

Aleppo Shriners Circus

THE 2009 Aleppo Shriners Circus starts in just over two months.

The plans for the circus are falling into place, but there is still a lot left to do. Hanneford's is all set to roll in for another outstanding program of acts.

Time is winding down for advertisements in the Circus Program book. If every Noble gets one ad, the book will be an incredible success. Please send them in regularly to Sheila Bissett in the Administration Office at the Shrine Center so that we can process them in a timely manner.

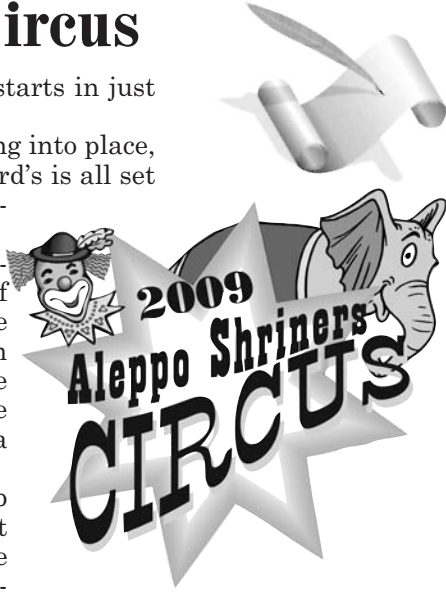
Please fill out the volunteer sign-up sheet on page 22 of this paper, fill it out and send it back so we can schedule the volunteers for all the twelve performances. The sooner these are sent back, the so schedules can be made and adequate coverage can be made.

We are going to need extra help at the Friday morning April 24, 2009, performance for our Handicapped program. Please let us know if you will be available to help.

We are looking forward to another successful Aleppo Shriners Circus, and can't wait to work with all the wonderful volunteers that so graciously give some of their time to make sure all visitors to the Aleppo Shriners Auditorium have a great time.

Fraternally,

Roger Metcalfe, Circus Chairman



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2007, 2005, 2004, 2003, 2001, 2000, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1994,
1992, 1991 *Honorable Mentions: 2006, 2002, 1993, 1990, 1989*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editors Note: The following is a letter from the mother of a former Shriners Hospitals for Children-Boston patient from Chechnya, to Past Potentate Alton L. Moore, 2001. This was forwarded to the Aleppo News for reprint.

Dear Alton, dear Shriners,

This is the thank you letter that I promised to write two years ago. I'm very sorry that I didn't keep my word at that time. To tell the truth, I have been writing it for two years (I still keep copies). Unfortunately I never mailed it.

I want to tell you our story.

My son was seven years old when he was severely burnt in Grozny during the raid in Chechnya. It's not easy to write about it. I'll never forget the horrible night of April 6. Grozny, once a beautiful town, was a nightmare at that time; a dead town in ruins. I was in despair; it was evening and nobody was allowed in the street and the hospital was so far to reach. Our neighbours came to help; my son Said was unconscious in my arms. There were shootings here and there, no lights, and our neighbors were waving white flags asking soldiers to let us go. It was a long trip. All the hospitals were half ruined, and refusing to help us because there were no burn specialists.

At last we reached a burns department thanks to one policeman (he was like an angel to me that night). That man called the military chief and asked to stop the flight that was on the way to the that hospital, and they let us go. We spent five days in that department. No lights, no water, no heat. For five days my son was on an I.V., and that was all the help he could get. They wrapped him all over and never changed the dressings. Said was hardly breathing when we flew to Moscow on board our president's plane, but he never gave up: the very moment he opened his eyes, he was searching for me, and he said "Mum don't worry, I'm OK." My son helped me to survive at that time; he was doing his best not to give up, and the chief of the Acute Unit, Dr. Ktsoev, was very proud of him.

While intubated, Said had undergone nine surgeries and I had no chance to see my son for more than a month. When the tube had been taken out and Said tried his first steps walking, another black cloud appeared on the horizon - a scar in his burnt trachea began growing. I was losing my son again, and then a miracle happened. Yes, a miracle, and this miracle was done by you, my dear Shriners.

At that time, Shriners had a Project Hope Program at Moscow's Speransky Hospital. Dr. Remensnyder used to come and operate on kids there. Our doctor, Lyudmila Budkevich, who was Chief of the Burns Department at Speransky Hospital, called Shriners Hospital in Boston and got permission for us to come to the hospital. Lyudmila Budkevich is a woman of great personality. Said's first surgeries on his face were done by her. Dr. Remensnyder appreciated her as a doctor. Some people gave us wrong information, saying that we'd have to pay big money for the surgeries. I'd never heard of your hospital, and I was at a loss; if only I had known that surgeries in your hospital were at no cost to patients, I wouldn't have cried, because I didn't have a penny. Chechen businessman H. Dzhabraïlov paid for our airplane tickets. At last we boarded the plane to the USA, and our trip to a better life started. I had never met any Americans before, and couldn't even imagine how nice they turned out to be. My husband and I were both very surprised!

In spite of the pain he was in, Said was busy with the presents he received from the pilots. When the plane landed in Boston, we saw an elderly man with a red Fez on. Said liked him at once. We took a taxi to the hospital, and there we learned that the man we had not recognized was a Shriner. After all our misfortunes, grief, and sorrow, we came to Boston asking people to save my son's life. Now, when I recollect our first visit to the hospital, I understand why everything seemed like a fantasy or a sweet dream to us. Everyone who worked in the hospital treated us in such a way that we forgot all about the bad past. Our angel Lyn Smith made up a plan with Said's team that helped my son to recover step by step. The surgery on his trachea was difficult; I remember doctors coming to the eighth floor to see photos of the scar in his trachea. They all worried about my Said. The surgery came out so well that I began believing that my son would have his voice back. I'm still so grateful to you for taking care of my son for 14 years.

We want to say thank you to all the people working in the hospital for every kind word and for every smile that they had for my son. I couldn't stop crying when in 1997, Said came out of the elevator on the seventh floor and said, "Mum, I'm home." Since that time, he has missed his second home in Boston, and so have I.

Once I told you, Alton, about the paradise in America. All the people in the village where we live have learned about Shriners. We told them about the outings, the Circus, and the birthday parties you organized for the kids. We told them about the outing where we first met you. The kids were so happy driving motorbikes. The parents were amazed at what Shriners were doing for children. I remember telling you, Alton, about the paradise in America, and my opinion hasn't changed.

When a child gets burnt, he changes his opinion about the world, and he and his family have to go a long way to survive. And here come you Shriners, giving your help and support. I still remember quite vividly the help we got from the Shriners thanks to our friend Alton. My family regards Shriners as the blessed people.

Thank you again for being so good to us.

Sincerely,

Said and his mum Fatima

P.S. the American people should be proud of you.



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