

## Activities in Bahrain

Wafa Ebrahim Al-Ammadi from Bahrain, Ren2002 Leadership Course

Ms. Wafa Ebrahim Al-Ammadi From Bahrain (2nd program, Leadership Course), was inspired by the experience she had in Tokyo where she interacted with people with physical disabilities and started a program that would allow opportunities to interact with people with physical challenges upon her return to Bahrain. She is actively involved throughout the year, with activities including learning how to use sign language and interacting with children in an orphanage, etc. She has even drawn the interest of local media <Bahrain Tribune May 12th, 2003>.

## Sign language training for SWY members



Bahrainis training in sign language at the Shaikh Al Farsi Centre.

FIFTEEN Bahraini members of the Ship for World Youth (SWY) were given a special training in sign language at the Shaikh Al Farsi Total Communications centre yesterday.

The training, organised in cooperation with the Directorate of Rehabilitation at the Ministry of

Labour and Social Affairs, aimed to provide the participants with basic understanding of sign language to improve skills in communication with the deaf.

The programme was in line with the activities for International Day for the Deaf which was observed on April 28. This year's theme was 'Decent job

opportunities to all.'

The trainees were young professionals from the private sector who took part in the Ship for World Youth programme, an international ship travel and educational programme aimed at fostering understanding between peoples of different cultures.

List of the activities;

### 1. Share Experience with SWYAAAB members

"Upon our arrival from the 21st Renaissance Youth Leaders Invitation Program, Miss Hamsa Jowhar and Mrs. Maysa Al-Ansari made a 60 minutes presentation about what they learned from the program, and they exchanged their experience with all SWYAAAB members. Maysa showed us the Media video made by her group, and Hamsa made comparisons between Education in Bahrain and Japan. The presentation was attended by many members but unfortunately the time was too short therefore, Ms. Elham Al-Koohiji and myself were unable to make our presentations."

### 2. Lunch at Japanese Ambassador Residence

"Mr. Ono, the former Japanese Ambassador in Bahrain, invited Ms Elham Al-Koohiji, Maysa Al-Ansari, Hamsa Jowhar and Wafa Al-Ammadi for lunch at his residence in Barbar to share the knowledge and experience following our participation in the 21st Century Renaissance Youth Leaders Invitation Program.

The atmosphere was warm and cozy, we had very fruitful and enjoyable time with the Embassy staff and Mr. & Mrs. Ono. Then the press was invited to interview us; luckily the articles were in all Bahraini newspapers next day."



### **3 "Orphans Day"**

Orphans day was one of the most exciting activities we had during the year. SWYAA Bahrain members & volunteer youths gathered to make the kids day special, every member invited a relative to encourage them to interact with orphans now and in the future.

The preparations started two weeks earlier and people were really excited. We decided to pick them up from the Child Care to make them feel the difference. We all gathered at Al-Seef Shopping Center, made a brief introduction about the day, put all the kids in groups and distributed the nametags. Then we went to the cinema where kids really enjoyed The Lion King movie. Before proceeding to the beach, we had a meal at McDonalds, and they enjoyed the free atmosphere surrounded by kids of their age. Kids weren't patient to wait for 45 minutes to reach the beach; they put on their swimming suits on the bus before the arrival. Games were the first thing to start the program with, followed by celebrating a volunteer's birthday. All kids liked the games and found them challenging.



Then we had the kites' session, Khalil (SWY14) is an expert in this field so he led the session, and made an amazing atmosphere for the kids, and turned the skies so colorful. Then all kids gathered to make a group painting, to be framed and hanged at the Child Care premises as a memorable of this lovely day. The painting was beautiful with lovely kids' touches. We ended the day by having a super all together and distributing gifts. Saying "Goodbye" was the worst part on that day. In no time we were so attached to these kids and they were attached to us as well.

We all learned many unexpected things on that day, others appreciated many things in life that they never realized. May Matter was a

broadcasting reporter, she was a volunteer who came to assist and then left us to cover the activity live on Bahrain Radio.

### **4 Sign Language Course**

Sign language course was arranged in cooperation with the Directorate of Rehabilitation enter at Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The objective of the program was to introduce the basic understanding of sign language and to improve the communication skills with people suffering impairment hearing.

The course was conducted at Shikhan Al-Farsi Total Communication Center, and approximately 15 members of SWYAAAB attended the course on Saturday, May the 10th 2003. I was very much interested in attending this course but unfortunately it was a working day to me and didn't manage to take the day off. This course was conducted on voluntary basis and free of charge therefore, we had no say on the day or date of the course.

The program of the course was basic but useful, and attendees promised to keep on refreshing their memories from time to time to maintain the knowledge they gained. The program started by brief welcome speeches, followed by introduction to Arabic Sign Language, then letters and numbers, common phrases like getting to know the family members, house hold & food items, and ended by having a quick revision. Touring the facilities was the last item on the program. The most interesting thing we came to know about that every language had its own sign language. We were seriously wondering why not to have a common sign language around the globe?



## **5 Visit to Al-Rahma Center**

"Following the local newspaper articles mentioned above, we SWYAAAB got a call from Al-Rahma Center for Mentally Challenged Students inviting us to visit their premises and get to know the difference between the institutes in Bahrain and Japan. Of course I took with me the pictures of my visit to Yokohama Mentally Challenge School to share my experience and explained and described to them what I saw in Japan to enable them to learn from the Japanese experience.

We started the program by a tour in the premises and then a meeting to introduce to us the school team and background of the center, what difficulties they encounter, how can we assist them, looking at pictures and ended by having snacks and a group picture.

We found that the center was brilliant in terms of education, attention and dedication but they had some financial difficulties. We tried to help them out in a very simple way by designing them a website, bought lots of SWY16 give away and gifts from their own products, helped them out on the exhibition day they had at Bahrain Shopping Center, and now almost have a permanent volunteer from our side.

This activity was attended by 12 of our members on Sun 30 Nov 2003. To me personally the experience was great, and I was very impressed by the educational level and attention offered by Al-Rahma Center staff and Management, and found out that in both countries such educational institutes share common students problems."