



## **MID-YEAR 2023 UPDATE**

### **School For Peace**

#### **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.

#### **Alumni Gather at the School for Peace**

At the end of March, more than 100 alumni from the School for Peace gathered to reflect on the school's impact and legacy and what more is needed to grow and sustain dialogues necessary for peace in Israel and the region. This was the second-ever alumni convening organized by the school, which hopes to make it an annual event. Over three days of discussions, uni-

national and bi-national alumni working groups came together to tackle questions about power relations in peace work and activism, what it means for Arabs and Jews to struggle in solidarity with each other, and what role young people can play in moving the peace process forward.

There were also presentations by alumni who had previously received project grants from the School for Peace. Yasmin Shbeta, a 2019 alumna of the School for Peace's Architect and Planners Course, presented her plan for greening Tira, a city in the Central District of Israel, by converting waste areas and an abandoned parking lot to parks. She is working with a group of volunteers to advance the project. Other noteworthy presentations included a film that imagines a future in which national identities don't matter, a gardening initiative that uses recycled building materials to create planting beds and hydroponics systems for elementary schools, and a theater project that asks actors to interrogate common cultural narratives by receiving files from the national archives live on stage and discussing them with the audience.

## **In Brief**



In November, the School for Peace (SFP) staff took a weekend retreat to plan for their next year of activating programs for a diverse assemblage of students, professionals, and peace-workers. The expansion of graduate programming and support, a top priority for 2022, will continue to grow into the next year. SFP graduates are being encouraged to run for seats on their professional committees, and four Palestinian SFP graduates were submitted for candidacy for key positions in the Israel Planners Association elections in November. Follow up discussion groups have also been taking place for graduates of University courses as the SFP prepares to embark on courses at five campuses in 2023. Facilitation work continued this winter in Jaffa and Beer Sheba, and a new simultaneous translation course began this winter in order to deepen understanding during bilingual discussion groups across the SFP's programming.

# Primary School

## Everybody's Talking About the New Language Center



On March 1, after more than two years of eager anticipation, the Primary School's Language Center officially opened its doors. The occasion was marked by a ribbon cutting ceremony and community celebration, with welcome remarks in Arabic and Hebrew. The center is designed to be used by children aged kindergarten through sixth grade; it was conceived and developed by Primary School teachers in consultation with language education experts and an architect. The Language Center contains dynamic spaces that encourage users to learn real-life language skills, including a mock "corner market" where children can practice buying and selling food and clothing. There are learning tools and interactive games, a performance space and classrooms! Although the center is currently focused on children's language education in Arabic and Hebrew, administrators will eventually introduce English into the curriculum as well as develop language classes and activities for adults who would like to learn.

## Welcoming new Students



The opening ceremony included a heart-warming opportunity to greet new students from NSWAS and 21 local communities, and welcome back those returning - the first time the school has been able to gather together at the start of the school year since the beginning of the pandemic. The occasion was celebrated with rainbow streamers and songs performed by the children.



## Learning Leadership on the Student Council



While some student council elections may add up to little more than a popularity contest, the students at NSWAS Primary School (PS) take their elections very seriously, whether as candidates or voters. Their words are a lesson for us all.

Muhammed Hasnin, 11 years old and in sixth-grade, has attended the PS since 1st grade and was recently elected the Arab head of the NSWAS student council. He said: "I told my parents I wanted to sit on the class committee for my year, just to organize some nice activities during the year. And then I thought: 'Why just my class? Maybe if I sit on the student council for the entire school, I can do more activities and really improve things.'"

Itai Arbel, also in sixth grade, has attended PS with Muhammed since the 1st grade and will join him on the student council as the Jewish head of the student governance body. "I ran for a couple of reasons. I don't think my job is to just make the changes I think up. I represent all the students. I need to find out what the other students want and then try to change things according to that."

# Nadi Youth Club

## 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.

### All Abuzz at the Nadi Youth Club

Once a month, Nadi Youth Club members have the chance to don protective gear and learn the art and science of beekeeping—and get something sweet in return! Funded by the German Postcode Lotterie, a partnership with Human Rights Watch, this program enables Jewish and Palestinian children share responsibility for the bees by helping to maintain their hives and safely harvest honeycomb. The delicate work creates camaraderie and a sense of common investment and achievement for teens from different backgrounds and cultures.

## **Oasis Art Gallery**

### **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.

## **Pluralistic Spiritual Center**

### **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.