

LEO

LEONARD EDUCATION ORGANIZATION

A GATEWAY TO LEARNING AND LEADING



Leonard Education Organization *Pitchbook* 2025



Scan to Find Our Socials



Mission

Established in 2015 as a US 501 (c)(3), the **Leonard Education Organization (LE.O)** is committed to empowering young under-resourced Palestinian students from the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan and beyond to overcome challenges to pursue higher education. LE.O's mission is centered around equipping and preparing these students to become future leaders in fields like science, education, policy, and entrepreneurship. **Our mission is fulfilled by securing scholarships, personal guidance, and fostering academic mentoring in partnership with educational institutions, and other organizations.** LE.O strongly advocates the power and importance of education, and cultural exchange to allow room to foster stability, development and self-empowerment.

Vision

Leonard Education Organization envisions a **world unified through education, where education bridges cultural divides, and Palestinian youth are empowered to emerge as global leaders and catalysts for change.** This vision is built on the foundation of fulfilling educational aspirations, enabling individuals to contribute towards societal progress, peace, and global understanding; ultimately making significant necessary impacts within their communities and beyond.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR UNDER-RESOURCED PALESTINIAN YOUTH

Nurturing minds and expanding opportunities through the gift of education

Partners



Fundación Kareema

The Fundación Kareema believes in giving a hand to those individuals and associations that need help to realize their dreams.

Zakat Foundation of America

We accomplish our mission by implementing programs that bring immediate relief during and after disasters, building and supporting schools, orphanages and health clinics.



Thaki

Enabling refugee and disadvantaged children to learn through self-paced electronic tools.

Horizon Foundation

Enables exceptional students from disadvantaged backgrounds in the Middle East and Asia to study at leading boarding schools



MEEM Foundation

Envisions a world where women and girls in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) can achieve their ambitions.

Toledo Hotel

The owner Mr. Barakat has been a valuable supporter for LEO, with the hotel acting as a safe haven and a second home for transiting students and a gathering place for LE.O.



Student Stories



The Leonard Education Organization (LE.O) shines through the narratives of its scholars.

These stories, underscore the organization's commitment to turning dreams into reality. Each account is a reflection of LE.O's role in sculpting the lives of its scholars, one success story at a time.

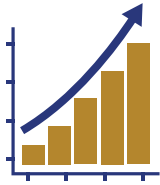
Mohammad who had struggled with adversity emphasised it was LE.O's support that not only provided financial aid but offered a beacon of hope that led him to start university

Donia from the West Bank echoes this sentiment, expressing how the organization's support and community connections have given her a sense of safety and belonging

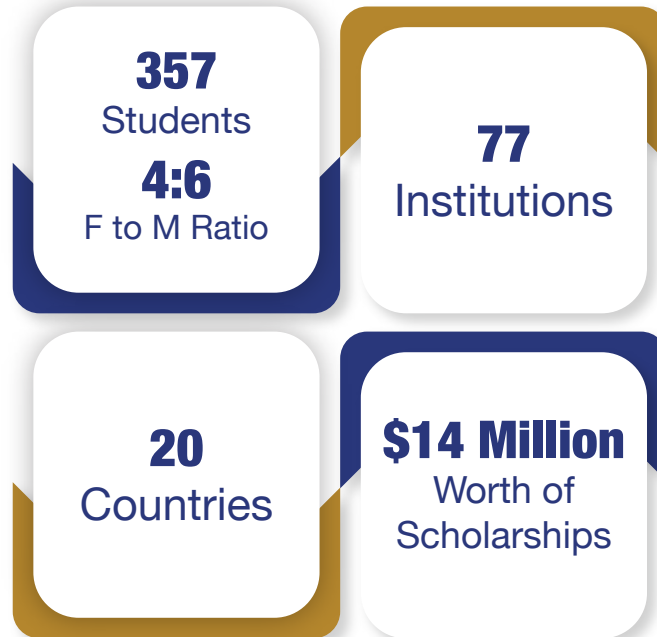
Ahmad from Lebanon shares a tale of resilience, crediting LE.O with immediate, on-ground support during a daunting 25-hour journey to University

