

Qatar Foundation and Best Buddies Qatar Team Up To Host Colourful Carnival for Children with Special Needs

Doha, 18 May 2014 – As part of its ongoing commitment to community development, Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development partnered with Best Buddies Qatar to host a fun-filled event for children with special needs.

The Buddy Carnival took place on 15 May at the Qatar Foundation Recreation Centre, and brought together 125 children with special needs and 72 accompanying buddies, to participate in a variety of interactive and enjoyable activities.

During the carnival, children enjoyed a variety of action-packed activities including, face painting, henna tattooing, and cupcake decorating. Youngsters were also eager to take pictures with their favourite mascots and were entertained by a host of delightful and lively acts, which included a magic and puppet show, balloon twisting, as well as a screening of the movie *Frozen*.

Designed to develop the social skills of children in Qatar, the event reinforced the commitment of Qatar Foundation and Best Buddies Qatar to create meaningful opportunities for children with special needs and help them further develop social skills with others of the same age group in a fun environment. Along with encouraging lasting friendships, these types of initiatives also help increase the self-esteem and confidence of children from both groups.

Commenting on Qatar Foundation's participation in the Buddy Carnival, Fahad Al-Ansari, Community Services Manager at Qatar Foundation Support Services, said: "I firmly believe we need to take better care of children with intellectual disabilities in Qatar. The Buddy Carnival is a perfect example of how children can develop their social skills to join in with others, and how Qatar Foundation can help them develop within the community."

Further affirming the importance of this initiative, Rania Abou Ghaida, College Program Coordinator at Best Buddies Qatar, explained: "The role of Best Buddies Qatar is to increase awareness about children with intellectual difficulties and their right to be integrated into society. Events like this are great because the interaction allows them to be less afraid and less socially isolated."

Rizan Baig, an event volunteer and a student at Texas A&M University at Qatar, added: “We’ve organised local events at Texas A&M Qatar before, but so far this is the largest event. I am impressed by the number of attendees and the variety of activities for children.”

Organisers from Qatar Foundation and Best Buddies Qatar aim to attract 500 participants to the next Buddy Carnival, which they plan to host biannually, in an effort to give children with special needs more opportunities to socialise.

Among the many events and activities arranged by Best Buddies Qatar, the organisation hosts four programmes including, Best Buddies High Schools, Colleges, Citizens and e-Buddies.

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Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF’s work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercializing solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar’s heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community.

For a complete list of QF’s initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>