

compassion

a newsletter of american fondouk



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From the desk of *Dr. Gigi Kay...*

As coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread – claiming the lives of vulnerable people and extending its reach across the globe – the American Fondouk remains a refuge of help and hope. We are working day and night to ensure that our lifesaving care is still available to the donkeys, mules, and horses who carry on their backs the economy of Morocco.

“We also distribute flour and oil to regular clients.”

Here in this ancient land, we have been in a State of Emergency since March 16th, with only essential businesses permitted to remain open. The Fondouk was given authority to continue operations on March 17th, a measure of the importance accorded to our services. One critical service we provide is the removal of deceased mules from the medina. The Fondouk has a metal slide with handles that we put these animals on – a bit like a toboggan – and we use it to transport them to our vehicle for proper handling.

COVID-19 Impacts the Fondouk

As of this writing, almost 500 cases of coronavirus have been confirmed in Morocco. Sadly, a Fondouk veterinarian and one of our support staff are among them. But our lifesaving work must continue. More



than ever before, we are having a direct socio-

economic impact on the lives of poor families in Fez. It's hard for them to find work in these tough days, and it's also hard for them to feed their animals.

For the families with working animals who can still get to us, we're continuing to provide outstanding free veterinary care, mule feed, and other critical services – despite necessary but challenging safety regulations. We've also become a food distribution center for our regular clients, distributing flour and oil to those in great need. As a team, we understand the dangers of COVID-19, so we operate with caution. At the same time, we simply must remain open to all. If not the Fondouk, then who would be here to stop the needless suffering of the equines of Fez? Accordingly, we're strictly following World Health Organization (WHO)

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The Nine Lives of Noura

2 March 2020

Today we admitted Noura, a dark gray female donkey, to the Fondouk hospital. She presented with a history of acute onset of unilateral nasal discharge and inability to swallow. Her owner reported that she was bought two months before without any sign of illness.

One of our clinicians, Dr. Farouk, examined her and found she had normal clinical parameters except the fact that she was slightly tachycardic and showed signs of dehydration (sunken eyes and persistence of the skinfold). He also noticed Noura had trouble eating.

4 March 2020

On Day 3 of her hospitalization, we put Noura on oral fluid and glucose because her glucose rate was getting lower and lower. Time passed, but we didn't notice any improvement in her appetite, and she appeared constipated. Dr. Safaa suggested we do a gastroscopy.

**Here with us, Noura
went through eight
of her nine lives!**

6 March 2020

Today, the gastroscopy was performed. It revealed a large gastric impaction with two gastric ulcers not completely visible. We decided to do gastric lavages, and performed them for three days – four times per day. Yet the impaction showed no change in size.

13 March 2020

Enteral fluid was our last alternative to save Noura's life. We treated her for seven days until she passed the impaction. At this point, we thought the problem was resolved. But Noura's triglycerides were elevated, and she had hyperlipemia – so she wasn't able to eat anything. Then she developed diarrhea. She couldn't survive without eating, but she had no appetite. Some of us believed euthanasia might become the only way to stop her suffering.

16 March 2020

On this day, to our incredible surprise, Noura started getting interested in dry alfalfa. Then little by little she was able to eat grass. Finally, she began to eat her normal food. She became brighter, and her lovely character started to show up.

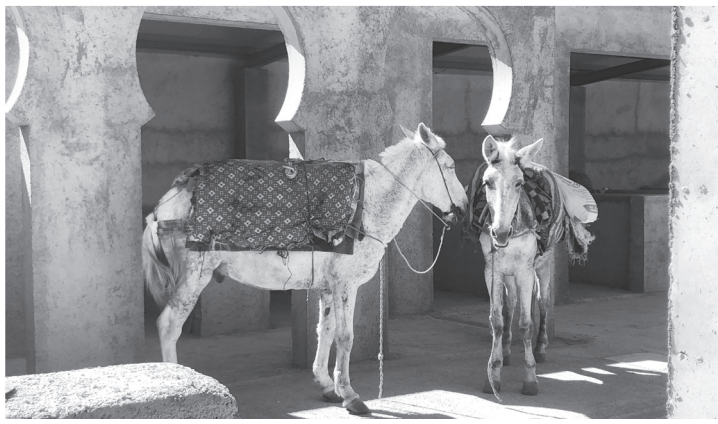
A few days later, Noura was ready to go home! The lesson learned is that with love and patience, even patients who appear hopeless can be rescued.



Showing Heart: *The New Stables Project*

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Fondouk is moving ahead with exciting new construction: The New Stables Project. Through a partnership with the World Scouting Organization – and with the very generous support of a compassionate café owner in Britain – we’ll create a new way to touch the hearts of Fondouk guests.