Omar from Jordan shares his appreciation for LE.O's ability to keep him connected to his home countries, fostering a safe space for the Palestinian community

Mohamed from Palestine expresses his gratitude towards LE.O for the meticulous care and attention to detail, being available 24/7



Statistics of Success



Accreditation and Recognitions

- On 13 July 2022, The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People of The United Nations accredited LEO as a civil society organization.
- TAKREEM Foundation Award for International Contribution to Arab Society, 2022.
- Great Non-Profits 2025 Top Non-Profits List.
- Candid Guidestar Platinum Seal of Transparency 2025.



Funding Students

LE.O matches funds towards enabling Palestinian youth to reach university. Applications mentorship, personal development, housing, living expenses, and transportation are only a few of the several ways that LE.O helps students build a successful career.

Types of Students and Their Annual Cost

➤ Students at an international institution outside home country in the West

Covering tuition gaps of their university funded scholarships (up to \$5,000), living expenses gap, health insurance (\$500-\$1,500), visa application fees (~\$160), and initial setup costs (\$200-\$500), flights (~\$1,500), Computer (~\$600).

➤ Students in Home Countries

Total tuition LE.O Scholarship (up to \$5,000), transportation, books and supplies (\$1,200), computer (~\$700).

➤ Students in The MENA Region

Total tuition LE.O Scholarship (up to \$3,000), newly funded living expenses necessitated due to war (~\$3,600), computer (~\$700).

