

## JREDS ... My Passion



*"When I was asked to write this column for our new newsletter it hit me how quickly ten years have passed. Yet it also gave a sense of pride and accomplishment. Just over a decade ago JREDS was a dream in the minds of a handful of young Jordanians. Now ten years on, we are one of the leading Jordanian NPO-NGO. Through our team effort we were able to turn a dream into a reality that touches the lives of many.*

*The beginning of JREDS was quite modest, meeting in each others houses hours on end as we'd argue our points. We would organize clean up dives every so often, produce public awareness brochures, until we found that our work was by far greater than each of us could commit. JREDS was at a "cross roads" which meant we had to expand our operation. It was our best move, ever since than we constantly find ourselves growing and meeting many new crossroads. All of which have helped us expand from small events to projects to sustainable programs. However, having said that, it was no walk in the park, JREDS did have its ups and quite a few downs. Yet we survived it all.*

*JREDS is a living example of how a dream could be easily turned into a reality through collective effort and determination".*

**Basma Bint Ali**  
Chairperson

## A Decade in Services

*"Ten years of serving the environment and the local community of Aqaba, JREDS is positively looking at its 10 years anniversary with anticipation and hope.*

*Evaluating its last decade and looking at the future, JREDS is working on developing a 5 year strategy focusing on building capacity efforts to enhance performance to serve our environment.*

*JREDS shares people's concern over Aqaba's environment which is already suffering as a result of on-going and planned investments. But far from despair, we have a sense of optimism. For we see first hand the genuine progress made by people from various sectors to counteract the expected harmful impacts. JREDS is strengthening its partnership with investors to achieve sustainable development and reach a win-win situation to conserve marine life and maintain the hoped for economic growth.*

*Again, and as we are approaching our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we at JREDS can proudly say that we are continuing to bring hope, build partnerships and do good for the environment. We are hard at work shaping JREDS to be more effective in the near future.*

*We believe that we can even do better with your help".*

**Fadi Sharaiha**  
Executive Director

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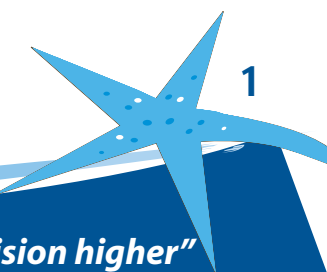
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*"We've set our vision higher"*

## JREDS activities

- ★ JREDS is an active member on the Environmental Work Coordination Board (EWCB) that was established in February 2005 and formed through democratic election.
- ★ JREDS participated with the rest of the environmental organizations in the board at different meetings to discuss important environmental issues such as the amendment of the new agricultural law, and the imported Steel products that are proven to be radioactive polluted. Also JREDS took part in preparing and reviewing the National Biodiversity Report 2005, in coordination with the Ministry of Environment and a number of professional and environmental experts.
- ★ JREDS's environmental impact assessment team in Aqaba attended a scoping session to review the Environmental Impact Assessment report introduced on "Thermal Converter Waste to Renewable Energy".
- ★ Our project coordinator in Aqaba participated in the Disaster Management workshop, which allowed JREDS to play an efficient role during the flooding problem that occurred in Aqaba during March 2006.
- ★  As part of JREDS awareness and educational programs, 32 students from the Montessori Kindergarten visited JREDS Amman office, where another 200 students from Al - Sabelah attended the environmental awareness workshop held at The Aqaba Marine Park.
- ★ JREDS's marine biologist and our Italian volunteer attended a 12 days conference for "Integrated Water Resource Management in the Middle East": Applications for the Sustainable Management of the World's Transboundary Waters.



"The earth will continue to regenerate its life sources as long as all people of the world do their part in conserving its natural resources. It is a responsibility which every human being shares. Through voluntary actions, each one of us can join in building a productive land in harmony with nature."



## EARTH DAY

### ACTIVITIES

#### Sea Turtles Competition

This competition will highlight the importance of conserving the endangered sea turtles. A group of students will do a role play presenting the harmful impact of human race on the natural lifecycle of the sea turtles.

#### Corals Growth Competition

This competition will present the natural coral reefs' growth process and the human destructive activities in littering; thus suffocating the corals.

#### Replacing the Plastic Bags Competition

The aim of this competition is to raise the students' awareness of the damages caused by using the plastic bags, and the importance of replacing them with paper bags.

The 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day will arrive this year on April 22<sup>nd</sup> - a special day to celebrate the wonder of life on our planet; a day for planting trees, grass and flowers, for cleaning streams and wooded glens.

Earth Day is celebrated simultaneously around the globe by more than half a billion people of all backgrounds, faiths, and nationalities.

