



Photos: Supplied

Spreading Smiles

To mark the beginning of 2016, Spread a Smile volunteers visited Rashid Hospital to cheer up patients

MAÁN JALAL

maan@khaleejtimes.com

TAKING TIME OUT from your day to make someone else smile is a simple but great gesture. The Spread a Smile initiative organized by Oxygen Management Consultants along with Aga Khan Scouts and Aga Khan Guides Group, (AKSG) have been doing just that for the last four years.

On December 31 every year, volunteers ranging from 11 – 27 years old visit Rashid Hospital's trauma centre with gifts and balloons to celebrate the beginning of a new year with patients who are unable to join their families and friends.

This year around 40 Spread a Smile volunteers visited approximately 125 patients in total, some of who were in car and motorbike accidents, and some who

were suffering from burns. Volunteers took the time to strike up a conversation, share jokes, listen to the patients' stories and tried their best to put a smile on their faces.

"The concept is to spread smiles amongst people on New Year's Eve," said Amiral Shariff, AKSG, Group Scout Leader. "There was a guy from Pakistan who got involved in a motorbike accident and he had absolutely no one in Dubai who he can call his family. So some of the kids went to see him. He himself has two kids back home and he was absolutely overwhelmed with the gesture that these kids came to see him and speak to him. Most patients are in the same situation. Although they have friends, around New Year's Eve most people are working or have their own plans so if they aren't family, they aren't going to visit."

AKSG is based at the Ismaili Centre

Dubai and registered with Sharjah Scout Mission. Their main purpose is to serve the community and they have been involved in planning and participating in major events including the Terry Fox Run, the Diabetes Walk, and Clean Up campaign. The Spread the Smile campaign not only changes the atmosphere of the hospital but helps the moral of patients who are ill and far from family and friends.

"It's nice to have that trait where you feel the pain in others," adds Amiral Shariff, "It's important to connect with the community at large and build that institution and capacity where you can go and speak to people."

For those who are interested in volunteering or would like more information please contact the Ismaili Centre Dubai: www.theismaili.org/ismaili-centres/dubai



Art beat

Enjoy a weekend of art, culture and food brought to you by Alserkal Avenue

GET IN TOUCH with Dubai's art and culture at Alserkal Avenue on January 22 and 23 at the fourth edition of Quoz Arts Fest. The free festival will feature visual art, music, dance and design under the theme 'Curate Your Day'. Participating galleries and creative spaces in Alsekr Avenue and across Al Quoz will stay open from 10am-7pm each day, hosting tours and welcoming visitors to examine and learn more about their exhibitions and artists.

There will be workshops and guided tours where you can explore nearby spaces or hop-on one of three buses to galleries and creative spaces across the Al Quoz neighborhood.

Food and beverage will be organised by Good Vibes Market with some of the best food trucks and culinary artists across the Avenue.

For more information, visit: www.alserkalavenue.ae



Skate at the Beach

XDubai launches the GCC's largest Skatepark at Dubai's Kite Beach

GET READY TO practice some ollies, kick flips and aerial grabs! Skateboarders can now practice and show-off their tricks at a brand new, free public facility at Kite Beach. XDubai have created a skatepark where novice and professional

skateboarders can come together. Featuring unique street elements, obstacles and transition flow areas such as hubbas, pole jams, up-down rails and soft-ended walls, beginners and experienced skateboarders can hang out, practice and

develop their skills.

The biggest attraction within the park is the XBowl for professional skaters. Built to world-class standards, it's a challenging 3.2m deep drop with a 2.1 shallow end. With its 29 different elements for

skaters, XDubai Skatepark is the largest multi-faceted skatepark in the UAE rivalling some of the best locations in traditional skateboarding destinations. **For more information, visit: www.xdubai.com/skatepark**