**DONATE Using
the QR Code**

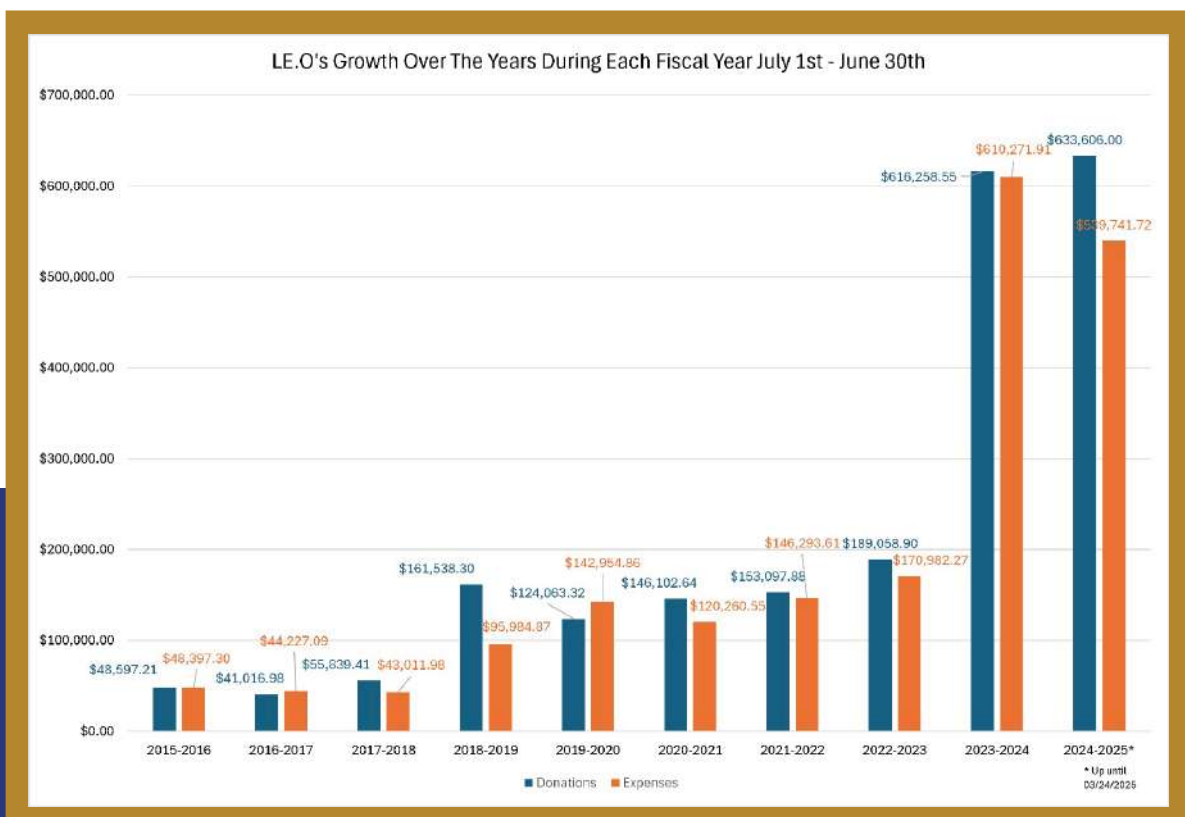




Funding & Operations

LE.O was established as a volunteer-based organization by older Palestinian students and Deya' Leonard Dresner in continuation of her father's lifelong work, the late Dr. Graham Leonard. Students work alongside Deya' on a daily basis, holding various administrative and leadership positions such as board advisors, secretary, treasurer, director of student relations, director of public relations, IT advisor, social media and content advisor...

LE.O supporters consist of fully vested Board Members, private individual and business donors, partner foundations, host families, academic institutions and LE.O Alumni. In addition to our extensive worldwide network leveraged for job placements and mentorship.



Success Stories



Marah

First generation university educated, she comes from East Jerusalem. Her family come from a long line of watch makers from the Old City, no longer in business. From a family of all girls her baba was reluctant to let her study in the US, but after meeting Deya' felt reassured that she would be well looked after. She received a highly coveted scholarship from her university and excelled in not only her course work but also engaged in community service and extra-curricular clubs on campus. She spent a semester abroad in Australia broadening her exposure to other cultures and upon graduation was immediately employed by Microsoft in the AI department, she is currently a senior research Engineer there. Marah supported her older sister with a master's education and currently supports her younger sister's university education in Jordan.

Hashem

Was introduced to Deya' 14 years ago through a family friend in Palestine. His home is one of the worst camps on the West Bank. He had been turned down twice by a known scholarship organization back home and ended up securing his own partial scholarship to attend college in the US. At that time Deya' was volunteering with a small US based charity, and so Hashem received support for his gap funding through them. He went on to become the first Arab male Rhodes Scholar and received a PhD in Economic Geography at Oxford University. He is now an associate professor of Economic Geography at Saint John's College, Oxford. Hashem serves as a mentor and advisor to the Leonard Education Organization (LE.O).

Success Stories



Iman

Lost her parents, two brothers and a nephew in 2014 when the neighbour's home was targeted, in Gaza. She was studying in the U.S. at the time and unable to attend their funerals. Upon completion of her undergraduate degree, she returned home to care for her younger sisters, returning again to the US a few years later to pursue her master's in Women's and Gender studies. Again, she returned home to Gaza at the onset of covid and found no employment in her field. She is a founding member of LE.O and holds the position of Director of Student Relations. She is currently pursuing a master's in Clinical Social Work, after which she plans to put her education to good use in service of her Gazan community.

Wael

Was born and raised in Burj Al Barajneh camp in Lebanon, a bright young man, he received a high school scholarship and studied in India. He received his undergraduate degree in Chemical Engineering and a master's in Science Management in the US and returned back home to work. With an income he was able to move his family out of the camp, and they now live in a home with a view to the sea. One of the founding members of LE.O he volunteers alongside Deya' as her right hand person, holds the position of Chief Operating Officer, and supports all aspects of the program. He also funded the university educations of his brother and sister-in-law.

Success Stories



Heba

Comes from a camp on The West Bank, and studied through LE.O in Jerusalem. She received her undergraduate degree in International Law and Human Rights, and spent her last year as a volunteer intern at LE.O, working remotely. Heba went on to pursue a master's in Global Studies and International Relations.

She attended her master's in Vienna, Austria and New York City, US. During the second half of her master's education, she interned at the Mission of the State of Palestine at the United Nations with our support.

Returning home recently she secured a job position at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as a community organizer and community center operator.