Earth Day reminds people of the world with the need for continuing care, which is vital to Earth's safety. Also, Earth Day draws on astronomical phenomena; using the vernal equinox, the time when the sun crosses the equator making night and day of equal length in all parts of the Earth. Such vernal equinox calls on all mankind to recognize and respect Earth's beautiful systems of balance, and most importantly to raise awareness on the human actions that could disturb such precious balance.

JREDS has celebrated this day throughout the years, and conducted different interesting and purposeful activities. This year, and in coordination with the Jordan Society for Sustainable Development (JSSD) and the Marine Science Station (MSS), JREDS is preparing for a pilot campaign in Aqaba that aims to raise the environmental awareness for the school students and the general public.

# live ... and let them live



Coral Reefs are the flowers of the sea, surrounded by colored fish with remarkable diversity. Coral reefs are highly productive ecosystems; they are the equivalents to tropical rain forest due to their species abundance. It is worth mentioning that the growth rate of reef building corals is very slow. Massive corals for instance may grow at a rate of few millimeters per year. It takes centuries to build up a vast carbonate structure.

**Coral reefs are among the most diverse ecosystems on our planet**

**If coral reefs are protected, the earning of tourism may reach a value of US \$16 million by 2010**



The coral reefs of Aqaba are important and critical to the biodiversity; it is used in seafood, pharmaceuticals and coastal protection in addition to the recreational value to the tourism sector and the diving industry.

It is estimated that the earning of tourism, if coral reefs are protected, may reach a value of US \$16 million by 2010 in case of slow reef degradation, while if fast reef degradation occurs, the value decreases to US \$3 million. This shows the importance of coral reef to the tourism industry and thus to the whole economy.



Never the less, there are some issues facing the coral reefs and the marine ecosystem of Aqaba, where the Gulf of Aqaba is the only window to the sea and host in its limited and small coast (27 KM) the only port of Jordan. This short coastline is a site of industrial development, concentrated urban expansion, dumping site and expanding tourism activities, resulting in extensive environmental deterioration.



In addition, there are some major threats to the Aqaba marine environment; where oil spills, port related activities, cooling water coming from power stations and factories, sedimentation by phosphate dust during loading activities, increasing tourism activities and the coastalization activities coming to the special economic zone.

**JREDS is inviting all parties to work together towards protecting and sustaining this God given fortune, so we can keep it to generations to come**

We believe that we need to work with investment and introduce the sustainable use of those resources, where the importance of coral reef is beyond monetary value, although it has a lot of that value as well. JREDS is working hard on meeting the ends from environmental point of view.

## ● About Us

### JREDS my first home

Seven years working with JREDS had changed my personal perspective for life in general. It had opened my horizons and incited my sense of responsibility towards protecting the environment and made me think of our children and future generations.

JREDS is where I got the big support to learn, and gained the experience which empowered me to be what I am today: a Senior Administrative Assistant/ Human Resources officer.

Here, I would like to share with you that I have started with JREDS as a secretary with very basic skills.

Working with JREDS made me that kind of person who loves to help and give without waiting for anything in return. I mean, I really believe now in paying it forward. I am very proud to be one of JREDS staff!

**Shereen Aqrabawi**  
Senior Administrative Assistant

## Being Volunteer

My beautiful experience with JREDS started July 2005, when I first arrived to Jordan and met the staff for the first time. They made me feel that I am one of their big family, they helped me get over my homesickness and dried up my tears.

JREDS gave me great challenging opportunities; I was able to hold some research at the Marine Science Station, I also supervised the schools' eco-clubs. All were very interesting experiences and helped me build good knowledge and relations.

I am sure ....once I'll go back to Italy, I will terribly miss the great city of Aqaba, where I found myself and felt like having a big unique family. I will also miss the sea...the incredible world of charming corals and amazing creatures where I dove into a totally different world.

JREDS made me see how urgent it is to work globally towards protecting the fragile environment; I will always hold this message wherever I go. Finally, I want to sincerely thank everybody for the unforgettable moments I had.

**Monica Zavagli**  
Italian Volunteer

## Our Team

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**We would like to hear your  
feedbacks and questions.**

**Please send us on  
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"Camping in Aqaba with JREDS was one of the most interesting trips I've ever had. I spent great time there learning about the environment and meeting new friends. I discovered new things about underwater life; for they took us deep into the sea in a submarine and taught us how to do snorkeling. It was wonderful to see all different kinds of fish and corals in real. I wish I can go there again and help JREDS in protecting the environment".

**Majd Al-Alami / JREDS Youth Camp, 2004**