



Press Release

Assyrian Medical Society Founder, Dr. Samir Johna, attends a Commission Ceremony at West Point, NY and recognizes US Army Second-Lieutenant, Marikay Satryano, with a special plaque honoring her humanitarian efforts while serving on the Civil Affairs Liaison Team, US Embassy, Amman Jordan in Operation Iraqi Freedom 2004 through 2007.

West Point, New York, January 30th, 2010: Samir Johna, MD, Clinical Professor of Surgery at Loma Linda School of Medicine, AMS Founder and Medical Director traveled to West Point Military Academy, NY to have the special honor of presenting an award to Second-Lieutenant, Marikay Satryano. In front of over one-hundred attendees, some of whom were high ranking officers of the US Army and the former Canadian Ambassador to Jordan, Dr. Johna stressed the fact that both he and Lt. Satryano worked together for the sake of those who needed desperate medical care. The irony was that they were both soldiers but on the opposite sides! It goes to show that humanitarian work cross all obstacles and reaches beyond borders, barriers, and politics. Marikay's service began in 2004 while coordinating Humanitarian Assistance with the NGO and UN entities in Amman, serving in Iraq. She went on to help create an organization in 2006, Gift of Life Amman, which would extend the humanitarian outreach to children throughout the Middle East, matching donors and volunteer medical professionals dedicating their time and skills. To date, there have been over 250 children that have come through this cardiac program. In 2009, Marikay Satryano returned to the US Army Reserve and has accepted a direct



commission in the US Army with the rank of 2LT. In her free time, she has continued the work of helping Iraqi children obtain medical relief with various charitable partners such as Assyrian Medical Society, Children in Need International, OCIUSA, Gift of Life International and the Tom Deierlien Foundation.

Children have always held a special place in LT. Satryano's heart, especially teaching history at a Catholic School prior to being sent to Operation Iraqi Freedom. " While I believe all children, throughout the world, are precious, it was a unique privilege to help the Christian community in Iraq with whom I have a faith filled connection." Lt. Satryano recalls her first reality of the effects of war after only the first month in arriving at Amman, Jordan, "It was a cold December day when a family, or the remnants of a family, came to the embassy gate and asked to speak with someone. The guards called me to help. Nahrain, a woman in her mid-twenties, came in holding onto to the arm of her mother who was dressed in black. This family, Christians who had lived in Baghdad, lost three members of their family to an ambush on their way to work. Nahrain had lost an eye and still suffered from shrapnel in her skin. They were the first family I helped."

Two months later, Lt. Satryano was directed to travel to Baghdad to report on the Humanitarian Relief efforts. It was at the National Iraqi Assistance Center located in the basement of the Convention Center where Lt. Satryano met Asaad, 12 years old, suffering from Tetralogy of Fallot, a debilitating and lethal congenital heart disease that should have been addressed when he was only weeks old. Upon returning to Jordan, she researched and learned of means that may be utilized in helping Asaad. Within six weeks of meeting with many citizens and professionals of Jordan, she assembled a program that helped ten Iraqi children obtain extensive heart surgeries from Jordanian medical professional donors, that was not possible without her intervention. Today, Asaad, is a thriving and healthy 18 year old young man, grateful for her dedication and hard work. Lt. Satryano is an inspiration to the children that have been touched by her generosity and commitment. Her guiding light will continue to grow, helping more children benefit from the work she has organized in both Gift of Life Amman and her affiliation with many viable humanitarian groups.



"One of my favorite phrases is from my confirmation name saint, Francis of Assisi," Start by doing what is needed, then what is possible, and suddenly you will be doing the impossible." This has been the journey thus far and I look forward to the endless possibilities of goodness that working together to save the life of a child brings."