

David and Carla Castaneda

Serving marginalized youth in Lebanon

“My son decided to drop out of formal studies as he struggled in classes and the school labeled him with some type of learning disability.” These were the words of a mom as she shared about Serge, her 16 year old son, with one of our staff at YFC’s Manara Youth Center (MYC). Since leaving school, Serge has been working daily jobs with hopes to find significance and dreams for his life and future. Serge is an Armenian-Lebanese youth who alongside other youth have been studying since February in our non-formal education (NFE) program at MYC. The objective of the NFE program is to provide opportunities for youth like Serge who for different reasons are not continuing their education. At the beginning of the month of May, teachers from our program shared with Serge’s mom how smart and unique her son is. They told her: “Serge only needs encouragement, love, and motivation in order for him to continue moving forward on his studies.”



Serge’s story is not unique! **Many youth living in the city Bourj Hammoud face such challenges.** Last year, the mayor of Bourj Hammoud shared with us that about 60% of youth drop out of formal school at the end of 9th grade. Some of the reasons are: Families are not able to pay for school costs, youth start helping their families financially, youth from different backgrounds suffer from discrimination, bullying, and violence at school, families are not able to support school work, or afford tutoring help. Whatever the reason is, the percentage is quite alarming, especially given other factors that impact Bourj Hammoud as a city, like: Poverty, unemployment, discrimination abuse and violence, addictions, and other social challenges.

God has opened a big door to serve Serge and other at-risk youth in this community and sharing with them the everlasting hope of Christ. Your partnership with our family and our work is key to help facilitate change in communities like Bourj Hammoud. Thank you for being part of this amazing work!