Hadeel

A Gazan, Hadeel had been supported by LE.O as she studied medicine in Egypt for the past 6 years. In November during a regular check-in with her we learned of her needs after graduation and she mentioned her classmates from Gaza as well, and informed us that the class below were also graduating due to a curriculum change. LE.O immediately responded by establishing a Call To Action initiative. Thanks to Hadeel, her organizational skills and her thoughtfulness, both classes received support with tuition debt, internship tuition payments and room and board for the year. Hadeel received her diploma as a GP, is currently in her internship year and was awarded the opportunity to spend a month shadowing a doctor in the US. Her future is unknown currently but her desire is to serve her Gazan community as a doctor in the future is certain.

Student Testimonials



Growing up in a Palestinian community in Israel I always felt that life doesn't have many opportunities for me, we live in a part of the world where we are constantly reminded that our work and commitment are not worth anything, that fighting for our dreams isn't going to take us anywhere, and that life is a cycle that's not going to change.

LE.O provided me with webinars made by the LE.O students themselves and online workshops in a variety of topics such as visa information, intercultural communication and academic advising that allowed me to be better equipped to succeed in the new environment I was going to face upon coming to a new country and my academic life, without LE.O I would be have been lost.

- *Moe*



I got to witness the sincere effort that Deya' and the team put into creating a community for Palestinians across the world, and even got to reap the benefits of being part of such community in ways I didn't imagine.

LEO's emphasis on building relationships stems from Deya's diligent effort to connect with the students, which became so clear to me after a conversation I had with her when LEO was still in its infancy. She recounted a story about a trip she took to the Middle East where she visited multiple students and connected with their families to better understand their background. She took note of the challenges that could prevent some students from adjusting away from home.

As a Palestinian who depended on scholarships to go to college, I appreciate LEO's efforts in going above and beyond to provide gap funding as well as emotional support for its students. As such, I believe supporting LEO will reverberate across the Palestinian community and encourage young students to pay it forward in the future.

- *Shurouq*



Student Testimonials



After a year and a half working closely with LE.O to find a solution for my education, I was finally able to study Medicine in Egypt, my dream came true.

LE.O is really special to me, their aim is to help students who are in need and to secure them good educations so they can be productive people in the future. Everyone is so kind and supportive, and I was welcomed to this family very lovingly and I am really happy to be a part of it.

And here I am, studying what I really dreamed to study with their help and support. When I become a doctor my plan is to ensure another Palestinian student receives the support I have been given.

- *Nour*



Writing with my heart full of gratitude and happiness, I am profoundly impacted by the Leonard Education Organization (LE.O). I was living with my mother and teta and my prospects for an education were limited. LE.O opened doors I never thought possible. Through their comprehensive scholarship program, I received the necessary funding to attend prestigious universities. LE.O supported my Bachelor's degree in Biomedical Engineering at Cairo University and my Master's in Biomedical Engineering at TU Munich, one of the best universities in the world. Their commitment went beyond financial assistance; they provided personalized guidance and mentorship throughout my academic and non-academic journey, equipping me with the tools for success and ensuring I had time to recharge. Today, I am a master's student at TUM and a part-time software development engineer at Philips, gaining valuable experience alongside my studies. They had truly transformed my life, turning my aspirations into reality and setting me on a path toward a bright and promising future.

- *Mohamed*





Student Testimonials



I am a third generation Palestinian raised in Burj Al Barajneh refugee camp in Lebanon. Through the support of LE.O I was able to study nursing in Lebanon. After graduating I received the opportunity to find employment with the NHS as a nurse assistant in the UK, and recently I took the NMC required exams to become a registered nurse. LE.O continues to check in with me and now through my experience I am able to give advice to younger LE.O's wishing to follow in the same path. I will never forget the support I received from this unique organization, one that has transformed my future and that of my family.

- *Mohannad*



LE.O supported me while I was in High School in Jordan and matched me with a "World Leadership" scholarship to attend a university in the US. I received orientation from LE.O to prepare myself for my upcoming journey and was met by a LE.O member at the airport and driven to my university, she stayed with me and helped set up my bedroom and prepare for student orientation.

