



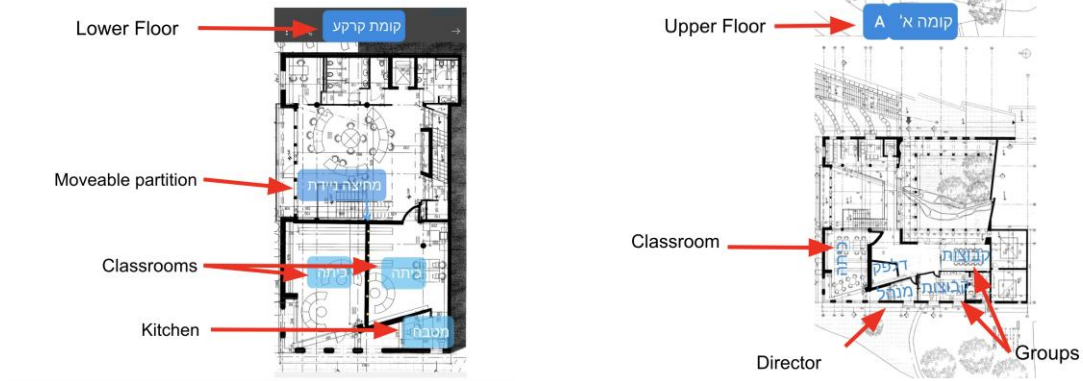
## 2020 + 1st Quarter 2021 IMPACT REPORT

It has been just over one year since the first COVID-19 closures in Israel. Never could we have imagined the toll this pandemic would take. And yet, even as we were forced apart, even as we then suffered an arson attack, even as so much went wrong - it was then that the people who live and work in Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom and their friends from all over the world came together like never before to work toward our mission of peace. We are proud to report the triumphs of the past year and grateful to present our exciting plans for 2021 and beyond. Our Oasis of Peace is open and thriving, and we invite you to join our remarkable mission.

### TEACHING TOWARD PEACE

As you may already be aware, the **School for Peace** suffered an arson attack in September of 2020, largely destroying the SFP library and main classroom. That no one was hurt is our chief gratitude - but the outpouring of support from all over the world has also underlined the vital importance of our programming. The process of rebuilding has been taken as an opportunity to further enhance programs with newly spacious and versatile facilities that complement an expanded curriculum. We continue fundraising efforts to ensure the completion of this important project. See below for the architect's drawings of the interior and exterior of the new buildings.





Architect's renderings and blueprints for planned updates to the School for Peace facilities

Even through the closures necessitated by the pandemic and the loss of the SFP's main gathering space, the work of pursuing peace and justice has not slowed, not by a long shot. Ongoing meetings of the Change Agents for Theater and Cinema course, Environmental Justice Course, Change Agents Training Course for Lawyers, and Arab-Jewish Forum for Planners have all taken place in the last six months, among many others. These ongoing programs train and encourage a variety of professionals to create the sort of cross-cultural collaborations which will build sustainable peace.



Masked, outdoors, and distanced, students work toward powerful solutions at the School for Peace.

This work is further sustained by the naming of Dr. Roi Silberberg as the director of the School for Peace in 2020. With his unique perspective as an alum of the program, his leadership is already helping to open new avenues of collaboration and education. Looking forward to the rest of 2021, with the support of the American Friends, the School for Peace will continue to host the Change Agents courses while also significantly expanding both Graduate programs across programs and collaborations with institutions in the village. The SFP has adjusted its curriculum for the new challenges of climate-change stressors, residual pandemic anxieties and further political polarization. It continues facilitator-training for groups in youth and cross-cultural encounters, provides courses at four universities, and remains at the forefront of this moment and movement toward peace, equity, and justice.

## DELIVERING AID WHERE IT IS NEEDED MOST



Across the world, 2020 stretched hospital capacities to their limit, but there are few populations worldwide for whom this was so singularly devastating as for Palestinians living under occupation, especially those in Gaza. With the generous support of AFNSWAS and others, the **Humanitarian Aid** program was able to deliver needed equipment and medicines directly. In the winter, an emergency campaign to source and deliver facial CPAP machines to Gaza was successfully mounted.

By reacting with speed to the expressed needs of doctors and nurses on the ground, and because of the generous support of our donors, we were able to support life-saving work stepping up where others would not or could not. We owe a debt of gratitude to our many donors and supporters, the Ministry of Health, the Gaza Community Mental Health Program, the Zakat Committee, and the health associations in Gaza. In 2021, Humanitarian Aid projects have already facilitated workshops and training in the field of mental health, delivered needed medicines and equipment and provided support on the ground for complex surgeries and needed care for hundreds of patients in Jabalia and Al Bureij.



