



Oasis of Peace

American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam

FALL 2022 Newsletter

MOVING FORWARD AS ONE

Dearest American Friends of the Oasis of Peace,

As always, it is our honor to support the work of the members of the Oasis of Peace (Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, NSWAS). We are grateful for the opportunity to share the impact your support has made in their mission of fostering peace these last few months. In the face of violence, their actions proclaim a powerful message:

“WE ARE ALL ONE.”

Across cultural divides, NSWAS builds community; across misunderstandings and generational harm, NSWAS prioritizes genuine communication and understanding. We all know there is no future in violence. The future is being built by those who live and work within NSWAS; with the young, bilingual students of the Primary School, with the youth expressing themselves through the NADI theater group, with the professionals of all ages strategizing concrete avenues toward positive change with the School for Peace, with all those who gather at the Art Gallery and Pluralistic Spiritual Center to communicate through art and matters of the spirit. The future is with the medical professionals who rallied to aid the people of Gaza this summer, and with all of you, who continually step up to lend a hand.

We believe a peaceful future is not only possible, but that it cannot be stopped. That comes to fruition when we journey toward it together, as one.

Thank you for journeying with us,

Joan Waller - Board Co-President
The American Friends of the Oasis of Peace

Now Is Your Chance to Visit the Oasis of Peace!

Join the Oasis of Peace for a Spring Tour

You are an important part of this growing community and the Village is excited to welcome you as their guest this Spring. Please consider joining us for the American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam Israel/Palestine Tour April 27 - May 7, 2023.

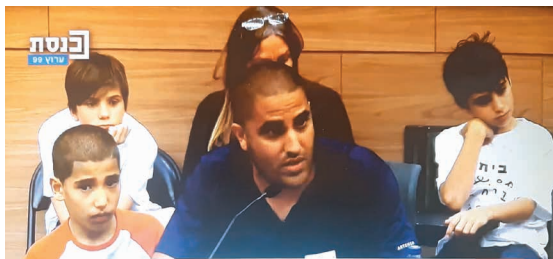
The tour is being planned by the AFNSWAS Board and coordinated with Village representatives and the MEJDI Dual Narrative Tour Company to include both Israeli and Palestinian guides. Sign up to be the first to receive more information by emailing afnswas@oasisofpeace.org. Don't miss this exciting opportunity to visit the Oasis of Peace and see its mission in action!

An Enduring Commitment to Lasting Change: The School for Peace (SFP)



SFP students pose with their completion certificates.

fifteen Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian participants, including those with backgrounds in education, culture, tours, and sociopolitical activism. One student shared the new sense of purpose he gained from the course, writing, “I have acquired a new way of looking at space – what I can see on the outside deliberately conceals something, as a systematic state approach...My responsibility as an individual is to examine what is hidden behind the visible, and share it with the audiences I interact with.”



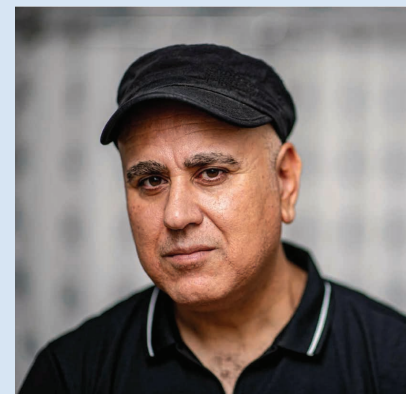
SFP graduate Gilad Mulyan and NSWAS Communications Director Samah Salaime testified on the imperative of supporting bilingual education before the Knesset.

Alumni Spotlights

Graduates of the SFP’s programming continue to make news. **Gilad Mulyan** is a graduate of the Leadership Course for Agents of Change in the Mixed Cities” and a key activist in the parents’ community of Haifa’s bilingual school. Alongside **Samah Salaime**, representing NSWAS’s Primary School, he recently spoke in the Knesset on the struggle to gain recognition for the status of bilingual schools for Jews and Arabs across the country.

Bilal Yosef graduated from the SFP Change Agents course for stage producers. He is a recipient of the Spirit of Freedom Award for his film “Crossing Borders,” which tells the story of two Arab feminist women fighting for equal rights with the men in their lives, and the Muhr Arab award at the Dubai Film Festival and the Best Film at the Cagliari Film Festival in Italy for his film “Back to One’s Roots,” which grapples with the question of identity for Palestinians in Israel.

His recent documentary film, “Living in the Shadow of Death,” featured in the Jerusalem Film Festival, is a personal and moving work that examines the toll of gun violence in Israel. Unlike earlier films where he served a more traditional role as a director, in this film he steps in front of the camera and shares his own story as a Palestinian man in Israel who also lives in the shadow of this violence. Haaretz wrote, “In scene after scene, he opens a window into the stories of the dead – some of them killed by a stray bullet – as told by the victims’ bereaved loved ones.” The SFP has placed a priority on their Change Agents courses for arts workers because of the immense impact their work can make on changing perspectives, building unity, and inspiring change.