It’s important to note that the New Stables Project is not designed to increase our hospital’s stable capacity. Rather, the idea is to give safe and comfortable housing to the mules in the medina who are currently nearly all kept in deplorable conditions. We also hope the new site is attractive to tourists who may ride the mules, and generate some income for the mule owners who currently live on the very edge of financial catastrophe.



Here are some important Questions and Answers about the New Stables Project:

Q. Who will use the new stables?

A. Local mule owners will use the new stables to generate income from tourists. In addition to mule rides, the stables will offer education, storytelling, movie nights, and more.

Q. Where will the new stables be located?

A. On the opposite side of the medina to the Fondouk, about a 30-minute walk from the hospital.

Q. Are the new stables strictly for the use of local mule owners?

A. Yes. This is a community project, created for the mule owners of the medina. The stables will not be used for Fondouk patients.

Q. How many stalls will the new stables have?

A. 31.

Q. Will the Fondouk help staff the new stables?

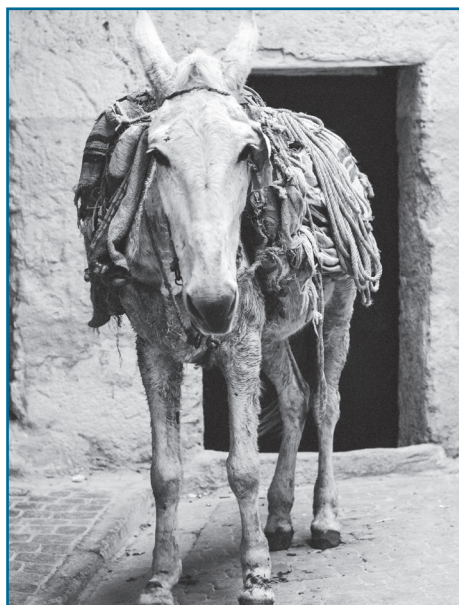
A. Yes. We will provide one extra groom to help mule owners keep the stables clean.

The New Stables Project is only one advance fueled by the compassion of friends like you. While COVID-19 has slowed us down, we still hope to complete construction of the new stables this summer.

Fondouk Students: Inspired and Inspiring!

Here is part of a lovely note we received from Mikaela Hannam, one of the Glasgow students who shared a rotation here at the Fondouk. Thanks to you, new generations are leading the way to better animal care throughout the medina.

“My time spent at the foundation was inspiring and incredibly fulfilling. I thank you for the perspective I gained – it has completely changed my outlook. I would love to come back and spend more time with you. Many thanks!”



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guidelines and the Moroccan authorities' recommendations such as:

- **Reducing** the number of our employees by half.
- **Wearing** masks, gloves, and appropriate protective equipment.
- **Receiving** animals while owners wait outside.
- **Disinfecting** all door handles and equipment twice or three times daily.
- **Practicing** social distancing and hand washing.

COVID-19 will leave a deadly legacy in Morocco and around the world. But one day this pandemic will pass into history. So now is the time to begin building a brighter future for the donkeys, mules, and horses who depend on us – and the poor families who depend on them.

Just as it has been from the beginning, all our vital work depends on the donations of caring individuals like you. So please allow me to thank you with all of my heart for the progress we've made in the past. That we're making today. And that we'll make for years to come!

– Dr. Gigi Kay, Director

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Supports the Fondouk

The American Fondouk was the recipient of a £1,500 gift from the RCVS. President Dr. Niall Connell chose the American Fondouk based on the excellent feedback he received from his students who have volunteered at the Fondouk.

There are More Ways Than Ever to Help Care for the Animals

American Fondouk can now provide you with a number of creative new ways to help you care for the working animals of Fez for generations to come.

- **Employer Matching Gift** - Your company may even have a matching gift form on its website. Just submit it with your next gift. We'll do the rest.
- **Car Donation** - Now you can use your old car to help the animals of Fez! It's an easy way to keep us rolling.
- **RoundUp** - It's the modern way to donate your spare change. The App rounds up your debit or credit card purchases and donates them online.
- **Coleman Circle** - In the spirit of our founding, the Coleman Circle is a special alliance of passionate animal lovers who provide a leadership role with an annual commitment of \$1,000 or more.

For more options or to learn more, please call Raffaella Torchia at 617 541.5011.



Providing Charitable Veterinary Care
in Morocco Since 1927™

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The working animals in Fez, Medina will always need our help. We've been helping them, with the support of friends like you, since 1927. If you would like more information about including the American Fondouk in your estate plan, please contact Raffaella Torchia at 617 541.5011.