



Oasis of Peace

American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam

Fall 2023 Newsletter

Dear Cherished Friends and Supporters,

It's hard to believe it's already September! I hope you have had an enjoyable and restful summer, and that you and your families are staying healthy and well.

We had a wonderful response to our 2023 Adopt-a-Class fundraising drive, and I'm incredibly grateful to all those who gave. Together, we raised \$17,176 for the Primary School's fifth-grade class. This month, as back-to-school time begins for millions of children around the world, these 18 fifth graders, nine from Arab families and nine from Jewish families, will be tackling a special assignment: identifying commonalities between Jewish and Arab holy days, their class theme for the year. We will keep you updated on the results!

Gold
Transparency
2023

Candid.

I'm also pleased to announce that American Friends of Neve Shalom-Wahat Al-Salam has received a Gold Transparency 2023 rating from Candid's GuideStar, the premier service for reporting on U.S. nonprofits. Many thanks to the AFNSWAS staff, our dedicated

members, and the Board for keeping us mission-focused and on track. Together, we are helping to strengthen the bonds of a unique shared society of Israeli Palestinians and Jews. I am proud to stand with so many united in the belief that a peaceful world is possible if we do the work to understand each other.

Sincerely,

Joan Waller President,

The American Friends
of Neve Shalom-Wahat Al-Salam



Practicing Peace



Since January, the School for Peace (SFP) has conducted almost 50 workshops, trainings, and dialogues to help hundreds of people integrate peace practices into their professional and personal lives. The school's Advanced Human Rights Training Program for Lawyers focused on moral and strategic dilemmas facing human rights attorneys, drawing on recent court cases as well as participants' own experiences. A training session for staff at Carmel Medical Center in Haifa provided an opportunity to talk about the conflict and its effect on mental and physical health and wellbeing. And now in its seventh year, SFP's Change Agents Course for Mixed Cities brought tools and support to activists working toward binational cooperation in cities with significant numbers of Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs.

Village Expansion Ready to Launch

This summer, we celebrated an incredible milestone more than a decade in the making: the infrastructure project that will allow the Village to increase its number of residents is finally finished. By adding paved roads, water, electricity, and other utilities to acres of adjacent empty land, the Village has expanded its footprint considerably. Many families who have been waiting patiently for the project to finish are now making plans to build their homes.

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The families who have been waiting all this time harbor the hope that if not their children, then their grandchildren, will grow up in an environment enriched by multiculturalism and bilingualism.

—Samah Salaimé, Director of Communications and Development

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Summer Fun at the NADI Youth Center



The NADI Youth Center is the place to be! All summer long, kids from the Village and surrounding areas have been exploring the center's many fun offerings. Some of the highlights: a hip-hop breakdancing workshop, a dough-making class for baking fresh pizza and Manakeesh (Arabic flatbread), a trip to an amusement park, soccer tournaments, and an end-of-summer pool party for the youth and their families. A new biweekly program, Creative



Fridays, also launched; geared toward elementary-school-aged kids, it focuses on the fundamentals of drawing, collage, and painting while giving budding artists the freedom to make their own masterpieces. During these quiet summer months, the NADI continues to make a huge difference in the lives of local youth who benefit from the social connection and learning opportunities they would otherwise go without.

Village Youth in Santa Cruz

In July, nine teens sponsored by the NADI Youth Center traveled to the U.S. to take part in the Science Internship Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The 10-week program



allows high-school students interested in science, technology, engineering, and math to participate in real-world research projects based at the university. Participating students also receive close mentorship from UCSC faculty and graduate students. Next summer's cohort has already been announced, and a record 12 NADI teens were selected by the university for the Science Internship Program.



Women Moving Together

In May, the Pluralistic Spiritual Center launched a new, daylong workshop for women that is now planned as an annual offering. “Naot: Moving Together” encourages healthy and holistic self-expression through dance. Skilled instructors lead a series of warm-up exercises before introducing movements and techniques from diverse traditions, including belly dance, Dabke, and other cultural and folk styles. Between movement sessions, participants pause to reflect on what they’ve learned, share insights and discoveries and honor their connectedness.

“We must cultivate an environment where people from different walks of life can come together, learn from each other, and build a more harmonious future.”

—Einat Bezalel, Director,
Pluralistic Spiritual Center

The Holiday of Holidays

“Ramadan in the village has a different flavor of community. Jews, Christians, and Muslims celebrate together, and the children are happy.”

—Shahed Abu Hamed,
Village Resident

You’ve heard of Easter, Passover, and Ramadan—and maybe your family even celebrates one or more of them—but have you ever celebrated all three at once? On April 1, the Pluralistic Spiritual Center did just that at their lively Hag ha’Hagim, or “holiday of holidays.” NADI Youth Center members and their families shared in one single celebration of the three different holy days, honoring their own traditions while learning about each other’s. Attendees shared delicious food, sang and danced, painted Easter eggs, and even raced to find the hidden Afikoman (matzoh).

Art that Knows No Bounds

In June, the Oasis Art Gallery opened “Us and Them,” an exhibition showcasing works by eight artists—four Palestinian, four Jewish. “Us and Them” offered perspectives on racism, nationalism, prejudice, and the things that divide us as well as what ultimately brings us together. The gallery also teamed up with the School for Peace to organize an excursion to the Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod, to view “Spirit of the Man, Spirit of the Place.” This group exhibition, featuring works by five members (and multiple generations) of the Abu Shakra-Al-Fahmawiya family, marks one of the first times an Israeli museum has devoted the major part of its space to Palestinian art.

“Israeli galleries are beginning to discover Palestinian artists after 70 years of neglect, but Neve Shalom-Wahat al-Salam is still the only place where Jewish and Palestinian artists share space equally. That’s why we continue to be unique and at the forefront of the renaissance in political art.”

—Dyana Shaloufi Rizek,
Oasis Art Gallery Curator





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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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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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