

Is there any place where Jews and Arabs actually talk?

“Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is an island of sanity and dialogue in a sea of mutual suspicion and resentment.”

The Times Educational Supplement (August 4, 2006)



Founded 35 years ago, Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is the only community in Israel where Jewish and Arab families have chosen to live, work and raise their children together. The “Oasis of Peace” has been nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts to create a genuine and durable peace by teaching trust, mutual respect and understanding. Through its three key educational institutions, the Primary School, the School for Peace, and the Father Bruno Hussar Pluralistic Spiritual Center, the village extends its commitment to peace and brings Arabs and Jews from outside of the village together for education and dialogue. The *Jerusalem Times* says the village is **“an environment where barriers can be overcome, biases and prejudices eliminated, and dialogue and community constructed.”**

Are there any Jews and Arabs that can get along?

“They [Jews and Arabs at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam] don’t resort to violence to solve differences.”

San Antonio Express-News (June 13, 2005)



The bilingual, binational Primary School and the internationally renowned School for Peace programs have brought tens of thousands of Arabs and Jews from throughout Israel and the Palestinian Territories together for dialogue and education. They have provided Jews and Arabs who want peace with opportunities to work for peace -- *together*. Perhaps most importantly, the residents of the “Oasis of Peace” keep talking, even when virtually everyone else stops. The *San Antonio Express-News* calls the village **“a testament to the power of a few people to make a difference in society.”**

Where are the moderates, of both sides, getting together and working for peace?

“People who have visited this village [Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam] have been greatly moved by the hope that they find there.”

Seattle Times (April 16, 2006)



Since 1979, the School for Peace has been central to the community’s ability to spread its message to others, to demonstrate Jewish and Palestinian cooperation, and to have a sustained impact outside of the “Oasis of Peace.” Its four primary programs, university courses, the women’s department, facilitator training courses, and youth encounter workshops, continue to have a significant impact on participants. More than 40,000 youth and adults—Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs—have participated in SFP programs since its founding. The *Voice of America* declares, **“...this community stands out as a place where differences are acknowledged and respected, perhaps even celebrated.”**

What does this mean for the next generation?

“If there are any grounds for hope and optimism, it surely resides in the determined peace, harmony and idealism of the Oasis of Peace.”

The Independent, UK (July 27, 2006)



The Primary School provides a unique learning experience to Jewish and Arab children by going to the root of differences -- culture and language -- in order to heighten rather than eradicate identity. Children learn to be strong in character and to choose for themselves how to respond to the surrounding conflict. Arab and Jewish children in Israel often grow up in separate worlds, but the environment at the Primary School allows these children to learn together, address the conflict, and find positive ways to move forward, breaking negative cycles that are deeply entrenched on both sides. The *Boston Herald* proclaims: **“Here is a model for future hope that actually works.”**

Dear Friends,

This summer, the conflict in the Middle East reached new levels of violence. The situation along the Israel-Lebanon border remains tenuous, hostility continues in the Gaza Strip and even relations between Israelis and Palestinians who have cooperated in the past are stressed to the limits. This leaves many feeling hopeless and that a chance for a genuine and durable peace is lost.

We mourn the human cost of conflict -- the lives lost, the injuries sustained, the far-reaching psychological impact of trauma. We see the material costs of conflict -- \$150,000 for an armored vehicle; \$500,000 for one missile; \$2,000,000 for a tank. And, we wonder -- what are the material costs of peacebuilding? What can we do to transform mourning, to begin the healing process, and to work to create a more hope-filled future?

Here are a few examples of what you can do to promote understanding and peace education between Jews and Arabs...

\$50 covers room and board for one night at the Guest House at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam for participants of School for Peace workshops.

\$250 provides school supplies, computer support and other materials to the Primary School at the "Oasis of Peace."

\$975 is the tuition cost for one Arab or Jewish student at the bilingual, binational Primary School.

\$5,000 supports a 2-day seminar at the Father Bruno Hussar Pluralistic Spiritual Center at the "Oasis of Peace" and offers Jews, Muslims, and Christians an opportunity to share perspectives from their faiths and lay a foundation for reconciliation.

\$9,000 is the monthly transportation cost to bring at least 180 Jewish and Arab students together at the Primary School; these students come from more than 26 surrounding towns and villages outside of the "Oasis of Peace," including Jerusalem.

\$14,000 brings 60 Arab and Jewish 11th graders together for a 3-day program at the School for Peace where they engage in dialogue and nonviolent problem-solving, breaking through the stereotypes they hold of one another and reducing their fear of each other.

\$35,000 covers the salary of one teacher at the bilingual, binational Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam Primary School where each student learns of their own and the other's culture, language, and traditions in a classroom with two teachers -- one Jewish and one Arab.

Each program, each classroom, each workshop takes place because the participants and their parents are looking for ways to build the future. Each program, each classroom, each workshop costs money and needs your financial support in order to continue. When you wonder if anyone, anywhere, will ever be able to do something, look no further...that someone, somewhere is you.

Be a part of making something quite unexpected and wonderful happen. With all of my heart, I hope that you will join me in offering whatever support you can. Know then, that generations will thank you for being a part of the peace-building solution.



Deborah First
President, American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam

