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September 2010

Dear Friends,

Here are seven reasons to support Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam:

Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam works!

It is living proof that Jews and Palestinians in Israel can live, study, govern, work and grow together. They create a new peaceful future for the generations to come.

Primary School

The binational, bilingual, multicultural Primary School is the best way to help the two sides understand their differences. As children grow up in their respective societies they can further mutual respect and understand different points of view.

School for Peace

Its youth exchanges, and work with Israeli and Palestinian professionals – journalists, environmentalists, politicians, health experts – is a courageous and innovative practice of peacemaking and conflict resolution theories.

Pluralistic Spiritual Center

This center, in honor of Bruno Hussar, the founder of the village, fulfills the dream of spiritually inspired peacemaking.

Youth

A generation of young people who have grown up in the “Oasis of Peace” brings a set of beliefs, perspectives, attitudes and values unlike any others before them.

Hope

Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam offers genuine hope that one day there can be a negotiated peace for the region. And its residents never stop generating positive ideas for the future.

Because you believe in peace!

The residents’ commitment to living together equally for more than 30 years, *makes me work harder to create a better future.*

Change the direction of the conflict. Support teaching reconciliation, peace-building and planning for the future. **Make tomorrow's work possible by sending your contribution today!**

In partnership,



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The "Oasis of Peace" in Numbers

At the Primary School

- ▶ 250 Jewish and Palestinian children
 - ▶ 200 families
 - ▶ 30 local communities
- ➔ **more than 10,000 people indirectly impacted**

At the School for Peace

- ▶ 600 Palestinian and Jewish participants each year, including:
 - ▶ 300 high school students meeting the 'other side' for the first time
 - ▶ 160-200 Jews and Palestinians from targeted professional networks
 - ▶ 25 facilitators
 - ▶ 75 underprivileged women
- ➔ **more than 10,000 people indirectly impacted**

At the Pluralistic Spiritual Center

- ▶ 100 influential Muslim, Christian and Jewish religious leaders
 - ▶ 20 young Jews and Palestinians of the three monotheist religions from all over Israel
 - ▶ 45 mediators trained to solve local conflicts in mixed communities
- ➔ **more than 5,000 people indirectly impacted**

Looking forward to a new school year at the Primary School

"Educating Palestinians and Jews together is a political statement: it is the beginning of equality. Actually it is the end of racism," says graduate Suhell Nafar. This September, the Primary School will continue to lead the field of binational, bilingual and multicultural education with 210 children enrolled (about 40 less than last year due to financial cut backs).

After two years redesigning the curriculum with teachers and experts, Anwar Dawood, the school's principal, is leading the reorganization of the teaching: "We are putting much effort into the Language Center, but also reorganizing the schedule to include activities such as Arabic and Hebrew language days, English, Sports, Math, Green activities or the Healthy School activities." Focus is also on integrating the teaching of Hebrew or Arabic into special activities such as Rosh Hashanah or Eid El Fitr.

Giving special attention to creating a larger impact on society, the school's team is developing evaluation strategies for the students' acquired knowledge, the relations between Palestinians and Jews, and the school's values.

As a response to its financial difficulties in the past two years, the school has created committees responsible for working with the Ministry of Education and dedicated to fundraising. They have already obtained positive results.

"You should know that this place is really important; you have to take care of this school... I wanted to stay on as long as possible here," confides Niveen Barhoum. "For a school, it's the greatest!" adds Gal Maestro; both graduated from the Primary School of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam.



Because we believe in Peace.

The Village's second generation inspires American audiences

In July, Maram Higazi and Omer Schwartz participated in the Chautauqua Institution activities in New York and shared their experience of coexistence with visitors. Both grew up in the "Oasis of Peace" and are now university students in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Maram and Omer addressed audiences of 250+ and discussed the situation in Israel/Palestine with recognized leaders and activists such as Hanan Ashrawi and Galia Golan. They also participated in smaller workshops with youth from Chautauqua.

"We're trying to represent our village and the cause and what it stands for. To make people see that it's possible [for Israelis and Palestinians to get along and live together]," Maram told the *Chautauquan Daily*. "The main thing, especially [for] the youth, is that we grew up in this reality in which you respect the other. You see that he's your friend, you didn't realize, or at least myself, I didn't realize that we were different until we got older," added Omer.

Watch a short video of Maram and Omer at www.oasisofpeace.org/videos

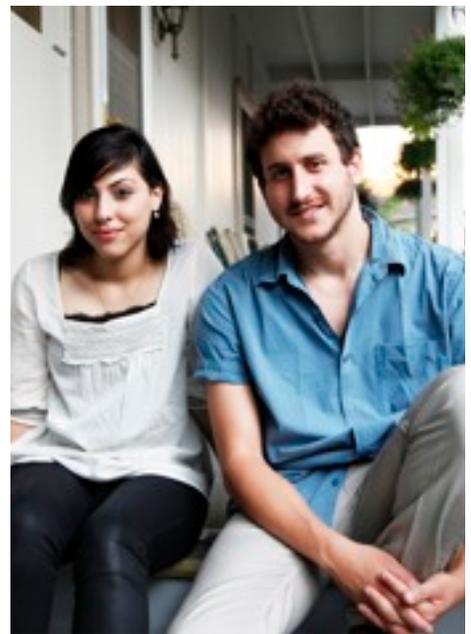


Photo courtesy of Tim Harris for the *Chautauquan Daily*

Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam takes on another peace initiative

On July 22nd, the village organized a major conference in Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam in order to initiate common work between NGOs in Israel. The idea emerged after the flotilla incident in May showed the need to address the conflict in a more united way.

The conference enabled more than 30 organizations from Israel and the West Bank to meet and work together. Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam affirmed its strength as a binational community standing together during difficult times.

The conference, entitled "Before it's too late, moving from protest to persistent activity," brought together major speakers from the political and non-profit fields. The first part of the conference included presentations that highlighted both the siege on Gaza following the flotilla incident, and the erosion of human rights and democratic freedom in the country and the Occupied Territories. The second part gave the participants the opportunity to propose ideas for joint Jewish-Arab initiatives for change.



The Spiritual Center cooperates with US organization

For a year now, Doumia-Sakinah, the Pluralistic Spiritual Center, has been working with the US-based organization Mediators Beyond Borders, to develop a curriculum for multi-cultural mediation. Both organizations are working to create a replicable model for community-based reconciliation between Jews and Arabs in Israel. The goal is to generate alternative spaces for nonviolent conflict management and to encourage local populations to use new forms of mediation and consensus building. Similar activities run by the Spiritual Center in recent years have already proven successful.

Learn about the many ways you can support the programs of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam at www.oasisofpeace.org/what-you-can-do and make a donation at www.oasisofpeace.org/donate.

Thank You!

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

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