



Oasis of Peace

American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam

Year End 2021 Newsletter

Building a Peaceful Future



For NSWAS, 2021 has been a year of challenges met and bold steps forward. In this newsletter, you will read about some of the great successes across departments in the last few months and plans for the year to come. Your support makes all of this possible. From the care and speed with which the American Friends and NSWAS community worked together to deliver urgent medical aid in Gaza over the summer, to the rebuilding and subsequent growth of the School for Peace, to the Primary School's return to in-person bilingual, multicultural instruction, your donations have made a powerful difference. As you consider your year-end giving, we hope you will include AFNSWAS. For the third year in a row, the AFNSWAS was named a 4-star Charity by Charity Navigator. Based on transparency, allocation of funds, and measurable impact, we are proud of this prestigious designation and hope it gives you confidence in your investment into the remarkable work happening every day at the Oasis of Peace.



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All of us on the board and at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam wish you and your families a holiday season full of healing and opportunity. We invite you to join the American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam in the life-giving work to build sustainable peace for our children and our children's children.

With gratitude and hope for the year ahead,
Joan C. Waller, Co-President

A Strong Foundation for Expansion



PS children in their playground.

The Fall semester is nearly over, and Primary School students are grateful to be back at their beloved school. Under the leadership of principal Neama Abo Dalu, teachers and students continue working with the HOTAM (Education, Culture, and Tradition) curriculum, setting the standard for bilingual, culturally inclusive education in Israel. In addition to instruction in Arabic and in Hebrew, students took part in activities and trips to further develop their understanding and appreciation for a spectrum of cultural traditions.

NEZAR, A PRIMARY SCHOOL 5TH GRADER SAYS,

“FINALLY, WE CAN MEET UP WITH OUR FRIENDS AT SCHOOL. FOR TWO YEARS I MISSED MY FRIENDS, THE PLAYGROUND, AND THE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES. NO MORE ZOOMING FOR ME! I CAN PICK UP OLIVES ALL DAY AND BE WITH MY CLASS FRIENDS AND MY TEACHERS. EVERYONE HAS ZOOM BUT NOW WE HAVE EACH OTHER AGAIN.”



Nezar, PS 5th grader and friends combine learning and laughter in the classroom.

Highlights of the Fall semester



Dor and family in school.

Ethiopian Jewish Holiday

1st-grade student Dor and his family visited his classroom to teach the class about the Ethiopian Jewish holiday Sigd. Students also handled and learned about Ethiopian artistic tools and their traditional clothing.

The Hekton Competition

A large group of 5th and 6th-grade students participated in the Hekton Competition in Mateh Yehuda. The students presented ideas to help inspire Jewish students to learn Arabic, enhance the relationship between students and the environment, and make school a more interesting and enjoyable place for students.



Students demonstrate their work at the competition.



Students and teachers out in the olive fields.

Olive Harvest

Because of its great importance in Palestinian culture, time was set aside for an olive-harvest field trip. Students learned about the process of making olive oil and its cultural significance.

6th-grade students had the special job of helping younger classmates stay with the group on the walk to Latrun Monastery for the trip.

PS students watched videos of Tibetan monks making sand mandalas as part of a “Citizens of the World” program, e-touring cities all over the world. Making their own mandalas and learning about their spiritual meaning was a favorite activity.



1st and 2nd graders display their mandalas.

Specialized trainings and Arabic instruction for the teachers continues, with more collaborations with other bilingual schools and teachers planned for 2022. In the coming years, the school looks to expand into the high school grades, providing an increasing number of regional youth with a full multicultural educational experience that will prepare them to be ambassadors of conflict-transformation, mutual respect, and peace-building throughout their lives. Making this dream a reality will require hiring and training additional teachers, as well as scholarship funds for students in need. We hope you will consider a gift in support of this well-planned and nationally significant model.



Classroom specialized training session.

Art with Impact

In the next month, the Peace Art Gallery will host a 16-day event to raise awareness about gender-based violence, showcasing Palestinian and Jewish artists who grapple with this important issue. The next show, “Global Climate Scream” will run into the new year. The struggle for equality and the changing climate are inextricably linked as students and artists see the harm climate change is causing across cultures and for individuals, and envision improved systems and more sustainable models of living for the future. This exhibition will display the work of Arab and Jewish Israeli artists engaging with that reality. In addition to January’s closing event for the show, the Gallery will be host two events spotlighting two Tel Aviv artists, in collaboration with the Tel Aviv Museum of Art Youth Section.



