

American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam



Dear Friends,

Let's make 2010 the year you personally support the Israeli-Palestinian peace process! It was the lack of grassroots adhesion to peace agreements that caused many attempts to fail. What Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam does is spread wider understanding of and willingness to cooperate with the "other side." It creates the settings for a lasting peace.

As new attempts to relaunch the peace negotiations seem at a low point again, **here is an opportunity for you to contribute to** people-to-people projects between Jews and Palestinians that will secure **a peaceful future in the region.**

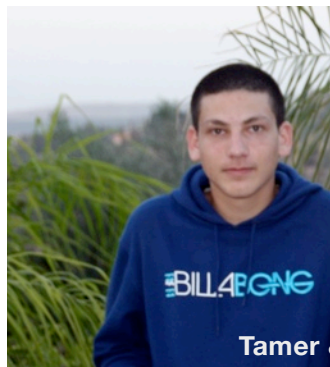
In the past year, and in spite of greatly reduced financial means, the "Oasis of Peace's" institutions have made a huge difference in the way Jews and Palestinians interact and see each other.

The Primary School has taught hundreds of Palestinian and Jewish Israeli children together and about each other in Hebrew and Arabic, creating the next generation of peacemakers.

The School for Peace has put together a program for 16 and 17-year old Palestinian and Jewish students, who will meet over 10 months to work on advancing human rights together. The School also launched a third "Change Agents" program that equips 120 women journalists, environmentalists and up-and-coming politicians with tools to create lasting change in their professional fields and communities.

The Spiritual Center is organizing mediation training and mediation sessions open to the public in mixed communities all over the country, such as Acco, Lod and Ramle to help resolve local conflicts between Jews and Palestinians.

You are the one who makes it possible! In a context of renewed pessimism, **you are able to sustain hope and concrete solutions to the conflict.**



A few years ago, the village created a Youth Club (the “Nadi”) to give the youth in the village a chance to continue to interact and share experiences after they leave the Primary School to attend separated Jewish and Arab middle and high schools. The Nadi has become a very important place for the youth, who here describe how they see their village:

*“Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is special for me, it shows the possibility of coexistence and living together. For me there is no difference between Arabs and Jews. The young people of the village have internal conflicts, especially during wars and events that happen in the country, **there are differences of opinion - but we get over them and remain good friends.** Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam for me is a good training for life and the place also causes us to think and develop our critical thinking. The village and the school are very significant, in particular for the idea of accepting others, and those who are different.” - Eden Ben Shabat, 11th grade*

“The village is very special because Jews and Arabs live together in peace and brotherhood. We play, eat and learn together. The Jews know how to speak Arabic and the Palestinians know how to speak Hebrew. We celebrate Jewish, Muslim and Christian holidays together.” - Tamer Munayir, 12th grade

This year, of the hundreds on a waiting list, a few families moved to the village - there are now 60 Jewish and Palestinian families living in the “Oasis of Peace.” Their **children are growing up in a world where Jews and Palestinians are just neighbors, friends or coworkers with mutual respect and equal status.** We want that to be true beyond the borders of the village.

As you might have experienced yourself, visiting Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is a powerful experience, but sometimes listening to Jewish and



Palestinian Israelis from outside the village is even more impressive. They're among the best ambassadors when it comes to explaining why **the “Oasis of Peace” not only makes a difference but is essential to the peace process and the Israeli democracy.**

A few hundreds of people joined the residents of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam this year for the opening of the brand-new Fred Segal Friendship Library this year. Some of them shared their feelings about the village:

*“I appreciate the difficulty of realizing such a thing. But the very fact that there are people who have chosen this path and are trying to deal with the difficulties that rise up - all the time anew, and much more than anticipated in our original dreams, in much more complex ways than we imagined previously - and after all this they can say to each other and whoever is watching or trying to learn from them, that **yes we believe that it is possible.** Zionism depends on the ability to live in peace with our Palestinian citizens within and with the Arab world around.” - Knesset Member Haim Auron*

*“Every time I come to Neve Shalom **I feel that I breathe a little more deeply** than in my everyday life. I love this place and I feel fortunate that I linked up with it.” - Ariella Friedman*

*“Once again I thank you and all those that have stood behind this initiative for this very fact, and thank you that **you have left this thread of light to which I will cling and hang** from in the hour that the soul is broken and in the time when I am anxious for the lives of children and their future.” - Nida Hourri*

Because You Believe in Peace



Beyond the programs of the Primary School, the School for Peace and the Pluralistic Spiritual Center, the very existence of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is needed by many in Israel and the world - representing their **unique source of hope for the future, a model that might bring a solution to the decades-long conflict.**

Residents of the "Oasis of Peace" will not give up on their dreams and we shouldn't either. A dream of peace, equality and friendship among people is not one to give up; it is one to spread.

I urge you to do your part to help secure a peaceful future for Jews and Palestinians. **Please make the largest contribution you can.** Because you believe in peace.

With gratitude,

Gordon Webster
President

P.S. **Thank you** for supporting the programs of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam!!

P.P.S. Don't forget you have the option of setting up a monthly gift on our website at www.oasisofpeace.org/donate

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