My family were not in a position to attend my graduation and Deya' came in their place. I am now pursuing a PhD at Tufts University in robotics and machine learning. All of this was made possible for me through LE.O.

- *Saif*





Parent Testimonials



I support LE.O because it is an holistic and authentic organization. It recognizes that each of the students it supports is full of potential. While holding it students accountable, LE.O provides the emotional (and more) encouragement that allows these students to thrive and to succeed. LE.O goes “above and beyond” to support the students and to work with the institutions so that it is a “win-win”. LE.O is “available” — and that makes all the difference.

Jenny

Host Parent



I as a parent it is never easy to let your kid go away from the safety of home but I also understand that when opportunities come your way you should take advantage of them. My son left home at an early age and I supported him throughout while hiding my fears and anxiety. Having Deya and LEO's support system gave me a sense of peace of mind because I know Deya and everyone at LEO care as much as I would for my son. I am very grateful to have known Deya personally and to have my son be part of the wonderful community that she created!

Vivian

LE.O Mother from Lebanon

Board & Donor Testimonials



I was approached by Deya' a few years ago when LE.O was just getting established. My rapport with Deya' goes back decades, even before I was born ! In fact my mother and her mother were good friends at college in Lebanon. I was very impressed with Deya's dedication and perseverance in helping very poor Palestinian children who had no hope. LE.O was the solution , providing education to such kids ! It is my great pleasure seeing the amazing achievements of such young people!

Tarek

I'm delighted to support LE.O, an organization founded on the idea that education matter to personal development, international understanding, and peace among nations. By assisting the most needy, capable and deserving young people to get scholarships, and by supporting them through college and beyond, LE.O makes a real-world difference every day.

Roland

Board & Donor Testimonials



I was first exposed to the Israeli / Palestinian conflict when I was evacuated out of Beirut where I was a boarding student at the American School in June 1967. I came back to graduate the next year and later did a year at the American University of Beirut, beginning in what came to be known as Black September. My parents were educators and I have spent my career in Higher Education in the US. Education has made a big difference in my life, as well as the places and people with whom I shared it.

I have also been privileged to serve as a trustee of the Lebanese American University in Beirut and now as a Board member for the Leonard Education Organization. On my trips to Lebanon I have frequently spent my free time meeting with students, visiting Palestinian students and their teachers, talking about the opportunities and realities of studying in the US. I have visited UNRWA schools outside of Beirut and Tripoli and met with student and faculty there. Their energy and drive is exceptional. Their academic prowess is what gives them the opportunity; that and the faculty and parents who believe in them and supported them for so long. Their discipline and engagement make them an added blessing for the campuses where they enroll. Often these are the first Palestinian students the American college students have ever met. Late night conversation, friendships, shared service trips and internships and collaborative research projects all make for a much deeper understanding and communication between these future citizens and leaders of our globe.