Art work by Dan Reisner.



Artwork by David Reeb.

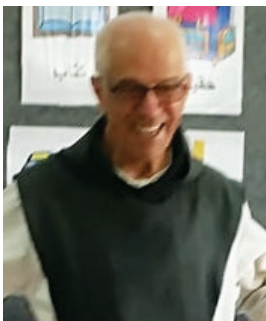
The NADI Gets Creative



The NADI Youth Group will welcome a new coordinator in 2022. She comes to the post with years of experience teaching and making art and theater. The children are very excited to create their own artwork and get on stage! Resuming during summer 2022 is the Summer Camp for Palestinian Youth from the West Bank and refugee camps, treasured by attenders, counselors and parents alike.

Growing Peace and Fostering Communication

Children, parents, and grandparents of the village started a community vegetable garden in October. The garden, an initiative of the municipal committee, is located on public land, almost at the center of the village, next to the soccer field. Just as the community will benefit from this new growth, it will also be strengthened by the new practice of quarterly town meetings to discuss expanding the Village and to talk through feelings about current events with outside meeting coordinators selected by the School for Peace. After a sustained effort by municipal chair Rita Boulos and others, the necessary permits for planned new neighborhoods have been secured, and 42 new families can start to build their homes in the Oasis of Peace. This is wonderful news for the growing community!



May His Memory Be Blessed

We were deeply saddened to learn of the death of one of the Village's oldest friends and a frequent visitor to the school and the community, Fr. Paul Saouma of the Trappist Abbey of Latroun. He was not just a founding friend of the Oasis of Peace, but a man of peace, sowing the seeds of love between all the peoples of the Holy Land and offering support in their time of need. We will remember him for his energy, his warmth, and his laughter.

Building Collaborative Alumni Networks



The SFP is broadening its reach with alumni, participants, partners and academic institutions.

The Binational Educators' Forum at the School for Peace took a hard look at the separate Jewish and Arab educational systems in Israel and investigated how this split system has contributed to the current conflict in the mixed cities, to prejudices and preconceived notions about the opposite group. This vital event included the Primary School teachers alongside educators from across the country and was an outgrowth of both the HOTAM teacher training and the Mixed Cities course offered by the SFP. This is precisely the kind of

active change-making through collaborative work that the SFP wants to further encourage by strengthening alumni networks.

SFP DIRECTOR DR. ROI SILBERBERG SAYS: "THIS GROUP IS THE FORERUNNER OF WHAT I ENVISION TO BE A CORE OF SFP GRADUATES WHO WILL TAKE THEIR DEDICATION AND GROUP INITIATIVES TO THE NEXT LEVEL, BECOMING INFLUENCERS IN EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OPINION AND CREATING CHANGE WITHIN OUR SHARED SOCIETY."

Rebuilding the physical facilities of the SFP continues, and the completion of the new buildings will do more than just provide ample space for the encounter programs and trainings for which the SFP is world-renowned. The new facilities will also create a physical center for the established and growing alumni networks which allow graduates of the SFP to put what they've learned into practice in their local communities and cities. The SFP recently put out a call for alumni grant proposals to improve Jewish-Arab relations and will mentor and support selected projects. Your support allows the SFP to continue to offer expanded trainings, build alumni networks, and make concrete change that improves lives far beyond the Village's borders.



Samah (on Right) meeting with US Rep. Rosa DeLauro (center).

Advocating for Change

Samah Salame, Director of the NSWAS Department of Communication and Development, met with US congress representatives and J Street members. Samah and other civil society representatives spoke of the importance of American involvement in advancing peace efforts. She also presented the educational institutions of NSWAS, with particular focus on the activities of the School for Peace.

BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE IN PEACE



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American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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
- Life Insurance Policies
- Trusts
- 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.

The new CARES act allows for cash contributions to qualified charities such as AFNSWAS to be deducted up to 100% of your adjusted gross income for the 2021 calendar year. The new CARES act allows all taxpayers to take a charitable deduction of up to \$300, even if you do not itemize.

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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