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Football and fun

You may or may not know that the football season started in the UK last weekend! Many people have been anxiously waiting for the first games to kick off, to be able to get behind their team, cheering them on to victory, or brought low with their team's defeat. Football provides fans with endless hours of enjoyment as they follow every goal of their team's progress, encouraged to keep following by friends and fellow fans.

Children from all over Jerusalem, and the surrounding villages, have also been anxiously waiting and looking forward to an annual event – the yearly summer camps which are held at Spafford Children's Centre. They provide the opportunity to do something different, have fun with their friends, renew existing friendships and have the opportunity to create new ones.

Many different people are involved in these summer camps and like in football everyone has a different purpose: the football team is made up of strikers, defence positions, and a goalie, as well as spectators, coaches, promoters and stadium staff all being involved. At Spafford's summer camps, everyone also has their own job and responsibility too – the staff team who lead the different activities as well as the cooks, administrators and other support staff – everyone involved has to work together as a team to make the camps a success.

Every summer the Cultural Department at Spafford Children's Centre arranges these camps, for different age groups of children. There is a range of activities, from art and music to dancing, theatre and sports, helping the children to develop talents, skills and confidence. These camps give children and teenagers from the West Bank and Jerusalem the opportunity to meet and spend time together in a fun and relaxed atmosphere.

But it doesn't just stop there – there are the ripples outwards as the children go home; for many of them this isn't just a week away from their normal lives. Most of them will remember what they did during that week and what they learnt for many years, even into adulthood – and it can have a massive impact on their lives and choices.