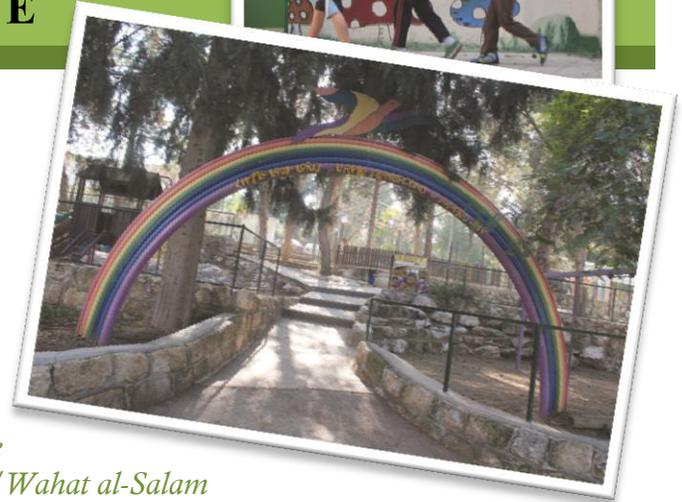


A M E R I C A N F R I E N D S O F  
**Neve Shalom**  **Wahat al-Salam**  
 נווה שלום **واحة السلام**  
 O A S I S O F P E A C E



## Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam Seeks the Higher Ground This Summer

*Dear Reader,*

*In these dark times in Israel/Palestine, we recall the words of the poet, Robert Frost, who said, "Dark is what brings out your light." It is in this spirit that we share with you some uplifting stories about the work of the Village of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam that focus on "the light." We hope you enjoy reading them. – (Editor's note)*

It is an intensely busy time for Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam. The Primary School recently received special status from the Israeli government, paving the way for future growth. Plans are underway to take on 100 additional students, and the School continues to gain recognition as a model across the region.

Along with the new status has come a higher standard for infrastructure, and major projects are underway with existing resources even as new requirements have been identified. Add to this the numerous summer programs that continue uninterrupted, and the summer of 2014 could be one of the more high-activity times for the Village in recent memory.

That's why your support could not come at a better time. This newsletter features stories of some of the Village's most vital institutions. Three of these programs are in urgent need of your support this summer. The Adopt-A-Class initiative, started three years ago, worked so well for donors and students alike that we are offering an opportunity to support the newest class in their journey from first grade all the way to graduation. The School's playground and equipment are in need of major renovations to comply with new government standards of accessibility. And given the volatile situation in the region today, we need your help to support peace-building and peacekeeping projects more than ever before. We especially believe that reaching the young people and developing life-changing and connection-building opportunities is perhaps the most urgent need of all.

We hope you connect your own lives with these stories and find at least one of them that inspires you to make it the focus of your giving this season. Then, come fall, the Village can say, along with the Primary School children, *"Despite what's happening around us, we will continue to be a living example of what's possible!"*

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# It Takes Two: Two Languages, Two Cultures, Two Teachers



Ordinary moments become extraordinary at NSWAS's Primary School, where children in the third-grade classroom of Palestinians and Jews collaborate because it is the "normal" thing to do. Their teachers are Hezi and Rami, who together teach third grade at the Primary School. Children collaborate on everything, growing and learning side-by-side. Rami, who usually teaches math and computer science to older children, says, "Seeing kids work together is one of my favorite things about teaching third grade." Hezi, who teaches Hebrew, agrees, adding that, "Reaching children at such a formative period in their lives is the perfect chance to give them the tools they need to live, learn and work together."

Hezi has seen the benefits of NSWAS come to fruition first-hand, having raised his own children there. He came to the community searching for a place of peaceful coexistence, and knew as soon as he found it that it was the place where he wanted his children to grow up. He wanted to be a teacher his whole life, and when he began teaching a media course at NSWAS, he knew he had found his niche. He has a degree in Hebrew education and devotes himself to teaching full-time.

For Rami, teaching is both the fulfillment of a lifelong dream and a chance to give back. As a child, he struggled in school, but a devoted fifth-grade teacher refused to give up on him. The teacher's passion and attention improved his grades, and also inspired him. He learned that a great teacher can have a huge impact on a child's life. Rami turned down a chance to teach at an Arab school in the Negev in favor of making the hour-long commute to NSWAS, moved by the school's commitment to Arab-Jewish learning. Together, Hezi and Rami are creating a third-grade experience with lessons that will last a lifetime.

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## Invest in Tomorrow's Leaders With a Gift Today

A unique aspect of life at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is its Youth Club (the "Nadi") dedicated to providing young people with tools to become leaders in peace-building. They acquire adult skills that help foster Palestinian-Jewish dialogue, encourage engagement in community activities, and foster a deeper sense of both personal and social responsibility.

Organized by community members, it takes an entire

village, parents and non-parents alike, to support the program. By focusing on what life is like for Jews and Palestinians outside the community, and addressing tough issues like what will happen when some young people go on to join the army, the Nadi prepares youth to use their experience to foster positive change in the wider world.

