

Forum on children with special needs opening tomorrow

Publish Date: Sunday, 19 April, 2009, at
12:20 PM Doha Time

By Nour Abuzant

The 4th Annual International Forum for Children with Special Needs will be launched tomorrow under the patronage of HH Sheikha Mozah Nasser al-Misnad, wife of HH the Emir. The three-day event, organised by Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs, is held under the theme “Achieving Independence”, with the participation of five first ladies and a host of other dignitaries.

Some 250 top educators, policymakers and organisation leaders will attend the forum and take part in discussions, from a global perspective, on strategies to inspire individuals with disabilities to achieve maximum independence.

Addressing a news conference, organisers said five main papers highlighting different aspects of disability would be presented along with workshops and lectures.

The drawings of Noora Saeed, a Qatari who joined the centre when she was aged four, would be exhibited at the event.

Shafallah Centre deputy general manager Samira al-Qasimi said Qatar's paper would be introduced at the inaugural session and would highlight the social service offered by the centre.

She said that the forum's theme reflects the importance of helping the children to become essential members of the society.

Al-Qasimi said 554 students are registered on the centre's list.

Shafallah Centre chairman Hassan Ali bin Ali told reporters that achieving independence for people with disabilities is a revolutionary process.

“It means changing laws in some countries, but more importantly, changing hearts and minds.

“We must remove all the barriers to independence in order to find jobs and create new opportunities to live and learn.

“Over the course of three days this forum will ask some tough questions and hopefully shed some new light on how we can work together to achieve these goals.”

A media centre for those covering the forum was also inaugurated.



Shafallah Centre chairman Hassan Ali bin Ali, managing board member Dr Khalid bin Jabor al-Thani and deputy general manager Samira al-Qasimi responding to questions at the news conference yesterday