



SUCCESS STORY

Inspired Through the Magic of a Child

Disabled child leads mother to volunteer at USAID-supported center



Photo: Caritas Seti Center/ Hanan Nicola

George and his mother work together on specialized learning activities at the Caritas center.

The parents now credit George as the reason they are still together and describe him as “God’s gift” rather than a burden.

Any parent will tell you that raising children is hard work, but rewarding. Some children, however, have a special ability to change those around them. Despite his Down’s Syndrome, George was not only able to bring his family together, but he also inspired his mother to become a volunteer at a USAID-supported organization that helps other families of children with disabilities.

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of USAID and the National Council on Childhood and Motherhood, organizations like Caritas provide much-needed support services for families in crisis. George’s parents knew about his Down’s Syndrome before his birth, but they remained in denial about it until he was almost a year old. His father blamed the mother, became depressed, and was unable to assist in the care of the young child. As a result, the family suffered many conflicts and problems and was almost torn apart.

The family’s pediatrician referred the mother to Caritas, a USAID-supported organization that provides support to disabled children and families. George attended workshops and diligently worked on his activities at home with great success. George’s capacity to succeed changed his father’s attitude and encouraged him to be more involved in the young boy’s life.

The parents now credit George as the reason they are still together and describe him as “God’s gift” rather than a burden. The specialized services provided by Caritas allowed George’s mother to improve her son’s quality of life and keep the family together. As a result of her experience with Caritas, George’s mother was inspired to help others. She is now an active volunteer. Caritas trains volunteers to support other families as they face the challenges of their child’s special needs; volunteers help organizations like Caritas continue activities regardless of funding.

More than 2.5 million people are disabled in Egypt, approximately 40 percent of whom are children; disability is a major source of family conflicts. The support provided by Caritas helps to make the lives of these families and children a little easier. Caritas is a grant recipient of a USAID project which works to strengthen access to justice, enhance family stability, and protect the rights of children. The USAID project has awarded more than \$2 million in grants to Egyptian organizations that work to promote family justice. Utilizing volunteers, like George’s mother, these organizations can continue to inspire children and improve the situation for many Egyptian families. Like the Egyptians who worked their magic to build the pyramids, George and his mother are making a new kind of Egyptian magic.