



CARE puts a smile on children's faces in Gaza this New Year

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As people around the world counted down to 2010, CARE International West Bank and Gaza has kicked off the New Year by distributing clothes to support children in Gaza a year after Operation Cast Lead offensive. CARE strives to assist Gazan children to celebrate new beginnings and give them hope for the future.

As a consequence of the tight blockade on material and people in and out of Gaza and Israeli military offensives in December 2008 and early January of 2009, most households are now still struggling to support themselves and meet basic humanitarian needs. On Thursday, December 31, 2009, CARE started its clothes distribution under the *Gaza Emergency Response: Clothes for Gazan Schoolchildren* project, which is funded by multiple private donors. With more than \$63,000, CARE already distributed clothes to more than 800 schoolchildren in need in Juhor ad Dik, and is planning to distribute next in Al Maslakh and Al Mughraqa. These communities were heavily affected by the Israeli offensive and have received some but not adequate support during the past months. Hence, they require more support to help them cope with the current winter season.



Activities of the project were based on providing vouchers for 920 children to receive school clothes using an "open market" style of distribution based on previously similar successful experience during the war in Gaza. Families were chosen on the basis of their need for new school and winter clothes. As a result, families will have reduced household costs, and children are appropriately clothed for school and for winter conditions.

“We thank CARE and the donors who did not forget about us even after a year of ceasefire”



Sulaiman Abu Isa and his four children who received assistance from the CARE Gaza Emergency Response Project on New Year



Clothes shop distributing clothes to Gazan children in Juhor ad Dik

Sulaiman Abu Isa (shown in the picture above) is one of the beneficiaries who was supported through the CARE Gaza Emergency Response project. Sulaiman used to work in Israel before 1997. He was then forced to leave his job due to health problems he suffered from. During Operation Cast Lead, he was forced to evacuate his home with his teM household members, seeking refuge in a public elementary school in their town of Juhor ad Dik. Being one of the most affected regions by the war, Sulaiman's family stayed at the school for 23 days. After ceasefire, they went back to their home and found it partially demolished.

A year after the Israeli offensive on Gaza, four of Sulaiman's children who attend school received clothes for the school year and for winter, *“We thank CARE and the donors who did not forget about us even after a year of ceasefire. We still live in bad conditions and this type of assistance helps us a lot”*, said Sulaiman.

