



# e-Newsletter

HONORARY CONSULATE GENERAL OF SYRIA  
Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A

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*"Syria, the cradle of civilization and the gateway to history."*

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## Street Kids Phenomenon



Street kids are a socio-economic phenomenon that is normally tied to the well being of the country, and is a strong indication of the extent of poverty. It is a very powerful phenomenon since it strikes us in our faces when we are leaving our fancy restaurants or hotels, and because it hits the most vulnerable elements of our society whom we all agree need protection and love.

If you don't live in a country but you visit it on a regular basis, as I do with Syria, you would have the advantage of noticing certain changes that citizens of that country don't normally pay attention to, and accept as way of life. One sad thing that is on rise in Syria is those kids in the streets of Damascus following you trying to convince you to shine your shoe, or begging you to buy from their box of candies.

In one of my recent trips to Damascus, I was at an internet café in old Damascus checking my emails. Clocks have past mid night when a little boy entered asking people if they want to buy any of his chocolate bars. The manager of the place was quick to chase him out of the café so he won't disturb his customers. However I followed the boy outside, and engaged him in a brief conversation. After asking him about his name and his age, I asked him why he is on the street at this late hour when all kids must be in their beds. He replied : *"Well I have been here all day long, I am tired and would like to be in bed, but we have to work"* The boy was only 5 year old!

In the last couple of years I have been preparing with some friends in Syria to start an new NGO to focus on the street kids phenomenon in Syria, to raise awareness to the issue and to work on finding solutions. I am glad to inform you that last month the **Syrian Society of Social Development** has been officially launched. The board of the new organization composed of professionals representing most Syrian cities and most segments of our society. Syrian expatriates will have a role to play and are represented on the board in my person as I was given the privilege to serve as vice-president. We are preparing for an event in Detroit in the second week of November to formally introduce the new organization to our friends, and encourage the participation of everyone interested in helping.



The street kids phenomenon in the Middle East has been masterfully captured in a new Jordanian movie "Captain Abu Raed". It is an excellent movie that won several awards, and best of all is currently playing for few days only at [Maple Art Theatre](#) in Bloomfield Hills. I strongly encourage those of you in Detroit area to take the time to watch the movie. If it is not to learn more about poor kids life in the Middle East, it is to show support to an outstanding Arab production that is screened in US. I promise that the movie will put you for a couple of hours in a different world that many of us call home.

Ramadh Kareem to all of you.

**Dr. Naji Arwashan**  
**Honorary Consul General**