

## **KUWAIT CENTER FOR AUTISM**

Kuwait Center for Autism was established in 1994 by Dr. Samira Al-Saad, a mother of a girl with autism. The main mission of the center is to spread autism awareness and ensure an accurate 'Educational Program' to children with autism (a lifelong disability) for improving their educational, societal and conceptions abilities taking into consideration the individual differences and in the meantime supporting their vocational talents and the possibilities of integration with society.

### **Goals...**

- ✚ Ensuring an effective and integrated "Educational Program for Autism Children" by providing a comprehensive educational environment to children with Autism.
- ✚ Enhancing the awareness of Autism.
- ✚ Providing special training programs for specialists and workers in the field of Autism to keep pace with international development in this area.
- ✚ Improve the quality of Autism Teaching.
- ✚ Offering training courses for the parents and families to overcome the child's behavioral difficulties.
- ✚ Holding conferences and forums.
- ✚ Encouraging all kinds of voluntary activities.
- ✚ Establish a financial Awqaf(Trust) to sustain the financial viability of the center.

### **Professional Performance:**

- A. Educational Training Program is presented on scientific and educational basis that suits the Autistic child abilities and to evaluate the child and determine the level of his abilities to join him, in the class that fits his age and abilities. An individual educational plan is set to assess the improvement of the student all through the year.
- B. The Early Intervention Program is an intensive Rehabilitation program for children from age 3 to train the basic skills such as work behavior, work skills, enhancing communication programs and behavior modification plans and helping families by designing a self-help program.
- C. Friends Club Program is an entertainment program to enable the Autistic child to spend the weekend with his brothers and other children in a pleasant atmosphere of fun and entertainment and structure under the supervision of specialized persons.
- D. The Summer Camp is arranged during summer holidays and so far 8 summer camps have been arranged giving the children the chance to have a mixture of entertainment, training and amusement at a structured environment. This Camp is open to all students of Autism and Down Syndrome from different schools and establishment in and outside Kuwait.
- E. Swimming Club Program is an afternoon program setup every year during summer holiday for children with Autism and Special needs and their brothers and friends under the supervision of trainers. It is an essential step to join autistic children with normal and external society in such clubs teaching them many interaction and communication skills.

- F. Youth House Program aims to train youths suffering from Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) concerning self-help skills, in addition to communication and social interaction through several activities and programs specially planned to achieve these goals.
- G. Occupational Program for people with special needs to find a suitable job to secure a better life for them. This program was began at the center by employing one young man with Autism and another young lady with Down Syndrome.
- H. Evaluation & Diagnosis Unit to fulfil the devotion of family needs, studying the main problems and difficulties of their children with cooperation of genetic centres for medical tests and then perform the academic and psychological evaluation. Finally the parent gets a detailed psychological report with the needed recommendations.
- I. Consultation and Training are contributed by specialists in the field of Autism invited from different countries of the world, for continuous information on the latest developments in the field of Autism.
- J. Widen the scope of employing adults with special needs.

### **Achievements:**

- ✚ Assist in establishing specialized programs for children with Autism in many Gulf countries (Jeddah, Riyadh, Jubail, Bahrain, Qatar, and Sharjah) & in Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon). Such effort includes training, curriculum development, educational manuals and other services.
- ✚ Conferences and Workshops are held for families, teachers and workers in the field of autism and special needs, also all those who have relationship and interest in autism in and outside Kuwait. The 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference in the region was in 2000 & the 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2003.
- ✚ Publication series are introduced since the establishment of the center to spread understanding and awareness of Autism by composing or translating specialized books into Arabic Language to overcome the clear shortage of such books (more than 50), audio or video in the Arabic Library.
- ✚ Silent Scream Magazine (1997), the first scientific specialized magazine in the Middle East concerned in Autism Syndrome. It speaks for those who are suffering Autism and other difficulties, as many translations, research stories, interventions and the updated information in science and researches in this field.
- ✚ Gulf Autism Union established (2002) to bring together the professionals and institutions in the field of autism in the Gulf region which is soon to be converted to Arab Autism Union.
- ✚ To maintain the ISO 9001:2000 certificate acquired (in 2005 & 2008) to ensure the quality of service provided and also to improve the efficiency & productivity of the different services provided.
- ✚ Autism Accreditation Status was awarded (2010) to the center by National Autistic Society-Accreditation, UK for Quality Autism Provision.
- ✚ Medical Unit, to provide fast and professional care to the students of the center in case of accidents & emergency.
- ✚ Research Unit, with a Study Hall & Research Hall to continue old researches currently being done with Harvard University, Faculty of Medicine & Kuwait University & start or cooperate with more researches to identify the causes of autism. The Center has so far published many research articles in scientific journals and international conferences and will continue to do so.
- ✚ Training Center, to train the parents, teachers, and other workers in this field through workshops conducted by international professionals and therapists in autism field. Autism Diploma courses for teachers and professionals were also conducted at the centre in cooperation with University of London..

