



Issue 5

Summer/Fall, 2017

Dear Partners, Sponsors, Donors, Friends and Family,

OpenMinds season begins in spring. We ushered it in with our magical *Sakura* and Japan inspired 4th OpenMinds gala at Biel on March 9, 2017. *Sakura* or cherry blossom season signals a time of renewal, optimism, hope and dreams, and a future bursting with new possibilities. Cherry blossoms, or *sakura*, a lavish spectacle of nature, reminds us, to *pay attention*, to seize the day, and to shed the past. And that, it truly was.

In this newsletter, we will share some of our accomplishments: We spread BLUE LOVE in April to commemorate World Autism Day. A roundtable on special needs of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities in zones of conflict took place on May 11th. A two-day course addressing inclusive education occurred.

The research has led to a new patent for novel drugs for treatment of neurodegenerative conditions, and our students presented their work at international venues garnering prestigious awards.

We assisted hundreds of families at the AUBMC Special Kids Clinic, and lobbied drug companies and the ministry of health to provide life-saving therapies for rare diseases. Alas, the pressing need for assistance with diagnosis and services continues to increase at an alarming rate.

We have plans for the future of 'the adults our special kids will become': an open community in an idyllic setting and the provision of lodging, training and jobs for them in Dibbiyeh.

The dedication and creativeness of our board members, the passion and excellence of the ASKC team and the hard work of our patients and their parents have all conspired to have a positive impact on so many lives.

On November 8th, 2017 we celebrate our fifth year. So... we have stayed the course.

None of this would have been remotely possible without your steadfast and generous support. You are the oxygen that keeps us alive. On behalf of OpenMinds board members and the AUBMC Special Kids Clinic, thank you.

Rose-Mary Boustany, MD
Director, AUBMC Special Kids Clinic and the Neurogenetics Program

Mrs. Ghida Rabbat
President, OpenMinds