

The Christmas Spirit in Chabrouh

By Mivida Bou Assi, Lebanese Volunteer

“ Every year, we go up to Chabrouh ready to help handicapped people from different homes, that would have otherwise been left to spend the coldest and most magical season alone, with no friends or family. Chabrouh has become a second home to them; a home in which they meet people that are ready to offer them the warmth, love and respect that they need more than anything. We go up, determined to do the best we can to make everyday unforgettable for them, knowing that this might be their only, sometimes even their last chance to be happy. And then when our guests leave, the emptiness they leave behind makes us realize that in the simplest ways, our guests have offered us a love even more valuable than the kind we have offered them; it's a love that we can only find in innocent hearts like theirs. They fill me up with an irreplaceable energy that has become an essential part of who I am and what I have to offer my community. So for the past seven years, I go up to Chabrouh to see them and “recharge” every chance I can get.

A Growing Experience

By Antonius Aulock, former Caravan team

As an ex-Caravanista, Chabrouh means a lot to me. I spent a lot of time there and experienced many camps, and I think it's fantastic that so many Lebanese volunteers join the Christmas Camp. By now, the Camps have become more “German” (strict rules, e.g. not leaving the compound) and in my opinion that has strengthened the team spirit and the relationships with our guests.

Since I ended Caravan, I've come back twice and enjoyed it a lot each time. This year it was particularly exciting, because I got to meet new guests from Chlifa, and many volunteers.

It is always a beautiful experience to be able to serve while being able to enjoy it with other people my age. I love to come back to Lebanon, and Chabrouh and the camps are a fundamental part of the reason why. After the camps, I can enjoy leisure time in Beirut that much more.

Spreading Love and Smiles

By Elie Haddad, Lebanese Volunteer

My second time volunteering at Chabrouh camps was one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. I have difficulty finding the words to describe how I feel when I see the smiles on the guests' faces. It is their smiles that tell me that they are having the best times of their lives. When I see the smiles on the guests' faces I know that the main purpose of the camp has been achieved: for them to experience love, fun and to build an incredible bond with the volunteers. The activities we do and relationships we form during the time that we dedicate to this camp and these people have allowed me an experience that my ordinary life cannot offer me. At the camp, the focus is to love and be loved, and it is achieving this goal that leaves me feeling like I have really contributed to the guests' lives, and mine as well.



Back to Chabrouh

By Amelie Krecu, former Caravan team

This year's Christmas Camp was the first time I went back to Lebanon since my Caravan ended in June 2012. At that time, leaving was like a “break-up”, and it took me quite a long while to get over my “ex-boyfriend, Lebanon”.

So when I booked my flight I got quite nervous, I wondered how it's going to be like to be back, without all the fellow Caravanistas around me. Would at least one of the guests recognize me?

Arriving at the airport, getting onto the Caravan bus and driving through Beirut all the way up to Chabrouh made me feel like I had only left for a few weeks and returned! Especially being back in Chabrouh - it felt like I was coming home. All the guests around; shouting, singing, dancing. The smell, the facility, the view, the Almaza- everything! Immediately when I arrived, I knew what I had been missing. The care, love and boundless happiness that we share with each other while in Chabrouh.

Now I am at peace with my “ex-boyfriend”, even though I am still very much in love with him. But he is fine, therefore I am fine. And I will try to return as soon as possible!!!!