- ✚ E-mails from different countries requesting professional assistance from Kuwait Autism Society.

### **Researches & Studies published in Scientific Magazines and International Conferences:**

- "The Identification of Training and Educational Needs for Autistic Children from Parents' Perspective in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia", An Article published by Educational Journal Kuwait University No. 45 - 1997
- "Special needs and the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Arab World", A research paper presented to the 7<sup>th</sup> National Conference in Autism - Cairo/1998
- "The identification of training and educational needs for children with special needs", A research paper presented to 2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress on Rehabilitation - Dubai, UAE/1998
- "The implementation of an educational program for children with autism—the Kuwait Experience", A research paper presented to the special needs conference - Egypt/1999
- "Speech and Hearing difficulties – the cause, diagnosis & the treatment", A research paper presented to 10<sup>th</sup> Seminar for the Social Development Office - Kuwait/1999
- "Implementation of an Educational Program for Children with Autism-The Case of Kuwait", A research paper published in the scientific journal, International Journal of Mental Health-Vol.29 No.2/2000
- "Development Disabilities Seminar: Scientific and Practical problems", A research paper presented to Gulf University Development Disability Conference- Bahrain/2000
- "Autism Programs–Facts & Aims–Kuwait Experience", A research paper presented to the Special Needs Conference - Bahrain/2001
- "Waqf experience in establishing Kuwait Center for Autism", A paper presented to the Special Needs Conference - Sudan/2001
- "Toxic trace elements in the hair of Autistic children", A research paper presented to Faculty of Medicine - Kuwait University/2003
- "Biological correlates of childhood autism: Trace Elements", A research paper published online in eCommunity: International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction/2004
- "Establishing programs for people with Autism in Kuwait & Gulf Region", A paper presented to RI World Congress, Oslo - Norway/2004
- Poster Presentation at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Autism Congress & Exhibition, South Africa (2006) on "Establishing programs for people with Autism in Kuwait and the Gulf Region"
- "Olanzapine treatment of some behaviour associated with autism. An Open Label Trial", A research paper published in Medical Principles Practice/2008
- "A Study on genetics of autism using DNA samples from families of children with autism", A Study with Harvard University.

## **International Prizes..**

- ✿ Princess Haya Award for Special Education for 2011 for best practices in educating and rehabilitating special needs individuals according to international standards and distinguished quality programmes, creating a competitive and qualified environment that is capable of advancing and sustaining future services.
- ✿ Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz of Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) award for 2010 was awarded for establishing programs for Autism in GCC region.
- ✿ Chaillot Prize 2009 finalist awarded by the Delegation of the European Commission to organizations which promotes the rights of vulnerable groups or which promotes general awareness of human rights as an appreciation for their positive developments in the area of human rights promotion in the GCC region.
- ✿ Jan Amos Comenius Medal for 2008 awarded by the UNESCO & the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic to acknowledge the significant contribution to the development of education in autism field.
- ✿ Jaber Prize for Quality Management 2008 on best establishment run by a Lady (Kuwait) with level of quality provided and recognized as a model to be followed by other organizations.
- ✿ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Award Kuwait 2007 in conducting awareness campaigns in Kuwait by non-profit organizations
- ✿ Philip Morris Award 2003 for Charitable Organizations in recognition of its effort towards supporting children with autism in Kuwait to make a difference in their lives.
- ✿ U. A. M. Women Society (U.A.E.) in 2003, the prize in the field of social services.

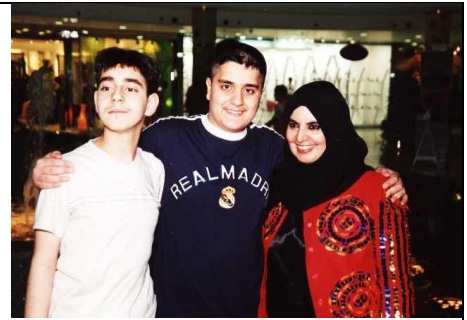
A new phase has begun with the construction of a purpose built school with much larger capacity and facilities than the existing one which is the first for the Gulf region in providing an integrated services with the state of the art equipment for students both in Arabic and English language, large swimming pools, sensory rooms, gym, art and vocational workshops, libraries, office space for research and more. The new building which cost US\$ 13 million (all through donations from the Civil Society) was officially opened on 12-Jan-2011 under the sponsorship of His Highness the President of Kuwait (Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-AHmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah).



**Kuwait Center for Autism (New Building)**



**Official launch of the New Building under the auspices of the Amir of Kuwait**



**Dr. Samira with KCA students**



**KCA Students in different activities like, academic, art, music, computer, games and sports**



**Graduation Ceremony of KCA students**



**2<sup>nd</sup> WAO School Project 2011 participated by delegates from 11 countries**



**Medical Lecture on Autism conducted in cooperation with Harvard School of Medicine**