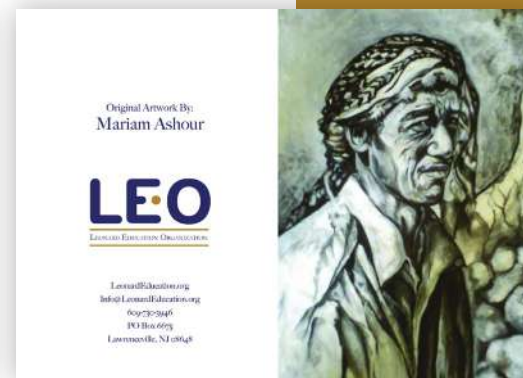
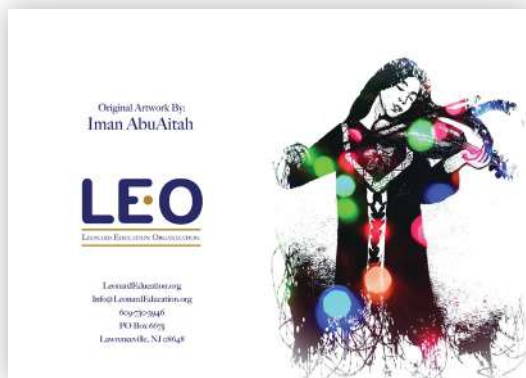
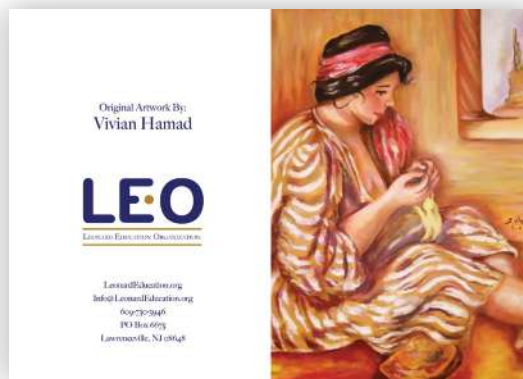
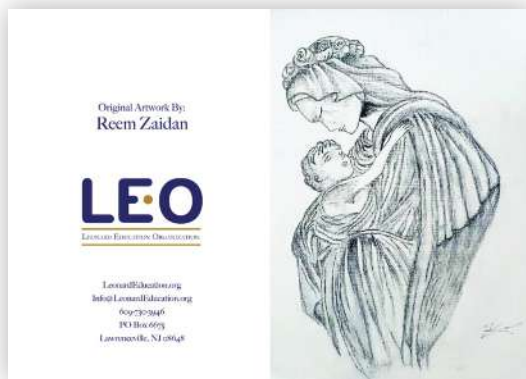
There are surely many people in a desperate situation deserving of a break. Not only have the Palestinians suffered a long time, theirs is the collective result of massive failures of basic fairness and commitments by the West in deference to their dispossession and ongoing occupation. Throughout this experience the Palestinian society has valued education and family commitment and thus these students represent the hopes of many – their parents, their siblings, their extended family and their neighbors. We can give them no greater gift than to help them gain an education and the networking and international exposures that can be transformative in their adult lives. They will invest themselves as well, and I know that it is a worthy means of improving the lives of everyone on this tormented globe that we share. For these reasons I am pleased to assist the work of LEO. My greatest reward is the students' joy at graduation and the subsequent realization of opportunities.

Fred

DONOR INCENTIVES



CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION



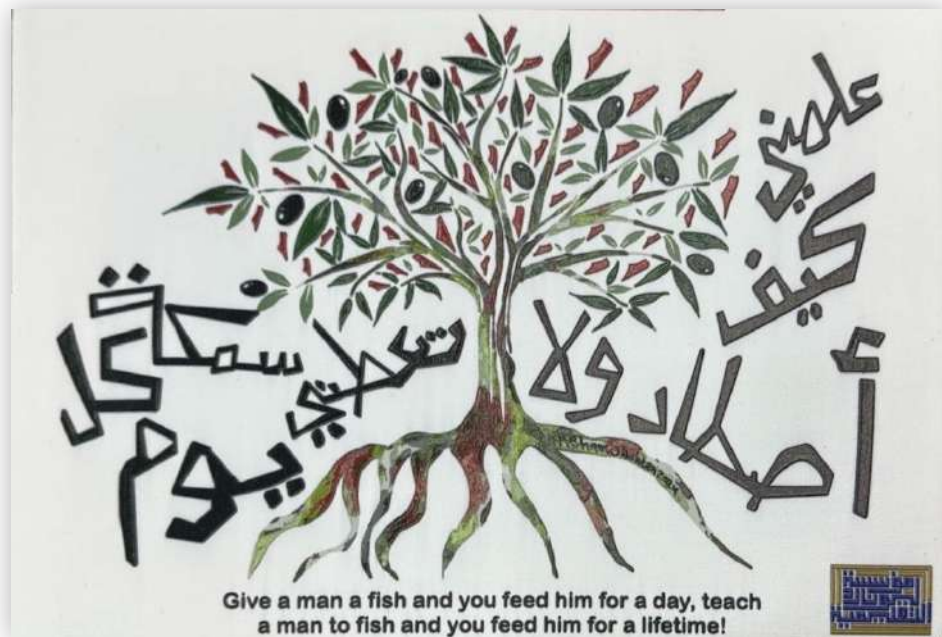
**LE.O
THANK
YOU
CARDS**

*Artwork done by LE.O Community.
Donors receive the card electronically or physically mailed with a
handwritten thank you note!*

DONOR INCENTIVES



APPRECIATION GIFTS



**Only available for UAE residents*

IN HONOR OF AND IN LOVING MEMORY FUNDS

Donors can request an in honor fund to be created in their name or in loving memory for a dearly departed.

