"Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul."
- Samuel Ullman

Living examples of Ullman’s quotable wisdom, Palestinian MEPI alumni embarked on a fulfilling mission to help elderly women in refugee camps celebrate Mother’s Day, under the auspices of the recently launched Palestinian MEPI Alumni Network. On March 21, which is International Mother’s Day, more than a dozen alumni of various MEPI programs visited a home for elderly women in Qaddoura refugee camp in Ramallah. This is but one example of many activities organized by MEPI alumni that made the day special for elderly refugee women.

The alumni joined 22 women at the Elderly Women Society Association for lunch. Aside from serving different types of foods, the alumni also served the women who were unable to serve themselves. The sight of young alumni patiently feeding women with special physical needs was moving to the staff.

As a symbol of celebrating the day, alumni served a special cake baked by the alumni themselves just for the occasion.
Elderly Home Visit on International Mothers’ Day
Report on Activity

Sami Thawabi, MEPI alumus, played various classical songs on the “Oud”, a musical instrument known more commonly in English as the Lute. The music moved the women to sing and dance with the alumni. It was obvious the music was taking them back in time!

Feeling comfortable and at ease with the young alumni as the visit went on, elderly mothers started sharing their stories with the alumni. One actually believed that an alumna was her daughter and kept asking her to visit more often! The alumna handled what could have become an awkward situation with utmost sensitivity and care.

Finally, simple gifts were given to honor the mothers, many of whom believe that they have been abandoned by their family and friends.

The day was well spent and very enjoyable to all involved, both the elderly and the MEPI alumni. The mothers felt remembered and enjoyed their special day while alumni basked in appreciation and joy.

“Nothing can be more fulfilling than bringing a smile to a face that almost forgot how to smile.”

– Nasser Touqan, MEPI Student Leaders alumnus.