



# TENT SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2022



## Ready to Roll.

**A mobile school in Lebanon is delivering education to the Syrian refugee camps of Bekaa Valley.**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Crisis in Ukraine

School Welcomes 31 in Jordan

Laptops for Families from Cuba and Haiti

# A NEW MODE OF EDUCATION

With your help, refugee children in Lebanon finally have their mobile school on a cargo truck



After a year of reporting on the "almost-ready" status of a school on a truck, the dream of a mobile school for Syrian children has finally reached the camps of Bekaa Valley in Lebanon.

The pandemic and societal upheaval in Lebanon combined to cause a full year of delays, but our partner has now checked every box: the purchase of a cargo truck with help from TSI donors, vehicle inspections, license plates and driver certifications. The dedication of Pastor Joseph Milan and his son Sayeed of Warm Heart Lebanon is unmatched. Now, our team will be reaching students in Bekaa Valley by the time this newsletter reaches your mailbox.

As the saying goes, this is where the rubber hits the road. Tent Schools International (TSI) has committed to operating the mobile school at \$3,000 USD monthly for one year, putting 12 Syrian children back in school with a committed teacher, nutritious lunches and bathroom facilities. The sum will also cover a driver, fuel, and school materials. For about \$1,000 more monthly, a second class of 12 could be added.

"I'm a survivor person, and a faithful person," said Pastor Joseph in a March interview with TSI. "I believe and trust the Lord will provide. For such an amount, we can do things."

Joseph and Sayeed have years of experience working with children in the camps using language instruction and vocational training

"Every global conflict affects Lebanon. But we stand on a rock – the Lord Jesus Christ. I know my calling. I am not afraid. This is my role in this situation, to serve and be a blessing to my people." - **Pastor Joseph Milan**

inside shipping containers. This will be their first school on wheels. Under this replicable model and with the required funding, an increasing number of kids can be reached over a wider area.

A physical space to learn was the first step, but without a teacher the truck won't impact kids. In each camp, Joseph looks for a Syrian educator who is serious about empowering the refugee community.

"You need someone from within who will represent them - a peacemaker, an ambassador. They know the tents. They know the families."

Students will learn English, math and receive vocational training - "subjects they will actually use", according to Sayeed. The father-son team have spent years building trust within the camps, and now those efforts are paying off.

"[The kids] love our school," said Joseph. "When they see my car coming, they say, 'Joseph is here!' They are excited. They know I'll come on a Thursday or a Saturday and they start to clean the camp. It has been a big blessing to me." •

**Together, we are delivering education where no school has gone before. Thank you for your support!**

**Clockwise from left:** 1. Pastor Joseph receives driver certification for the truck. 2. Camp teacher Ms. Salam gets a ride to work. 3. Lessons in Beirut on a spiritual enrichment day.





## The Mobile School: A Replicable Model

Initially, 12 students will be enrolled in the mobile school in Lebanon. With increased funding, our partner could later add two more classes during warmer months, for a total of 36 Syrian children who would otherwise have no access to education in the camps of Bekaa Valley. The model above shows how all three classes could be served by one cargo truck. The mobile school includes a bathroom, kitchenette and learning materials. This efficient way of delivering education could be replicated across the valley with the help of donors like you!

### GOOD NEWS + A PRAYER REQUEST

#### 31 NEW STUDENTS FROM IRAQ WELCOMED IN JORDAN



A new student on the playground in Amman

The Good Shepherd Center in Amman, Jordan recently enrolled 31 new Iraqi students from a nearby area of the city, many of whom had missed up to four years of education. They were joyfully welcomed by the staff and student body with a celebration on March 5. "We wanted to tell them, 'You have great value. We were thinking about you the whole time and praying that God would open the door so you can attend this school,'" said Principal Dawlat Hijazeen. Please keep Dawlat and her staff in your prayers as they help children adjust to being back in school, especially those struggling with trauma after fleeing ISIS activity in Iraq. •

#### RESETTLED FAMILIES FROM HAITI AND CUBA GAIN LANGUAGE AND JOB SKILLS THROUGH LAPTOPS

While our main focus is educational opportunity for refugees abroad, one lesser-known aspect of our work is outreach to resettled families in the U.S. through our unique partnership with electronics recycler, Comprenew. TSI recently granted 24 refurbished laptops to Bethany in Grand Rapids, MI. Bethany's Refugee Employment Specialist, Landon Mendes, will distribute the devices to resettled Cuban and Haitian families in the region. The laptops will equip them to learn English and gain job skills online. We are honored to take part in welcoming our newest neighbors! •



Landon Mendes, employment specialist for Bethany Christian Services in Grand Rapids, MI

### CRISIS IN UKRAINE

#### TEN MILLION FLEE RUSSIAN INVASION



Ukrainians at the border (Getty Images)

The United Nations reports that ten million Ukrainians have fled as a result of the Russian invasion in February, around a quarter of the population. Most of those fleeing are women and children. Many are traveling to neighboring countries to the west, primarily Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Moldova. Packed trains and long lines of traffic have been steadily heading for the border.

The world is delivering aid. Poland's government has requested more funding from the EU in order to host the number of people arriving there. Romania and Hungary are offering cash allowances for food and clothing, and children are being placed in local schools when possible. Greece and Germany are sending urgently needed supplies including tents, blankets and masks to Slovakia, while France is sending medicine to Poland.

UNICEF reports that more than 1.5 million children are among the refugees, and the risk that they may face human trafficking and exploitation are "real and growing." TSI is partnering with churches in the U.S. and abroad to provide safe spaces where children can shelter and return to school. •

Visit [TentSchoolsInt.org/Ukraine](https://www.tentschoolsint.org/Ukraine) for updates and ways to help.





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## WELCOME THE STRANGER.

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." - Matthew 25:35

TentSchoolsInt   

**LET TENTSCHOOLS COME TO YOU!** TSI staff visit churches, schools, and Sunday Schools to share the ways education restores hope among refugee families. To learn more, call (616) 531-9102 or email [info@tentschoolsint.org](mailto:info@tentschoolsint.org).



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### OUR MISSION

TENT SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL demonstrates the love of Jesus Christ for displaced children by making education accessible. We exchange chaos and loss for peace and opportunity.

TENT SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and a proud member of ECFA, the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA.org).