Bilal Yosef, award-winning documentarian and SFP alum.

Mixed Cities Projects: An Ongoing Focus

In the Spring, we brought you news of the SFP's impactful alumni conference, ongoing Change Agents courses, and the awarding of the annual Dr. Nava Sonnenschein Prize. The award recipients, Bustan Nof Hagalil, include Palestinian and Israeli activists who are creating cultural encounters in the Mixed City of Nof Hagalil through community outreach, work with the municipality, and more.

Their work is part of a multi-pronged complement of programming and projects led by the School for Peace in Mixed Cities across Israel, leveraging the cross-disciplinary expertise of alums from every professional background from lawyer, to urban planner, to actor. After gathering working groups of Palestinian and Israeli activists in Lod and Jaffa, the participants have spent the last year working to create plans to address central issues in their shared "Mixed Cities."

Lod is a deeply challenged city, with some of the highest rates of violent crime and youth unemployment rates in the Israel. This project works with residents, community organizations, and community leaders in developing strategies to impact change. The project leaders encourage and support citizens' participation in local neighborhood councils to find solutions for violence, help train local groups in community building, develop plans for children and youth, and advocate with governmental institutions to develop an agreed-upon action plan against violence.

In Jaffa, citizens face a severe housing crisis, with many third-generation Arab residents whose families have occupied their homes since 1948 now defined as "squatters" with no legal rights. The crisis is exacerbated by fast-growing gentrification forcing out local working-class and poor residents of every cultural background. The project builds a coalition of residents to pressure the city to develop affordable housing, pushes for the planning and building of accessible projects open to Arab residents, advances viable solutions to the tenants of public housing facing evictions, and advocates for the offering of more public housing to Arab single mothers living in poverty.

The project seminars and workshops that make up this School for Peace programming are designed to equip the participants with the knowledge and tools to address policy change in municipal and governmental structures while bringing the groups together and enhancing shared community. The Fall and Winter will bring further workshops, alongside the continuation of meetings with political and municipal leaders, learning sessions, and refinement of each group's working action plan.

Change does not happen overnight, but this long-term, wide-ranging set of projects spearheaded by the School for Peace is precisely the sort of thoughtful and collaborative change-making the American Friends make it a point to support. Already the project is making a difference in the lived experiences of those in Mixed Cities, and we look forward to reporting further on their progress in the coming months.



Students perform for the community.

Celebrating the Creativity of Youth The NADI Summer Theatre Program

NSWAS's youth club, called the NADI, resumed their summer theatre program in a newly-renovated clubhouse, thanks to the support of the American Friends and others. During their weeklong summer theater camp, they received instruction from **Yasmin Bar Shalom Agmon**, an actress and "daughter of the village," and **Nur al Mughrabi**, a Palestinian theatre professional from Jaffa. Delighting one and all, these young thespians inspired even more excitement for the theater they will create during the school year as the program continues.

Building A Legacy For the Future, Today

We share the deep sense of loss with all who loved **Richard Goodwin**. His partnership with NSWAS was long and dedicated, and received with gratitude. As a real estate developer, he made possible the building of many of the main structures. Also an avid supporter of the Primary School's programming, NSWAS development direction Samah Salaima wrote, "There is hardly a corner of our village that has not been touched by Richard's generosity and spirit, and that spirit will remain alive, for us, in our schools, classrooms, and gardens."

Richard was not a distant supporter but an active partner through his visits and through the contribution of his time, efforts, and counsel. "Communities like Neve Shalom/Wahat al- Salam promote understanding among people who previously mistrusted each other. The key to reducing much of the violence in the world is communication and education. Our children will hopefully practice greater tolerance and understanding than previous generations. They are the solution to the Middle East riddle. They must be taught peace, not hatred."



Honoring **Richard Goodwin**

Honoring J. Zel Lurie

Nearly forty years ago, **Zel** visited NSWAS. It was his first encounter with a community committed to working together for a future where Arabs and Jews live and work in equality and dignity. Whether he was reporting for the Palestine (now Jerusalem) Post or working as a founding editor for Hadassah magazine, **Zel** focused on justice. His introduction to NSWAS helped him see what was possible when both peoples work together to live in equality and mutual respect.

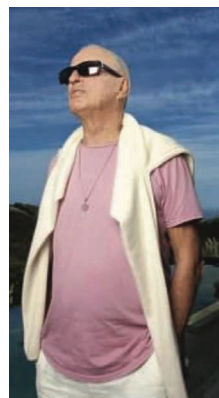
From the moment **Zel** saw the Primary School, he understood that integrated education as early as possible was going to be key to finding the way forward. Through supporting the Primary School, he hoped to foster a future filled with justice, equality, and respect for one another. On April 10th, 2017 at the age of 103, after 37 years as a founding director, Zel left a gaping hole in the heart of American Friends of NSWAS. For all these years, we were standing on his shoulders, taking his encouragement and guidance. Now it is our turn and yours to become the shoulders for the next generation.