Responsive delivery of medicines where they are needed most is a top priority.

## A NEW KIND OF SCHOOL

In the 1980s, the **Primary School** pioneered an integrative bilingual education system from nursery to 6th grade providing bilingual and multicultural schooling to children from NSWAS and the surrounding areas. Throughout the world, distance learning posed particular challenges for students and educators, and the Primary School was no exception. Thanks to generous support, the school was able to provide tablets and internet support to families whose children would not have otherwise been able to attend school during the shutdown.



Despite the closures of 2020, the Primary School continues to grow hoping to return to two 1st grade classes. They have plans to expand teacher training, hire more Arabic language-dominant educators, introduce an expansion of the Music program, update the Honey Path beekeeping project, and complete the final phases of the playground. American Friends continues fundraising to support curriculum updates, additional staff and teachers, and student scholarships. The possibility of opening a regional bilingual multicultural High School is currently being studied. With pride for our successes and strong plans for growth in 2021, we anticipate great things for these Jewish and Palestinian, Christian, Jewish and, Muslim, Hebrew and Arabic speaking students. The recent appointment of Nir Sharon as Director for the Children's Educational Institutions and Youth Club will support an integration of resources, skills and facilities.



Students enjoy music and game-time.

## FEELING FOREVER YOUNG

The **Nadi** is NSWAS's youth club; organized on a volunteer basis by community members, run by a part-time salaried youth leader, and assisted by a growing number of parents and older teens. The Nadi began in order to enable NSWAS youth to continue the dialogue of coexistence beyond the village and as an investment in the future of NSWAS through the young people who are growing up there. Its goal is to prepare the younger generation to assume leadership roles and become activists for social justice, both within the village and subsequently in the wider world. In 2020, between lockdowns, these youth enjoyed activities that built deep relationships and leadership skills to support their goals and work in 2021.



Young people from the village took part in varied excursions such as the Film Bus, bike trips, and more!

Summer programming included an overnight camping trip, theater workshop, and a forest bicycle trip. In Fall, they collaborated with Tel Aviv University to host ten volunteer students who taught the young people filmmaking skills. Together, they produced a film in which they interviewed several long-term village members. Afterward, a screening of the completed films was held outside on the Primary School grounds. Later, the youth helped organize a fundraiser for inhabitants of a shelter for battered women.

These young people are creative and dynamic. Providing activities to stimulate their imaginations and build strong relationships across cultures is vital for building a shared future. We are grateful to all who supported this work through the American Friends of NSWAS. The Youth Club moves forward into 2021 with both an Arab and a Jewish coordinator at the helm and seeks support for the return of the Palestinian summer camp, mentoring and training programs, and more fun, educational, outdoor activities for youth in the village.

## CONNECTING THE SPIRIT

From heartfelt Zoom meetings with our Italian friends in April to classic film screening to a 20-person outdoor concert by top Israeli musician David Broza in the Fall, the staff and supporters of the **Spiritual Center** called upon their ingenuity to continue offering an impactful and inspiring calendar of programming for members of the Village and supporters around the world. As we all begin to gather together again, we have loss and grief to process - but we also have the joy of reconnection to celebrate. In 2021, the Spiritual Center continues to build bridges by hosting the Religious Leadership Program alongside Rabbis for Human Rights and support community by programming special events and theater presentations to coincide with holidays. A primary goal for 2021 is the remodeling of the Rescuers & Sculpture Garden and the planning of a ceremony to honor Jewish and Palestinian people who have acted with outstanding courage to save the 'other' during the years of conflict.



David Broza, 2020

## HEALING THROUGH ART

As a gathering place for the local community to display their own work, as well as a powerful site for displaying other local and international work, the Art Gallery is an integral part of NSWAS. Despite the arson damage to the gallery, they were able to host outdoor events in 2020, including a sculpture and mosaics workshop in November featuring Jewish and Arab artists from all over Israel. They move forward into 2021 with plans for three exhibitions as well as multiple visiting artist displays with question and answer sessions, all supported by AFNSWAS.



Outdoor mosaic art celebrating peace.

## RISING TOGETHER TO MEET 2021

Even through a tumultuous and challenging year, NSWAS continues to grow and develop in each of their compelling and productive projects and departments. 2021 plans are bold yet considered, and with the support of friends the Village will meet its goals. Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom (WAS-NS) is a Village of Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel dedicated to building justice, peace and equality in the region and the country. Every day, we work to support this vision as their American friends. Through this work, and with the support of generous benefactors and partners, a durable, sustainable peace will be built for the generations to come. If there is one lesson that the Oasis of Peace can teach us from 2020, it is that together, we can meet any challenge.



The Primary School youth inspire us all.