

Dear Team

Volunteers in our learning programmes met 30 parents over the last 2 weeks to discuss the progress their children were making in their studies. The meetings were also attended by the children and were part of our on-going endeavour to facilitate a culture of learning in the neighbourhoods we work in. Everyone one was a little apprehensive before the meetings. Volunteers were wondering if the parents would actually come and if they did, would they be easy to speak with. As for the parents, they were worried that this would be another meeting to receive complaints about their children. As for the children, well it is always scary when adults meet to talk about them.

All parents who were invited showed up and they did not need prompting to share the concerns they had for their children and the challenges they faced. A father asked “How do parents teach their kids?” He then elaborated “I came home one day and there were policemen at my door. The kids had cranked called the police and each one was blaming the other. Finally, one admitted to it.” As parents and volunteers exchanged information about the children, both began to appreciate the efforts each other were putting in. We observed that the cooperation between parents and volunteers brought a comforting reassurance to the children that they were cared for.

Toward the end of the meeting, “Achievement Cards” were presented to the children. The card described the nature of the child’s intelligence, a positive trait and expresses what is expected of him or her in the coming weeks. Here’s an example: Sam is Math Smart. He is bright, curious and asks a lot of questions in class. Sam rocks because he is always energetic and looks at things from a different point of view which encourages others to do so. In the coming weeks, Sam will be trying to learn to a new way of encouraging others. He succeeds when others speak up in discussions before him.

After the meeting, a parent told us that she was most grateful to hear good things being said about her child. It was not something that had happened before. In turn, we thanked her for trusting us with her child. Trust, friendships and communities are built when we take the time to share our stories and appreciate the pleasure of each other’s company. As such, we hope you will join us this Sunday from 3.45 pm to 5.00 pm for a dialogue attended by our youths, parents, volunteers, donors and friends. Ask for the tea reception at Zouk and we will warmly welcome you.

I can be contacted at 97885700 if you need more information.

Looking forward to celebrating National Youth Day with you.

Gerard

*“Education is a kind of continuing dialogue, and a dialogue assumes different points of view.”*

*Robert M. Hutchins*