

Hello!

First of all, I wanted to thank everyone that responded to my last email, asking whether or not you wished to still be a part of the team effort to help the refugees and IDPs. I did want to make one clarification to that email. If you are not in a financial position to help at this time, that does not exclude you from the team. I would still very much like to send you all my progress reports and updates, in hopes you will read them and share them with others. Certainly the funds to cover airfare and to purchase supplies are necessary, but equally important are the ideas, words of encouragement and being another ambassador for the people living in the camps. You never know, the person you talk to about our combined effort to make a difference just may be able to do something that will allow us to accomplish even more. So unless I hear otherwise, I will keep you on the email list.

This Sunday, I'm doing a booth at the Faith Episcopal Church's Spring Community Event near me, to shed light on the IDP (Iraqi Displaced People) and refugee situation in Northern Iraq and what my experiences have been, plus what I have plans for in the near future. Thanks Val Lasko for facilitating this! Getting ready the last couple days for the event has led to me really fine tuning my plans. I wanted at this time to share with you some of what I will be sharing with the attendees at the event on Sunday.

I have decided upon seven projects that I will get off the ground when I return to Kurdistan. With the work that I have been doing since I returned from my last trip, I am feeling more prepared to arrive in Erbil with a definite plan that I will implement and train selected IDPs to manage beyond the time I am with them. Spending time with the IDPs in March and April definitely played into the development of the projects, and without that visit, I would not be as far along as I am in achieving my goal of making a difference for at least some of the IDPs. The group that I will be focusing on when I return to Erbil are the 415 families that lived in the Ankawa Mall and moved to a new location right after I left Kurdistan. The new location is being referred to as 128 Ashti, named after the neighborhood where the camp is located.

In developing these projects, here are what my objectives were:

- Each project has to cost nothing or have minimal expenses. Anything that has to be purchased must be available to buy in Kurdistan, as taking supplies on my flight to Erbil with me is an added expense and that money would be better spent on purchasing what is needed once I get to Erbil. In addition, things cost a lot less in Kurdistan, which means more can be purchased. Cost was a big factor in developing the projects because there are no longer any NGOs (Non-

Governmental Organizations) or government agencies managing the camp or providing assistance. With the IDPs having no jobs or money, they cannot be expected to help with costs. The only assistance they are continuing to get is food coupons from the World Food Program. Each person is given \$30 per month to purchase food, and that is it.

- Each project has to serve as a way to give the IDPs something constructive to do during their day to fight the numbing boredom.
- Each project has to be an activity that can easily continue and be overseen by selected IDPs when I am not there. I will however remain in touch with them from home to assist in any way that I can.
- Each project has to have at least some benefits to the mental and physical well-being for the IDPs.
- Each project has to have some financial benefit for the IDPs.

I have written a one-page summary for the seven projects, which I have attached. There is a description for each of the following:

- 1) Art Therapy
- 2) Camera Project
- 3) Child's Play Project
- 4) Gardening Project
- 5) Handicraft Project
- 6) Journal Project
- 7) Recycling Project

While working out the details for each project, I consulted with people with a particular expertise to help ensure the success of the projects. Art Therapist Linda Chapman was very helpful. She and I talked extensively about the art sessions that I did when I was in Erbil and when she told me that she would not have done anything differently, it was much appreciated validation that I am on the right track. Her recommendation is for me to continue doing exactly what I did last time with only some minor fine tuning. I was also quite pleased when Linda said she would reach out to the Northern California Art Therapist

Association to see about scheduling a time for me to speak to the members of the association. This would be some time after my next trip to Kurdistan.

I had great conversations with my friend Tarney Sheldon and her boss Miles Gordon. They work for a community gardening/farming non-profit organization in Northern California's Mendocino County. We explored a number of different options for gardening projects that would work for the IDPs in their new location. What we have concluded will work best I am really excited about.

I have also consulted with some writers that I know about the Journal Project and I have one more person to speak with, who I know will provide even more guidance and ideas to help ensure this project will be a success.

The recycling project overlaps in part with the gardening project. Tarney and Miles gave me some great ideas for this project too, in addition to getting some additional ideas from some other friends of mine that are experts in this area.

I have had a number of other conversations with friends that are a part of this team effort and each conversation gave me some new ideas and lots of encouragement. Please keep the ideas coming, as they are all greatly appreciated. And thanks to my friend Sue Terrell for doing a project with her art students that I am really excited about. When I return to Kurdistan I will be taking some of their art work with me. I will share more information about this in an upcoming update.

I am still working on the updates from my last trip. Thanks to Ruthe Smith for all the editing! We are indeed making progress.

Next thing on my very long To Do List is to get an official blog set up. Hopefully, I will be able to give you the address for it in my next progress report.

As far as a time to return to Kurdistan, I am still aiming for late June into early July. Enough funds to purchase two tickets will be what determine the specific dates. I will be launching another Go Fund Me campaign in the coming weeks.

There is something that some of you may be able to help me with now. After you read the summary for the Camera Project, you will know that I need used simple to use digital, point and shoot cameras. If you have one laying around that you don't use any more, or if you know someone that has one they would give up, I sure could use them. You can mail them to me at: Terri Crisp P.O. Box 34 Somerset, CA 95684.

That is it for this report. Again, I cannot thank each of you enough for being there to help. You are indeed important to me and I plan to make sure that the IDPs at 128 Ashti become acquainted with all of you. They don't have a lot of people pulling for them now, so what you are doing for them means a great deal!

Will be back in touch next week with more good news to share and pictures from Sunday's event.