

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

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Dear Friends,

If resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is key to solving other Middle East conflicts, why not give the process a helping hand?

Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is on a mission: to share the evidence that growing a peaceable future is possible, necessary and real, even in the middle of terrible conflict.

For all the doubters out there, Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is the evidence that transformation happens.

Is it possible for Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Christian and Muslim teenagers to participate in a three-day Youth Encounter, returning to their extended families and neighborhoods with evidence of deeper understanding, dialogue and project planning with "the other?"

**Yes, it is, with their work and your support.**

Is it possible for the Primary School to educate children bilingually, biculturally so that they carry their skills and perspectives forward as the nation's next generation of leaders?

**With their teacher's commitment, their parent's encouragement and your support, it does happen.**

There is a program that teaches a way for people, who have been at war with one another for a very long time, to dialogue with respect and hope... a school where parents from two cultures - growing up afraid of and apart from one another- now educate their children together in each other's languages and cultures.

**Where these things grow, there is a reason to give and to give generously.**

What would it be worth to you, to know that your support helped it happen, kept it going and made the future possible?

What could you give to move the project of peace building toward the tipping point?

I sign this letter and support these projects, having the privilege of knowing that I have a hand in sustaining efforts toward peace and hope, with safety and security for both "sides." Will you join me?

**Will you be part of the tipping point for the Primary School and the School for Peace?**

**The Jewish and Palestinian children of Israel are counting on it.**



Deborah First  
Chair, National Development Committee

Spring 2009

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF  
*Neve Shalom*  *Wahat al-Salam*  
נווה שלום واحه السلام  
OASIS OF PEACE

A group of Jewish and Palestinian engineers participating in a School for Peace program.



## A renewed vision for the School for Peace

A few months ago the School for Peace welcomed a new director, Ahmad Hijazi. A long-time facilitator at the School for Peace (SFP), the new director has a vision for the SFP in the crucial years ahead. Under his leadership the School for Peace will focus on:

- \* **Youth Encounters:** the goal is to have 10 encounters a year (600 participants from 20 schools) for this cutting-edge and widely inclusive program, so more Jewish and Palestinian high school students get their first opportunity to dialogue with the “other side,” preparing them for a future political, social and economic life together.
- \* **Peace Academy:** in cooperation with the Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College, the School for Peace will soon introduce a unique M.A. program in Peace & Conflict Studies, preparing informed and skilled academics and activists to work as models and agents of change in their professional and personal lives.
- \* **Senior Leadership:** the School for Peace has created a dynamic program to convene key shapers of public opinion - influential, prominent Arab and Jewish leaders - to study the “Future Vision” initiative created by Palestinian Israelis, and chart a course toward a shared future in the State of Israel.

A detailed interview of Ahmad Hijazi can be found on the village’s website at <http://nswas.org>.

Peace Art from children  
of Israel and Palestine



An art exhibit is currently touring the United States and Canada, featuring the paintings of 50 children from Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam and the Tulkarm refugee camp in the West Bank.

After San Francisco, CA and Austin, TX this winter, the exhibit will be in several East Coast locations in the coming months.

Contact us if you would like the exhibit to come to your area.



## Growing up together

The American Friends recently released a series of interviews with graduates of the Primary School.



These young people's stories are a testimony to the impact the school has on each child

learning in the Oasis of Peace.

Copies are available for sale on our website at

[www.oasisofpeace.org/shop-for-peace](http://www.oasisofpeace.org/shop-for-peace)

## Conflict in Gaza

The war in Gaza gave the residents of NSWAS a deeper sense of unity and focus on the centrality of their mission. In addition, they directed their Humanitarian Aid Program on the needs of residents of Gaza, delivering desperately needed supplies of food and medicines.

## Visit our new website

In January, we released our new website with new design and resources; you can now download our brochures and shop online!

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Nadwa (Palestinian) and Hadas (Jewish) jointly teaching first graders at the Primary School.

## Bilingual education benefits recognized by Israeli Ministry of Education

A committee appointed by the Israeli Ministry of Education recently concluded that the education system must nurture the "recognition of the fundamental democratic values of equality and social justice, particularly with respect to social minorities" by each side learning the other's "culture, society, history, beliefs, heritage, language and collective narrative in the context of granting respect and legitimacy to that narrative, without necessarily agreeing with it."

Modeling these goals for more than twenty-five years, the Primary School in Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam was the first school in Israel to implement bilingual, binational and multicultural education in Israel - at a time when no one had considered these ideas. The staff is currently developing a formal curriculum for bilingual education (with major support from the Annenberg Foundation) that will be available for use in any school in Israel - public or private - that is looking for a way to educate for the future.

## Dealing with the global economic crisis in Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam

In the past six months, as everywhere else, Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam has been facing financial difficulties linked to the global economic crisis.

- The Primary School has had to eliminate \$10,000 per month from the budget, and so
- Recently hired teachers have been laid off,
- The salaries of administrators and remaining teachers and staff have been reduced,
- Programs, such as the Youth Encounters at the School for Peace, have been put on hold until funding is found.

The village continues to review ways to cut expenses. Each educational institution has been asked to provide a forecast and a program for the coming months that reflects these new realities.