Even in times of trouble, the Nadi is preparing youth for living as change agents outside the community. No other youth

movement in the country prepares students for multicultural living, nor addresses the unique experience of NSWAS's young people, one that celebrates both equality and diversity. The Nadi Youth Leadership Program is a crucial investment in the region's future, providing human resources and growing the country's future leaders.

**Please help it grow!**



# Adopt a Class Today; Sponsor a Peacemaker for Tomorrow!

*“May you make many friends. May all your courses be interesting. May you always have your homework in on time!”*

With these words, the sixth-graders at the Primary School welcomed the new first-graders to their first day of school last year at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam. Later that day, they hit the books, learning in Arabic and Hebrew.

During the year, the first-graders participated in the “Peace Brush” activity, painting outdoor murals and graffiti art with messages of coexistence and peace.

In the winter, Palestinians and Jews, teachers and children, parents, brothers and sisters together prepared for and celebrated Chanukkah, Hijra and Christmas with food, music, art, stories and plays.

In the spring, on “Good Deeds Day” (just before Purim), they planted flowers and herbs around campus. Together, they celebrated Easter, Passover and Tu b’Shevat. Together, they mourned on Yom HaShoah/Memorial Day. Together, they read and wrote and spoke about Independence Day and Naqba.

And when fall arrived again, together they studied and celebrated Eid al-Adha.

As each school year ends, we see the learning at NSWAS including so much more than math and science, history and literature. By bringing Palestinians and Jews together during the most formative time in their lives, the school creates a generation for whom dialogue and shared problem-solving is the norm. Since the 1970s, NSWAS has led the way in binational, bilingual teaching. As the school has grown, so has its mission. The Children’s Education System has become a model for other schools across the region, spreading the message of mutual respect, equality and understanding beginning with the first day of school.

As the children grow together, the teaching focuses on building the skills necessary to take that spirit of peace beyond the confines of the village, creating exponential, long-term change.

First grade is where it all begins.

We know how important the vision of NSWAS is to you, so as we prepare for the coming school year, we are offering you the opportunity to be a part of its future. Committing to this mission by adopting a first-grade class, or even one first-grade student, connects you to the beginning of a new generation of peacemakers and lets you grow with them for six years.

With a new school year starting in the fall, we invite you to be there for these children, as they nervously prepare to make new friends, take interesting courses, and—we hope—get their homework in on time.

After the parents have paid tuition and the government has provided its contribution, it still costs \$45,000 per year to educate an average of 25 children (or \$1,800 per child) in one of our bilingual, bicultural, two-teacher, special curriculum classrooms. Adopting the incoming first-grade classroom or helping to pay an individual child’s tuition is a commitment to keeping the program alive for the newest generation of peace-builders.



Please support Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam by making a donation! The American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam encourages, supports and publicizes the projects of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, the "Oasis of Peace." For more than 30 years, NSWAS has been dedicated to dialogue, cooperation and a genuine and durable peace between Arabs and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians. Learn more about the many ways you can support programs at: [www.oasisofpeace.org](http://www.oasisofpeace.org)



The American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is a not-for-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status under the Internal Revenue Service Code.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY IN THE MIDST OF CHAOS

**Because few things form friendship faster than playing together on the same team!**

So much of what Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam signifies is embodied in its vital and ambitious programs. The pioneering, bilingual, multi-cultural Primary School, the School for Peace, the Pluralistic Spiritual Center and the new Peace College—very likely one of these was a big part of what inspired you to begin supporting NSWAS. Programs like these provide the formal foundation for shaping the youth of today into the peacemaking leaders of tomorrow.

With so much resting on the success of these programs, it can be easy to overlook one of the most important ways Palestinian and Jewish children build those bonds of friendship.

### Play.

All any of us needs to do is think back a moment to remember the ease with which we made friends on the school playground when we were young. No explanation, no introductions, no rules, no structure, just play. On the seesaw, on the swings, on the monkey bars, any child next to you is an immediate friend. Playgrounds are the truest melting pots of all, and few more so than at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam.

In a few months, the Village will once again open its school doors, and as it welcomes back its

students, it will also enter into a new funding relationship with the government of Israel. This fortunate turn of events translates into partial support for our Primary School teachers' salaries. But none of this comes without a cost: the Village needs to raise \$40,000 to make accessible the school's infrastructure, including the playground, which is in need of renovation. Clearing the ground, grading the surface, providing new paving to minimize trips and falls, as well as safe, sturdy equipment for children to play on together, are just some of the major playground projects in need of immediate attention.

If you believe there is deep learning through play, we encourage you to make the revitalized NSWAS playground a key focus of your giving this summer so that children can play in an accessible, welcoming and safe environment. Because few things strengthen teamwork skills more than working out who gets to go down the slide next!

***Please help us renovate the children's playground at the Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam Primary School and reach our goal of \$40,000!!!***