Egyptian artist Ahmed S. Toughan at an NCCAR-sponsored art exhibit at the University of Ottawa in October.

The exhibition surveyed his art presenting people, landmarks and landscapes of Egypt and Yemen. It was held in cooperation with *The Ambassadors Online Magazine* and the Chair of Arab Studies at the University of Ottawa.

Toughan began his career in 1946 as a journalist and cartoonist working for numerous Egyptian newspapers, journals and magazines. His earliest and most publicized works came during his period at *Rose Al-Youssef*, the famous political weekly magazine, and in *Akhbar Al-Yom* weekly magazine.

In 1953, following the revolution that brought President Gamel Abdel Nasser to power, Toughan was one of the co-founders of *Al-Jomhoriya* daily newspaper. In the 1980's, Toughan created the weekly cartoon magazine, *Caricature*, along with his colleague and fellow cartoonist Mostapha Hussein.

Today, his collection of works includes more than 50,000 cartoons in daily newspapers and magazines as well as 11 illustrated books.

Toughan's illustrious and award-winning career has served to reflect the vibrant popular movements that shook the Arab world in search of improved rights, peace and understanding.

NCCAR Announces 2008 Parliamentary Internship

Since 1999, NCCAR has been organising internships for Arab-Canadian youth from across the country studying law, political science, and other related academic fields. This spring, NCCAR will select the 2008 cohort for placements with members of Parliament and senators.

The goal of the internship program is to provide young leaders with an opportunity to learn about the Cana-

dian political system. Participants take part in the daily tasks that are necessary to run the office of an MP or senator.

Many former participants have gone on to work within political parties, with MPs and in the public service.

The internship also offers MPs and senators an opportunity to work with energetic young Canadians who have a desire to see their country prosper.

The Parliamentary Internship program relies on donations. Interns are provided with a stipend to help them with the cost of living during their time in Ottawa. Each placement costs \$1,500.

If you would like to contribute to this program or sponsor an internship for an Arab-Canadian university student in your community, please contact NCCAR at admin@nccar.ca.