

واحة السلام
נווה שלום

Oasis of Peace

Wahat al-Salam
Neve Shalom

Impact Report Winter 2018

Throughout the years, your support has made it possible for NSWAS has worked tirelessly to promote equality and peace within the village and around the world. This work as multifaceted as it is singular in focus and as rewarding as it is difficult. NSWAS thanks you for everything we are able to do— from conferences to connections made, from art exhibits to adopt-a-class— through your generous and vital support.

Thank you.

Oasis Art Gallery: A year of Building Awareness through Art

Each time the Oasis Art Gallery (OAG) curates an exhibit of Jewish and Palestinian



During a tour of the exhibition, one group stops to discuss what they have seen.

artists, it is strengthening its commitment to encouraging time and opportunity for creating that art. Its most recent exhibition, ‘Nonviolence Action’, has built on the themes established during the conference to create a challenging and engaging multi-media experience for visitors from all over the world. Village residents and guests alike have been inspired

by pieces illustrating the harmful effects of prejudice and the peaceful ways in which we may move forward.

An earlier exhibition reached a global audience by touching on an issue both intrinsically global and deeply personal. 'Refugee', which ran from August 1 to October 15, showcased work by and about refugees making clear, through their art, ways in which their experiences have shaped their lives. High profile visits served to highlight the importance of the exhibition's message and of venues like the OAG for amplifying the voices of refugees.



Members of the Danish Embassy gathered around a selection of ink drawings while listening to one of the guides.

Topol Family Foundation Funds Nonviolence Conference



Conference workshops combined a practical demonstration with group work.

On October 15, peace activists from all backgrounds and walks of life gathered in NSWAS for a day of education, community-building, and connection. The event? “Beyond Dialogue: Nonviolence and Social Action,” a conference first conceptualized by and then fully funded by the Topol Family Foundation.

The conference, which was in its first year (although a second is in the works!) attracted twice the number of participants as were initially expected. Lead organizer Sarah Salaime said of the turnout “We had many newcomers— people who had never been to an event before, who had perhaps never come to the village before— and we had more people than expected stay for the entire day as opposed to only for a

workshop or two.” We had many newcomers- including, by Skype, young peace activists from Gaza who spoke about nonviolent protest in the region. When asked, the young leaders said that what the people of Gaza needed most was to know that they are not alone. Events like this can help them— and others— feel support from a global community of peace-seekers, activists, and friends.

The Humanitarian Aid Program

2018 marks HAP's 16th year of service to Gaza and the West Bank. HAP provides free medical care to those in need through NSWAS volunteers and donations, from immediate medical care to referrals for further treatment.

Dr. Raid Haj Yehia has continued his Herculean efforts in assisting remote West Bank villages, hospitals, and refugee camps. As a pediatrician to some of the most vulnerable among

us, Dr. Yehia is frequently these families' only point of medical contact for their children. He has saved and improved countless lives and has every intention of continuing to do so. The HAP volunteers build connection where there is only fear; they make a fragile bridge with the most vulnerable. This too is part of making peace-building possible.



Dr Yehia, seen here helping a young patient.

Members of Wahat al-Salam/Neve Shalom go on tour in US



Crowds listened intently as Samah and Vered spoke!

Members of AFNSWAS and others got the chance to meet some of NSWAS's members face to face this November! Samah Salaimé and Vered Marom toured North America this November, meeting with communities all across the United States and Canada. Members of AFNSWAS were able to hear firsthand accounts of the

work being done in NSWAS, ask Samah and Vered questions, and introduce the pair to friends, family, and colleagues here at home.

Vered and Samah got to meet with diverse audiences—many of whom had never heard of NSWAS before, some of whom had likely never heard from peace activists in the region before— and strengthen old and new connections. Who knows? Perhaps some of those new connections will show up at NSWAS!



Adopt a Class 2018

The Adopt a Class drive, which took place during the summer of 2018, was a huge success! You donated over 19,000 dollars to the incoming first graders of 2018. 2018 marks the fourth year of increasing the Primary School's capacity to two first-grade classes, a move that has led to the Primary School almost doubling in size. Because of donations and support from the village and abroad, students are able to learn in Arabic and Hebrew as they partake in this unique curriculum, which includes traditional and classical music and an English language program that begins in grade 4. The effects of the Primary School extend beyond the students themselves; the Primary School also builds community through a series of events for parents and guardians— many of whom are from separate communities and who otherwise may never have met.

The Primary School holds a vital role in NSWAS and in the region, providing a concrete vision for a peaceful and diverse future. In 2019, the Primary School will continue to serve children and families in building a better tomorrow.



Building Peace and Resilience

Palestinian and Israeli mental health professionals got the chance to meet, work together, and learn from one another this August, during the School for Peace and Enmaa Center's co-sponsored conference on facilitating to conflicted groups. The weekend-long conference was filled with special-topic presentations workshops, and practice sessions to strengthen both learning strategies and practical skills.

The School for Peace develops events like these specifically to target emerging professionals in their fields, strengthening their skills and fostering a generation of peace-seeking practitioners sensitive to the issues in their world and better equipped to work with individuals and groups. Meet-ups like this allow these change agents to develop their professional and personal networks, build skills, and increase their capacity to change their world.



Director and Actress Yasmin Bar Shalom Agmon stands with the theater troupe during the finale.

"The Caucasian Chalk Circle": The Children of the Nadi Perform a Play!

The Wahat al-Salam—Neve Shalom Theater Group, a part of the Nadi Youth Club in the village, performed 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle', a play about selflessness and legality. The play, which the children translated and adapted from Bertolt Brecht's play of the same name, details the Solomonesque story of a young woman who rescues an infant after his parents inadvertently abandon him.

‘The Caucasian Chalk Circle’ was directed by Yasmin Bar Shalom Agmon, an actress who grew up in the village. Yasmin returned from the Nissan Nativ Acting Studio to help the fledgling group develop their acting skills and adapt the award-winning play into both Hebrew and Arabic. After six months of tireless work and rehearsal, the group performed for parents and village members alike. A great time was had by all, and the group itself was so inspired that they have already begun to brainstorm for next year!



Traditions Build Community: The Primary School Celebrates Olive-picking Season!

Olive picking is an ancient Palestinian tradition with some new fans! This October, children at the Primary School in NSWAS played, learned, laughed, and (of course) picked olives at the annual olive picking festival. Parents, teachers, and the whole school community gathered together for an afternoon of fun and inspiration. Classes picked olives around the village, then reconvened at the school to press the olives into oil and do arts and crafts as they learned more about the festival and its traditions. A good time was had by children, teachers, and families alike as they celebrated, made connections and built a small but mighty Jewish-Palestinian community with a strong voice and a clear, shared vision for the road ahead.