Honoring Fred Segal

To many, **Fred Segal** was an icon of fashion and retail who will be remembered as much for his extraordinary business prowess as his remarkable style. But for the American Friends, Fred was a visionary of another sort, a philanthropist whose support of NSWAS began in 1989 when he hosted a fundraiser at his celebrity-studded clothing store. His enduring legacy is the Fred Segal Friendship Library, an 8,000-square-foot facility serving the Village, visitors, and the surrounding community growing as a center of peace education.

Fred's vision endures. He spoke of "the tremendous need to promote love and friendship between peoples and the necessity for proper nutrition as a building block to healthy living."



"The people of Neve Shalom have been living and learning together for over 35 years. This is a role model for Israel and the world. At the Primary School, School for Peace, Jewish and Palestinian children learn Arabic and Hebrew in the same classroom—growing together and building personal friendships, a foundation for peace.

Many of us think peace begins with someone else. Peace begins with us. The responsibility belongs to all of us."

Fred Segal

May their memories be a blessing.

A Public Space for Creation

The Oasis Art Gallery

“We are blessed in this village to have experts and people who are knowledgeable on environmental issues, including on the tragedy of global climate change.” - Oasis Art Gallery curator Dyana Shaloufi Rizek.

In early September, a reception was held to commemorate the “Global Climate Scream” exhibition at the Oasis Art Gallery. Sculptor Nihad Dabeet, from Ramle, and artist Alex Erez were on hand to present their work, followed by an active discussion in the courtyard of the art in the exhibition and the subject of climate change led by Village residents Ori Zohar Shemesh, Amit Kitain and Dr. Avner Gross.



Participants discuss the impacts of climate and their own roles in creating a better future.

In the past year, the Oasis Art Gallery has featured two exciting and activating art exhibitions profiled in previous newsletters: “Me is WE, I am SHE,” as part of The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and “Global Climate

Scream,” featuring environmentalist art workshops for Primary School students. But did you know that in addition to its calendar of exhibitions featuring Palestinian and Israeli artists, the Oasis Art Gallery is also a central hub of creativity for local arts professionals and hobbyists alike?

The Oasis Art Gallery has launched, “the Studio,” a hub of creative expression and community-building. This room is set aside within the Gallery for artists to make work together



and teach classes for village members and other locals. Curator **Dyana Shaloufi-Rizek** hosts collaborative art-making sessions there regularly. **Maya**, a village resident and intuitive art instructor, works monthly with a group of local women and holds weekly sessions for all those who want to, “express themselves through color.” With further renovation, the American Friends hope to see this expansion of the Oasis Art Gallery’s work thrive and help drive community-building efforts across the region.

In a Time of Desperate Need, You Made a Difference

A Summer Update from the Humanitarian Aid Project (HAP)

American Friends came together to raise \$20,000 for desperately needed medical supplies in Gaza. Your words, your encouragement, and your donations made a difference. By joining together with an international network, HAP was able to deliver medical equipment, medicines, and services worth more than one million shekels, making possible 3 new medical centers, multiple surgeries, and medical treatment for more than 5,000 patients in Gaza. Combining efforts with a larger delegation, HAP stayed in the Gaza Strip for four days with 26 doctors and experts in the field of mental health.

As part of his report on the use of the emergency AFNSWAS funds, Dr. Raid wrote:

“Fatigue and exhaustion disappear in front of this achievement, in front of the level of impact arising from one visit.”



*The Humanitarian Aid Project (HAP) received a letter of appreciation from **Dr. Adjullatif Alhaj**, Director General of the International Cooperation & Projects Directorate of the Palestinian Ministry of Health.*

BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE IN PEACE



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Leave a Legacy of Peace

Consider supporting Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam through planned giving. Even the smallest gifts have a big impact over time. Choose to support the areas that mean the most to you—Israeli Jewish/Palestinian conflict transformation, youth leadership, arts initiatives, spiritual encounters, humanitarian aid, and more. Your generosity will sustain the Village's inspiring work for decades to come.

**THE OPTIONS
INCLUDE:**

- Bequests
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- Outright Gifts
- IRAs and Retirement Plans
- Life Estates

Planned giving is a powerful way to express your enduring commitment to peace while at the same time achieving both personal and financial security. Planned gifts offer substantial tax savings to donors, especially on appreciated properties and securities, and can reduce income tax and avoid capital gains tax.

Make peace a lasting part of your legacy. For more information, contact The American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam by emailing afnswas@oasisofpeace.org or calling (818) 662-8883.

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