

A short film entitled SPOT THE DIFFERENCE highlighting the impact of integration was one of the highlights of the evening and launched a successful media campaign supporting full integration of special kids into all walks of life. It will be aired on Middle East Airline flights, Beirut cinemas and local TV stations.

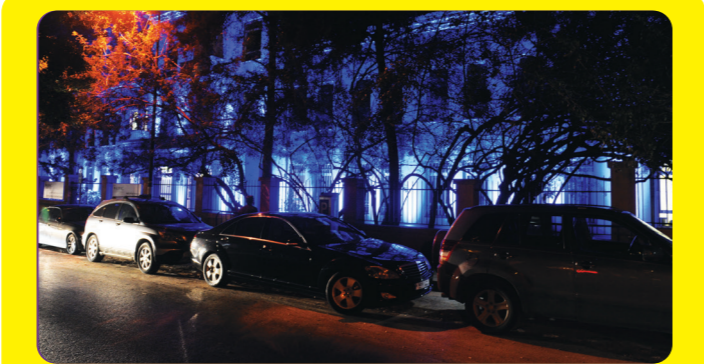
● April 2nd, 2015: World Autism Awareness Day. The LIGHT IT UP BLUE 2015 campaign organized by OpenMinds and the AUBMC Special Kids Clinic shone joyous and bright lights on autism by illuminating both the Pierre AbuKhater building that houses the ASKC clinic and the main AUBMC hospital in brilliant hues of blue! Thanks to efforts by OpenMinds board members, these two buildings are now listed alongside the following landmark buildings that also participated in the Light It Up Blue campaign, including the One World Trade Center, La Basilica de la Sagrada Familia, the Empire State Building, the China Millennium Monument, 30 Rockerfeller Center, Himeji Castle, Taipei 101 Tower, the Helmsley Building, and last but not least, the Great Sphinx and Great pyramids of Giza!



OpenMinds Board Performing!



Light it up blue!



* At AUBMC main hospital and the Pierre AbuKhater building housing the ASKC

● April 7th, 2015: A blue Easter egg hunt at Yuppie Park for special kids, their siblings and parents attracted over 200 visitors who celebrated, played, had fun and competed for chocolate Easter eggs from Patchi, and sundry gifts and vouchers. This last event was in celebration of World Autism Awareness Month.



* Easter egg hunt at Yuppie Park

Stay Tuned!

FOR FUTURE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES OF OPENMINDS please check our Facebook and webpages at: <https://www.facebook.com/openmindslebanon.org> - www.openmindslebanon.org



OPENMINDS FUND – AUBMC SPECIAL KIDS CLINIC

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NEWSLETTER 2, SPRING 2015

Dear Friends,

Thanks to the philanthropic spirit and generosity of our community, we at OpenMinds continue to charge forward fulfilling our pledge and mission to support the AUBMC Special Kids Clinic (ASKC), fund significant research into neurodevelopmental disabilities, support integrated schools with special education programs, and raise and enhance awareness for the needs of children and adults with autism, birth defects and neurogenetic disorders across their lifespan.

We are proud to share with you the many significant events and accomplishments achieved over the last 8 months.

Thanks to your openhandedness and big hearts OpenMinds has been able to complete an ambitious program over the last 8 months.

None of what follows would have been remotely possible without the staunch and steadfast provision of unwavering support from our partners, sponsors, donors and friends.

We salute all of you, your humanism and altruistic spirit.

On behalf of patients and their families, special needs therapists, researchers, OpenMinds board members and supporters we wish to express our deep felt gratitude.

Thank you!! Merci!! Shukran!!
 Vielen Dank!!Grazie!! Gracias!!

President, OpenMinds
 GHIDA RABBAT

Director, AUBMC Special Kids Clinic
 Neurogenetics Program
 ROSE-MARY BOUSTANY, MD



Partners



ASKC is growing ...

In leaps and bounds! An additional pediatric neurologist, Dr. Rolla Shbarro, an accomplished epileptologist and pediatric neurologist from the University of Arkansas was recruited to the ASKC. To meet the demands of the community, AUBMC also hired one more clinic assistant, and 8 therapists offering speech and feeding, occupational, and ABA home-bound therapies.

A move to a much larger area in the new ACC building by 2016 is anticipated.



