

School for Peace Activity Report



Opening of the Friendship Library

After many years of planning and building, the Fred Segal Friendship Library was inaugurated on April 22, 2010 in Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam. The 8,000 sq. ft. (750 sq. meter) building will provide books and manuscripts on peace and conflict, education for peace, health and proper nutrition, and fine literature in Arabic and Hebrew serving the village and area residents.



In addition, it will be a venue for meetings of academics and field workers dealing with peace and human rights issues.



At the opening, words of introduction were made by Village functionaries Dorit Shippin, Umar Ighbariyeh and Eyas Shbeta. Speeches were delivered by guests, among them Knesset Member Avishay Braverman, Minister of Minorities (photo), Knesset Member Chaim Oron, Head of Mateh Yehuda Regional Council Moshe Dadon, author Ruth Almog, poet Nida Houry, Prof. Ariela Friedman. Dr. Nava Sonnenschein, who originally approached American philanthropist Fred Segal and established with him the conception for the library, described the history of the project and plans to activate it. Deanna Armbruster spoke on behalf of the American Friends of NSWAS. Daoud Boulos served as master of ceremonies.

Nava Sonnenschein receives Woman of Courage award

Nava Sonnenschein, co-founder and current director of adults programs at the School for Peace received the "Woman of Courage" Award Certificate from the US State Department. Diane E. Kelly, Senior Policy Advisor from the Secretary's Office for Global Women Issues presented the award.

The certificate recognizes Dr. Sonnenschein's courage and tireless work in advocating for social change and coexistence. During the ceremony at the School for Peace, Ms. Kelly described Secretary of State Clinton's commitment to women's empowerment and paid tribute to the way women have overcome physical and psychological barriers to improve the status of women worldwide. "Dr. Nava Sonnenschein proves that change is possible," said Ms. Kelly in the name of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, "[she is] doing work to recognize the rights of people who are not entirely equal with one another. There is no higher calling."



A new project for media professionals

Based on the method developed for the “Change Agents” program, the School for Peace is starting a new project that will deal with the Arab Peace Initiative and analyze why this initiative received little exposure in the Israeli and world media. Participants will address how the Arab Peace Initiative can be used and marketed for advancing peace in the region.

This is a joint project between the School for Peace and the Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, a Palestinian NGO promoting peace and located in Bethlehem. Most of the funding is provided by the European Union and its Middle East Partnership for Peace program.

Starting encounters for Palestinian students

The School for Peace is preparing the implementation of two university student encounters between Palestinians from Israel and Palestinians from Palestine. The goal is to create new opportunities for contacts between various segments of the Palestinian society, in order to create a better understanding of the needs of the region and strengthen relations between the two groups.

The SFP recognizes that the Palestinian citizens of Israel have an important role in mediating between the two sides (Israeli Jews and Palestinians from the Occupied Territories). They need to be empowered to develop an active position of responsibility in working towards a peaceful settlement in the region. Ordinarily Palestinians do not recognize themselves as having this role.

Each workshop is planned for thirty students and will be conducted over a week-end. The workshops will be conducted in the West Bank.

Course for Arab & Jewish leadership in advancing human rights

This year, the Pluralistic Spiritual Center is collaborating with the School for Peace to run a one-year long course for Arab and Jewish high school students who want to become leaders in advancing human rights in their milieus. Nine Jews and thirteen Palestinians from different high schools (age 15-17) are participating in this program, which includes one encounter every month for 8 months. The first encounter took place on April 25-26.



The participants learned how to identify violations of human rights in their own environment, for example in connection to disability, women, children. They also got encouraged to report about the observed violations to the major in their cities or towns.

During this first workshop the debate around human rights started, both in uni-national and in binational groups. A game was proposed in order to guarantee a free exchange of opinions: each participant had the possibility to write anonymous questions on a piece of paper. One of the participants, a very shy Jewish student, decided to take courage and raise a very delicate question directly: he asked to his peers what they will choose to do when they will be called up for military service. The following discussion gave voice to the ticklish dilemma between social and personal expectations and the awareness of the violation of human rights connected to the choice of serving as combat soldiers in the occupied territories. A girl expressed the hope that the experience in the SFP program will help her to decide how to act in the future.