



The American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is dedicated to dialogue, cooperation and a genuine and durable peace between Arabs and Jews, Palestinians and Israelis by encouraging, supporting and publicizing the projects of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, the "Oasis of Peace."

For more than twenty-five years, Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel have lived and worked together as equals in this community. The community teaches tolerance, understanding and mutual respect well beyond its own borders by being a model for peace and by reaching out through its educational institutions. A bilingual, bicultural Primary School/Junior High School serves the village and the surrounding communities. Encounter workshops conducted by the School for Peace, both in the community and beyond, have reached tens of thousands Jewish and Palestinian youth and adults.

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



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NEVE SHALOM/WAHAT AL-SALAM



The Oasis of Peace

נווה שלום واحه السلام

Nestled on a hillside off the main highway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the community of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam stands as an alternative to regional violence and strife.

The "Oasis of Peace," as it is known in Hebrew and Arabic, is made up of dedicated Jews and Palestinians, all Israeli citizens, who have established a model that they hope others will see as evidence that a new kind of society is possible—one where the state of Israel is sustained; where the Arab minority owns an equal and legitimate voice; where traditions and cultures are valued together as an integral facet of the rich history of the Middle East.

Since its founding in the 1970's, more than fifty families have come to settle there, half Jewish and half Palestinian, with many more on the waiting list. Turning to dialogue and sharing responsibility in their day-to-day interactions and government, the residents of the village demonstrate the possibility for Jews and Arabs to work through differences of culture and politics.

Building a Foundation for Dialogue, Cooperation, & Peace

At Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel share decision-making power and strive for equality

Ori Sonnenschein, Jewish resident of NSWAS:

The village brings the two sides together to meet, to interact, and to see face to face, not through media, persons, or government, but to really see each other. Through interaction and meeting, you can learn more. When you learn about someone, it's easier to understand reasons for what they do and where they are coming from. That way it's easier to find ways to compromise.



Rita Boulos, Arab resident of NSWAS:

For me, living in NSWAS is a unique experience. I think that if we have succeeded to be together, the world must learn from our experience, so different groups can be together despite all the difficulties. I think to be together for peace we must know the other. By living together, by living and discussing the conflict all the time, I actually feel we enjoy greater security than do other people elsewhere who live separately.



Yuval Zak, Jewish resident of NSWAS:

At a time when global war seems to be adding to the already high tensions between Jews and Arabs here in Israel, we at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam are keeping the dialogue open through good times and bad. By the very act of living in one community, in the day-to-day life and interaction of a small community, we are bridging the gap that leads others who live apart to fear, hate, and resort to violence.



Anwar Daoud, Arab resident of NSWAS:

NSWAS is a community of people who have brought with them all the contradictions inherent in their society. It is a place where the ideas of Arabs and Jews, of men and women, are all thrown into a huge forge, in the hope of making order of contradiction and creating something of beauty. And, indeed, when the fire cools, what emerges is often well-wrought, lucid, and beautiful. Yet behind the art lay human personas that can never be melted down. This is the essence of multiculturalism.

Reaching out to surrounding communities through education and example, Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam has become a model of the positive relationships that can exist between Palestinians and Jews

The Primary School: Every day Jewish and Palestinian children travel as far as 40 kilometers to attend the community's Primary School where the curriculum is based on the ideals of dialogue and biculturalism. In these hallways, Arabic and Hebrew are both spoken, and artwork depicting Torah, Bible, and Koran scriptures are displayed; in each classroom, a Jewish teacher and an Arab teacher instruct in their own language and with their own cultural perspective. At every turn, the fact of two cultures and three faiths existing side by side is celebrated. The costs to run the NSWAS Primary School exceed those of regular Israeli schools, so the School depends on individuals, foundations, and friends' organizations throughout the world.



Students role-play to learn Hebrew & Arabic.

Guest House: Located within the village above the Ayalon Valley, the Guest House provides accommodations for participants at the School for Peace's numerous workshops as well as for vacationing families and international guests. The Guest House also arranges tours and other activities.

The School for Peace: The heart of the solution is at the heart of the conflict. Land, security, rights, and equality are just some of the issues that pervade the Jewish-Palestinian conflict. When these issues can be discussed in a setting where both sides' views and challenges are heard and respected, then tools to managing the conflict can develop.

The School for Peace workshops and other courses delve into identity and experience to create a dialogue where both voices and stories are heard and analyzed. Learning to listen and learning to speak up go hand in hand to encourage a relationship of trust and respect among participants. Programming relies on budgetary resources, cultivated from government grants, international foundations, and individuals.



Youth have a rare opportunity to discuss feelings and issues.

Father Bruno Hussar Center for Spiritual Pluralism: Activities at Doumia/Sakina, or the "Corner of Silence," are developed and coordinated by the Center for Spiritual Pluralism, named for the founder of the "Oasis of Peace." Seminars and lectures bring people together to discuss spiritual and ethical values, especially as they relate to the Palestinian-Jewish conflict.