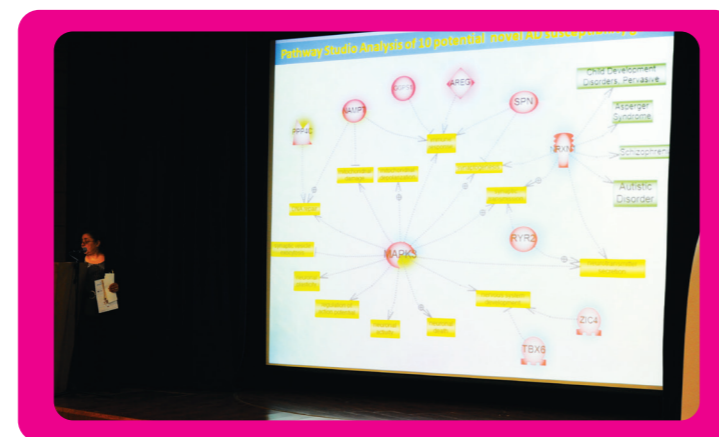
ASKC Christmas Party for over 100 kids and their parents, hosted courtesy of OpenMinds...

Patient packages galore...

54 families with special needs children have received over \$300 000 in financial aid to cover costs of early intervention, ABA evaluations and home therapies, urgent hospitalizations, MRIs, psychometric testing, EEGs and state of the art genetic tests.

Home grown research...

The research teams at the ASKC and the neurogenetics program have established the first autism prevalence figures in Lebanon at 1/67 children, have made inroads into understanding autism by delineating novel MRI/DTI findings and its genetic underpinnings, and are developing a therapy for the neurogenetic disorder, CLN3 disease.



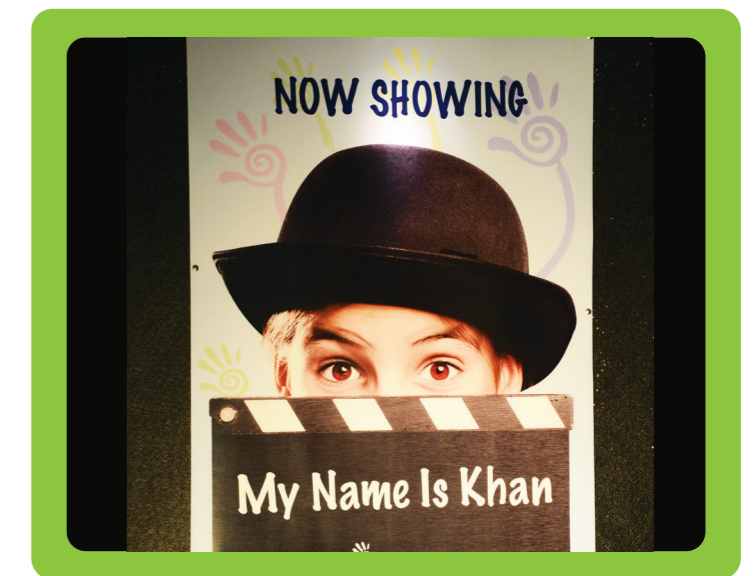
Raising awareness with a bang, pomp and circumstance ...

In October 2014, OpenMinds and AUBMC launched the functional academic program at the Lebanese Evangelical School which is now housed in two attractive floors renovated and furnished by OpenMinds and completed in a record 40 days by RAMCO!!



New Facilities for the Functional Academic Program at LES

No better way than story-telling to reach the hearts and souls of the public by sharing with them the trials and tribulations of special needs kids and adults and their families portrayed in a large number of award winning films, like My Name is Khan, I am Sam, Ghadi, Rain Man, Lorenzo’s Oil, Memory Keeper’s Daughter, Temple Grandin, Forrest Gump and Extraordinary Measures. In October, 2014 at Centre Sofil, a moving and successful 5 day festival dubbed “Special People at the Movies” was attended by over 6000 middle and high school children, therapists, teachers, celebrities and the press and members of the community.



In November, 2014 an enlightening conference took place at Bathish Auditorium at AUB entitled “Special Kids Transitioning to Adults” with speakers from England, the USA, and Lebanon shining the light on problems faced by special needs young and older adults after leaving school, including medical, social and economic issues. The importance of planning thoughtfully ahead by families and guardians was stressed. The event was attended by ~ 200 parents, teachers, physicians and therapists who work with special kids.

The conference spurred OpenMinds board members into overdrive!

They are now actively working together with a number of ministries in Lebanon, the Chamber of Commerce and a growing list of businesses (over 10 so far: AUBMC; Haykel Medical Center, etc...) and the AUST university LEAP program to secure vocational training, university-based learning and job opportunities for special needs young adults in Lebanon.

On February 2, 2015 we hosted our second OpenMinds FUN-raising bash at the O1NE, Beirut. The gala was spectacular and was punctuated by powerful presentations from OpenMinds board members, and accentuated by stunning body-painted dancers, a breath-taking juggling exhibition by Nadir Ammar (a young man with autism), and a priceless auction of pop artwork, one of a kind sports and entertainment packages, as well as priceless tombola gifts, not to mention the spirited dancing of partners, sponsors, guests and OpenMinds board members until the wee hours of the morning...



Pop art painted dancers



Nadir Le Jongleur