

You Can Make a Difference

Dear Friends,

The Middle East is in turmoil. Distrust between Israelis and Palestinians is deep. Yet, there is one example - one village in Israel - where Jews and Arabs have made a determined effort to live together and prove that a genuine and durable peace built on mutual respect and understanding *is* possible.

Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, the "Oasis of Peace" needs your help.



❖ There are 500 Jewish and Arab families on a waiting list to come and live in the "Oasis of Peace." *The community needs help in building the infrastructure - roads, leveling lots, connecting water and electrical lines - necessary for new families to move to the village.*



❖ Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam teaches children about equality. For 30 years, Palestinian and Jewish children have learned each other's language, traditions, history and culture in Israel's first bilingual, binational school. The children receive a rigorous academic experience while learning to value and respect differences and strengthen their own identities. *Support is needed for teacher salaries, student tuition and buses for the school's 200 pupils.*



❖ Over the past 27 years, the School for Peace has conducted intensive workshops and courses for more than 33,000 high school students and over 7,000 adults. Through the experience, participants gain a better understanding of both sides of the conflict and learn how they can create positive change in the region. *Donations fund workshops that give even more people the chance to meet one another to learn how to build a more secure future for all people.*

You can make a difference.

We need your help. The residents of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam rely on the support of friends around the world to expand their community and sustain their educational projects. You can make a real difference in the everyday lives of the Arab and Jewish residents of this village who have sought to make peace for themselves, for their children and for everyone. Please lend your generous financial support. Let us know what you'd like more information about.

Thank you for helping to make a difference.

Deborah First
President

Kayed Khalil
Vice President

Judith Tuller
Vice President

Elias Shomali
Vice President

Please consider filing out survey enclosed and returning. Thank you.

Matching Gift Fund Dollars matched up-to-\$25,000



Elizabeth Oppenheimer and Jeanne Burns of Minneapolis, MN will match every dollar of yours with a dollar of theirs, up-to-\$25,000, to support the School for Peace.

“The two of us take the long view regarding reconciliation of complex and tension-filled situations, especially those that exist in the Middle East. The American Friends of NSWAS commits itself year after year to cultivate and live the vision that the village planted a generation ago: to support successful ways for peoples of different faiths, ideology, and national identity to live, learn, work, and grow together peacefully. In effect, the residents of NSWAS are letting their life speak, and we are listening.”

~ N. Jeanne Burns and Elizabeth A. Oppenheimer

Pension Protection Act

In 2007, individuals 70½ years of age or older, can donate up to \$100,000 to a 501c3 not-for-profit organization from their Individual Retirement Account (IRA or Roth IRA) with no distribution taxes incurred. Consider giving to the American Friends of NSWAS through your IRA and receive this tax benefit. Our Federal Tax ID# is 13-3441742.

If you need additional information, please contact us at
afnswas@oasisofpeace.org
or 818-325-8884.

Village is Strong, Growing

There are 500 families on a waiting list to move to the “Oasis of Peace.” Ahmad Hijazi, Director of Communications & Development, who has lived in the village for 20 years, explains how the village will grow.

Q: How many families live in NSWAS?

A: We are presently 54 families, equal numbers of both Jews and Palestinians, all citizens of Israel, with another 15 families in the process of building their homes.

Q: Why isn't the village growing faster?

A: For a long time, more than 20 years, we were not able to grow on the land that we leased from the Latrun Monastery. Like every village in Israel that wants to grow, we tried to buy state land, but the state wouldn't sell us land to expand. They were clear and honest by indicating they did not want Wahat al Salam~ Neve Shalom to grow to become an Arab dominant village in this area of Israel. About five years ago, we established a new contract with Latrun enabling us to start a process of changing the status of additional land from agricultural to residential zoning. This change of status is allowing us to expand to another 90 families. Now we need support for developing the lots, clearing the land, preparing the roads, digging for water and electrical connections. Each family is responsible for building its own home, but we need to prepare the lots.

Q: Why not build other such villages?

A: Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is an example of what it can be like for Jews and Palesitnians to live together -- in genuine equality -- with mutual respect and understanding for one another. Its educational programs, like the Primary School and School for Peace, have a great impact on a significant number of people beyond the borders of the village. However, the goal of the community is to take our model and *apply* it to the region. If we can live together, then it *is* possible for others to do the same. At this stage, we would rather develop our own community than to struggle to build another community. We are at a stage that we can share our experience and knowledge to help others if they are interested in developing an idea of another community.

Q: What is the best way to help the village in its expansion?

A: From our experience, I can say confidently the participation of people in our programs has changed attitudes, involvement and even careers. It is important to expose more people to the idea of becoming active citizens who will work to improve relations between Jews and Arabs. We rely on friends around the world for their financial support to sustain our educational projects. If more funding were available, we would be able to expand our village and our programs. If we are able to do more, then more people will be deeply affected.