



*Names and photos changed to protect the privacy of the families.

Dear Supporters,

As Egypt's future remains uncertain with political and religious unrest our Valuable Girl Project (VGP) continues to make strides to bridge tolerance and understanding between Christian and Muslims.

In Egypt it's quite common, especially in rural areas, for people of different religions to never interact. Different cultural and religious practices often eliminate the opportunity to communicate. As people get older their fear of the unknown can sometimes develop into a full blown hatred. The goal of VGP is to empower girls and young women through educational mentoring. A positive outcome of the program has been the reduction of the communication gap between Christian and Muslim youth to gain a common understanding.

Aalia* a Big Sister participating in VGP shared her thoughts about how the program has made a difference in her life. She said, "Before my participation in the project, I used to carry negative attitudes and feeling towards Christians in general. I never used to have any Christian friends or as much as talked to my fellow Christian classmates or neighbors if I knew they were Christian. The reason I joined the project was exclusively driven by the motive to find a job...nothing else! However, upon the start of the project, I was personally touched by the love and respect my fellow Christian girls showed me. After participating in the Valuable Girl Program I started to feel a mutual love and respect for them as well. I felt that something changed in me and in how I lead my life just by observing how they treated me. Consequently, my family also changed their attitudes towards Christians in general after I shared my thoughts with them. A few months after I had been participating the local VGP coordinators advertised an overnight trip to Assuit which included a visit to Saint Mary's Monastery and I wanted to go. I wanted to spend time with my new friends and understand more about their life. When I asked my dad if he would let me participate in the trip he said I could go because he knew I would be safe and that I have nothing to fear with my new Christian friends. VGP helped change me and my families attitude towards Christians for the better."

It is through your heart felt contributions that we can continue to unite Christian and Muslim girls throughout Egypt for a greater understanding that will benefit future generations.

Sincerely,

Hanan Baky
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