In Loving Memory of Lily About Nasser Khuri (1936-2020)

/ Funds, In Loving Memory

Early Childhood: Lily Saleem About Nasser was born to Deya Akkawi and Saleem About Nasser, in Haifa, Palestine. Both families were from Nazareth.

Lily was the youngest of five children, Faheema, Olga, Antoine and Georges.

Saleem About Nasser owned the first Opel Car Dealership in Palestine, where he worked alongside his five brothers during the British Mandate.

In 1947 Tony was a medical student in Geneva and Georges was in business school at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Faheema and Olga were also in Lebanon at that time and had graduated from the American School in Saïda, Lebanon.

In 1948 during the Nakba (known as the catastrophe), Lily was aged 12, she and her parents fled to Lebanon to join her siblings. They lost all their worldly belongings and moved into the poor Beirut neighborhood known as Basta.

Saleem went to Jordan to start a new car dealership and was unsuccessful returning to Beirut. He established an atelier along with his wife Deya, daughter Faheema and son Georges, and then the family became part owners of the Sporting Club Beach resort before taking full ownership till the present day.

Lily attended Beirut College for Women (BCU), now known as the Lebanese American University, and spent a semester abroad at Chatham College in PA. She received her BA in social work from BCU in 1957.

Adult Life: Lily married Dr. Graham Leonard, an American from Tennessee in 1957, and they had two daughters, Deya' and Mona. Both girls were born in Cambridge, MA where Graham was working on his Ph.D. at Harvard at the time. During their marriage they lived in the Mensoufia District of Egypt due to Dr. Leonard's work at The Fundamental Education Centre for The Arab World. Dr. Graham Leonard later became the Dean of Students at the American University of Beirut (AUB). The family resided in Beit Mery and Beirut, Lebanon till they divorced in 1965.

Lily later married Dr. Fuad Khuri, a Lebanese citizen from Alley. They had three children, Paul, Valerie, and Heather and moved the family to London during the Lebanese civil war in the mid 1970's. They later moved to Houston, Texas, where they raised their children and resided for the rest of their lives. She had 6 grandchildren and one great grandson.



Philanthropic work: From as early as her college years Lily was actively engaged in philanthropic work. Her first real passion was the Hidanet Al-Tufl orphanage in Zahle, Lebanon introduced to her by her college friend and famed author Emily Nasrallah. Lily raised funds for the orphanage for many years and was the US Fundraising contact. Focused on the wellbeing of children and youth Lily became an active fundraiser for Saint Jude Children's Hospital's Houston chapter. She was an active member of her church and often cooked meals to serve the homeless.

When asked by Saint Jude children's hospital and the Rene Moawad Foundation if they could honor her, she turned down the honor. To explain that decision, she told her children: "the work I do is between me and my relationship with God, I don't need an award."

When her eldest child, Deya' established the Leonard Education Organization (L.E.O) Lily engaged from day one, reaching out to all of her friends to gain support of the program, and was instrumental in securing funding and support to launch the organization. She hosted L.E.O students in her home, cooking Palestinian food for them and learning about their lives and that of their families. In her final years when she was ailing, she would ask questions inquiring about the program and smile in pride when she heard about the students' achievements.

Well-known as a hostess and excellent cook, Lily will be remembered by her family and friends for her generosity and loyalty to those she loved. Her dearest friend Mrs. Lois Lewis will tell you that "she didn't know a stranger and the world was better for her presence."

Donate 
In Loving Memory of Lily About Nasser



ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US AT LE.O

Thank
you



LEO

LEONARD EDUCATION ORGANIZATION

A GATEWAY TO LEARNING AND LEADING