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PALESTINE

Supporting Vulnerable Children in Gaza: Najwa and Her 3 Daughters
IRUSA is partnering with UNRWA to provide families of orphans, children with disabilities, and other extremely vulnerable children with a stipend to help families cover basic expenses, such as food, housing, healthcare, and school fees. In addition to the cash support, the project provides children with clothes, school uniforms, and school supplies. UNRWA also organizes recreational activity days and provides parents with awareness-raising sessions in addition to case management services for the most in-need families. Finally, select youth and caretakers participate in vocational training that will allow them to supplement their family’s income.
Najwa is the widowed mother of three daughters, Mona, Roa’a, and Nour. She lost her husband in Gebru-
ary 2016 to renal and heart failure. Since then, she has struggled to cope through deep grief, while trying to
maintain stability for her daughters.

Nour, diagnosed with Down Syndrome, was deeply affected by the loss of her father. During the initial weeks
after his death, her mother says she woke her up every morning saying “I need my father, Mama! Where is he
now?”

With no savings, and few opportunities for work as a single mother, Najwa was elated to learn she had been
selected as a beneficiary of the Intervention to Support Vulnerable Children in Gaza project, funded by IRUSA.
“Receiving the UNRWA message, I instantly burst out crying - out of joy! Words fail to express how tremen-
duously thankful I am to this project donor. Honestly no matter how many times we say ‘Thank you,’ there will
never be enough.”

The IRUSA cash assistance has supported medical treatment and special education programs for Nour. She
now goes to a special school where she has learned to read and write, and has increased access to adequate
healthcare and medicine. Through the funds, Najwa was also able to purchase prescription glasses for Roa’a.
Despite their financial security, and despite the fact that she herself never completed her education, Najwa
was determined that her daughters would achieve academic success and complete the higher education
necessary to help them pursue their professional dreams. Her determination helped keep the girls motivated
and focused despite the loss of their father.

The clothing and school supplies component has relieved Najwa from having to ask for assistance for these
items. Moreover, the awareness-raising sessions funded through the project have also helped Najwa. Speak-
ing to UNRWA social workers, Najwa says the sessions enabled her to meet from and learn new people,
making friends who have helped raise her morale and provide stress release.
“My daughters are literally my life. They are my oxygen and my charming gardeners making my soul flourish and blossom.”

-Najwa