

“Go to school and learn from Jesus, not to create worlds or to work miracles, but to become humble and gentle!”

Blessed Mary Theresa Gerhardinger

Reem  
Abdullah



Established by the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1996, Caroline Center, a ministry supported by SSND, provides job training as nurses' aids and pharmacy technicians to economically disadvantaged women. The 15-week programs include employment-readiness assistance and tutoring, as necessary.



# Transformative education

AFTER SIX YEARS OF LIVING IN THE MIDST OF WAR-TORN BAGHDAD, REEM ABDULLAH, HER HUSBAND, AND THEIR YOUNG DAUGHTERS LEFT FOR A BETTER LIFE.

Within a week of arriving in Baltimore, she learned about and applied to Caroline Center's pharmacy technician program. Reem said, "Caroline Center was the best educational and social experience in my life. The Center guided me through my transition to life in the U.S., made me feel part of Caroline Center family, and welcomed me into their loving and warm environment. This increased my confidence and helped me adjust quickly. There, I was able to learn about the U. S. health care system, state regulations, tax and banking systems, and the job market. Caroline Center helped me develop my communication skills and expand my scientific knowledge."

Four months later, she graduated with both the technical skills and certification that would allow her to work in the pharmacy department of a national grocery chain where she continues to be employed. For two more years she continued full time before being accepted into Notre Dame of Maryland University School of Pharmacy, a fully accredited, four-year pharmacy program. Now, with her last year ahead of her, she will enter into the practicum phase and graduate in 2016 with a doctor of pharmacy degree.

"Since I had some pharmacy experience in Baghdad, I was already interested in pharmacy, but I was not sure I wanted to become a pharmacist until I attended Caroline Center," Reem said. According to Sister Patricia McLaughlin, Executive Director of the Caroline Center, "I think all of us at Caroline Center were impressed with the energy and determination Reem showed – she was not about to let the fact that she was new to this country stand in the way of creating a bright future for her and her family."

Reem is a role model for others including her two young daughters who attend to their schoolwork just as they see their mother studying. This coming year she is looking forward to working in Peru in mission medicine through the university and sees her career path leading her to underserved populations.

With an effervescent smile she says, "I have learned that everyone here has an equal opportunity to reach their own goals in life with hard work, ambition and being honest. Here I have been able to build a new life with my family, make friends, and establish a respected professional career. As a proud U. S. citizen, I know this country is the free land, a land of opportunities. This is where I have also learned the importance of being active in the community and reaching out to those who need help or guidance in their life." ●

The School Sisters of Notre Dame founded the Notre Dame of Maryland Preparatory School and Collegiate Institute in 1873. Today, renamed Notre Dame of Maryland University it continues as a ministry of SSND. It is one of the oldest institutions of higher education for women in the country and offers graduate and Ph.D. degrees including a doctor of pharmacy.

