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As the day dawns on our last school patrol, I reflect back on my last two and a half months of patrols here in Hebron.

Setting off at 6:50 a.m. we are greeted by the smiling faces of children who take the time to stop and give us a high five or shake hands with us. As we walk through the Souq (market), an array of colourful fabrics reflects the warmth of everyone as they invite us into their shops for tea. Then we turn the corner and everything changes. There is a metal turnstile, a metal detector and another turnstile, all lined up together menacingly in a dark part of the tunnel. Every day the children must walk through this checkpoint. Soldiers search their bags and point machine guns into their faces, into the faces of little children who have hopes and dreams, who long just to be able to walk to school without fear and intimidation.

The teachers too must go through the checkpoint. Somehow, they manage to maintain their dignity whilst being faced with humiliation and having to remove their belts and lift up their shirts

and trouser legs in front of their students.

It was heart wrenching to see the same teachers stopped and ID'ed every day by the same soldiers. One time I watched and documented, feeling helpless, as soldiers held a teacher. He was desperate to get to school and start his students' exam, but still they held him for nineteen minutes, knowing the longest they can legally hold him is twenty. It was as if they were trying to taunt him. Watching the soldiers hold the teacher for so long made me wonder, what good am I doing here? What am I doing here at all?

Upon his release the teacher answered these questions for me when he looked me in the eyes and said "thank you." I was reminded then that we are here so that people such as this teacher who have amazing dignity and strength and every day have to face the forces of the occupation are not alone and are not ignored. And we are here so that people near and far may open their minds, hearts and eyes, see what is happening here, share it with others, and pray that one day there will no longer be a soldier and a checkpoint to greet every child and teacher on their way to school.