

An Invitation from Rebuilding Alliance

I Care About Peace

**4th Annual Briefing by
Palestinian children
to the U.S. Congress for
International Peace Day**



“To do something BIG
— to think globally and act globally —
one starts with something small and
one starts where it counts.”

– Oxford Professor Nabeel Hamdi

Problem

- ❖ Palestinian children in villages, towns, and refugee camps are deeply stressed by the danger and uncertainty that surrounds them.
- ❖ Mothers are reporting that little ones and even teenagers are experiencing night terrors.

Approach



- ❖ Workshops for boys and girls — and their parents — to make Pinwheels for Peace
- ❖ Encouraged by the adults, the children write down what peace means to them and draw what peace looks like;
- ❖ Together they form a pinwheel that turns in the wind;
- ❖ And join thousands of children worldwide, mapped at www.PinwheelsforPeace.org



Al Aqaba's children in 2008



Susiya's children with Pinwheels for Peace in 2015

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The Pinwheels for Peace were wonderfully effective in Al Aqaba Village.

The children put good energy into this project, and it gave them calm. Their pinwheels inspired solidarity efforts around the world.

In April 2008, the High Court ruled that “for the time-being the center of the village will remain standing” — and in Al Aqaba that has made all the difference. They still face demolition order but Al Aqaba’s center was not demolished and they are thriving.





Um al Kheir's children with their Pinwheels in 2016

Benefit

- ❖ The children describe what matters most and are heard.
- ❖ Each child's message reminds adults of our responsibility to make their dreams real. Some parents have found this *life-changing*.
- ❖ Social workers use it to help identify children who need special attention and care.

More Benefit

- ❖ When policy-makers hear the children, they take action;
- ❖ In Rebuilding Alliance's experience, the #ICareAboutPeace children's presentations to Congress have been *the most effective form of advocacy* to keep Palestinian villages standing.



Al Khan Al Ahmar's children with their Pinwheels July 2017

An Invitation

- ❖ Rebuilding Alliance invites Al Khan al Ahmar
to send **one child and their parent**
to travel to Washington DC with our delegation and
speak to Congress this September

Overview

- ❖ **Who?** One child and parent from five villages and neighborhoods in Palestine
- ❖ **What?** An invitation
 - ❖ To each Palestinian neighborhood to participate in the Pinwheels for Peace program; and
 - ❖ For five Palestinian children to present their Pinwheels for Peace to Congress at one large gathering, called a 'briefing,' in the U.S. Capitol Building
- ❖ **When?** Fly from Amman to Washington DC on **Saturday, Sep. 22nd** and return to Amman on **Saturday, Sep. 29th**
- ❖ **Where?** Washington DC

Overview

- ❖ **Why?** In Rebuilding Alliance's experience, the #ICareAboutPeace children's presentation has been the most effective form of advocacy to keep Palestinian villages standing.
- ❖ **How?** Each child would travel with their mother or father at Rebuilding Alliance's expense. The parents and children from all five communities will fly together from Amman to Washington DC and back, accompanied by Rebuilding Alliance's staff.

An Invitation to Five Neighborhoods

- ❖ Rebuilding Alliance is inviting five Palestinian communities to do Pinwheels for Peace for International Peace Day — and we would like to bring one child from each of these five communities to present their Pinwheels for Peace to Congress in September:
 - ❖ Al Khan al Ahmar
 - ❖ Susiya
 - ❖ Al Aqaba or Cremisan Valley
 - ❖ A refugee camp
 - ❖ Gaza City

Who is Rebuilding Alliance?

REBUILDING ALLIANCE:

- Founded in 2003, Rebuilding Alliance is an American 501(c)3 nonprofit, Non-Governmental Organization

MISSION:

Rebuilding Alliance is dedicated to rebuilding war-torn communities and bringing the world together to make them safe.

LIFE-AFFIRMING VISION:

A just and enduring peace in Palestine and Israel founded upon equal rights, security, and opportunity for all.

VALUES:

- *Rebuild homes, schools and communities in a holistic approach that builds peace, combining community-directed rebuilding with grassroots and diplomatic advocacy;*
- *Stretch every dollar to seed endeavors that make a difference and grow;*
- *Build trust with each rebuilding project and connect peacemakers with constituents and policy makers worldwide who will intervene to safeguard threatened communities;*
- *Advocate for government policies based on international human rights law and international law.*

Rebuilding Alliance's Team

- ❖ Donna Baranski-Walker, Founder and Exec. Director
- ❖ Fatma Nawaja, Social Worker, South Hebron Hills
- ❖ Feras Alnabulsi, Country Representative, West Bank
- ❖ Team is based in California, the West Bank, and Gaza

Of note: Rebuilding Alliance has completed over 320 briefings with Congressional staff, mostly by phone and also in person. In July, we brought Khan al Ahmar spokesperson Eid Jahalin to meet with 29 House and Senate offices over 4 days.

2015: First Meeting with Senator Feinstein

- ❖ As a result, the Senator began her correspondence with Israel's Prime Minister to press him to keep Susiya Village standing



Of Note:

Aysar was granted a three year U.S. Visa that states, "September with Rebuilding Alliance."

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**#ICareAboutPeace Senate Briefing on
International Peace Day, Sep 21st 2016
with the children and villagers from Susiya
and Umm al Kheir**



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2016 Meeting Senator Dianne Feinstein



IN 2016, SENATOR FEINSTEIN PUBLISHED HER LETTERS WITH ISRAEL'S PRIME MINISTER AND CONGRESSWOMAN ESHOO'S DEAR COLLEAGUE LETTERS WITH 10 SIGNATORIES KEPT SUSIYA STANDING

Sen. Feinstein met with children of Susiya and Umm Al Kheir when they came to speak to Congress on International Peace Day with their Pinwheels for Peace

Senator Feinstein's letters to Israel's Prime Minister kept Susiya standing so far

Feinstein Welcomes Israel's Decision to Delay Action on Susiya

Nov 18 2016

Washington—Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif) today released the following statement on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to delay action on Susiya until December 13, 2016.

Over the past year, Senator Feinstein has traded letters with Prime Minister Netanyahu on this issue.

- [Senator Feinstein's letter, July 28, 2015](#)
- [Prime Minister Netanyahu's response, August 11, 2015](#)
- [Senator Feinstein's letter, October 2, 2015](#)
- [Prime Minister Netanyahu's response, November 25, 2015](#)
- [Senator Feinstein's letter, June 28, 2016](#)
- [Prime Minister Netanyahu's response, August 23, 2016](#)

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The Senator wrote:

"I welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu's decision to delay action on Susiya, a small village on private Palestinian land in the South Hebron Hills. It would be outrageous if Israel were to demolish these homes when the villagers have claims to their land dating back to the Ottoman Empire, ownership that has never been challenged by the government. I encourage the prime minister to take action before December 13 to prevent this from happening.

"Over the past two years I've met with several families that live in Susiya or in the nearby village of Umm al-Kheir. These families don't have much and live a hard life. They have no running water or electricity and are sustained primarily by international donations and subsistence farming.

"Today I'm releasing correspondence with Prime Minister Netanyahu in the hope that he will carefully consider Susiya's fate. I fear that a decision to demolish the village and remove families from their own land will be judged as utterly inconsistent with Israel's core values. If Israel retains a desire to be a Jewish, democratic state, it must treat Palestinians with the same dignity and human rights as Israel's citizens.

"Instead of demolishing Susiya, the prime minister could direct the Israeli Civil Administration to revisit and approve the village's professionally developed master plan. Doing so will allow these people to continue to live and prosper on their own land."



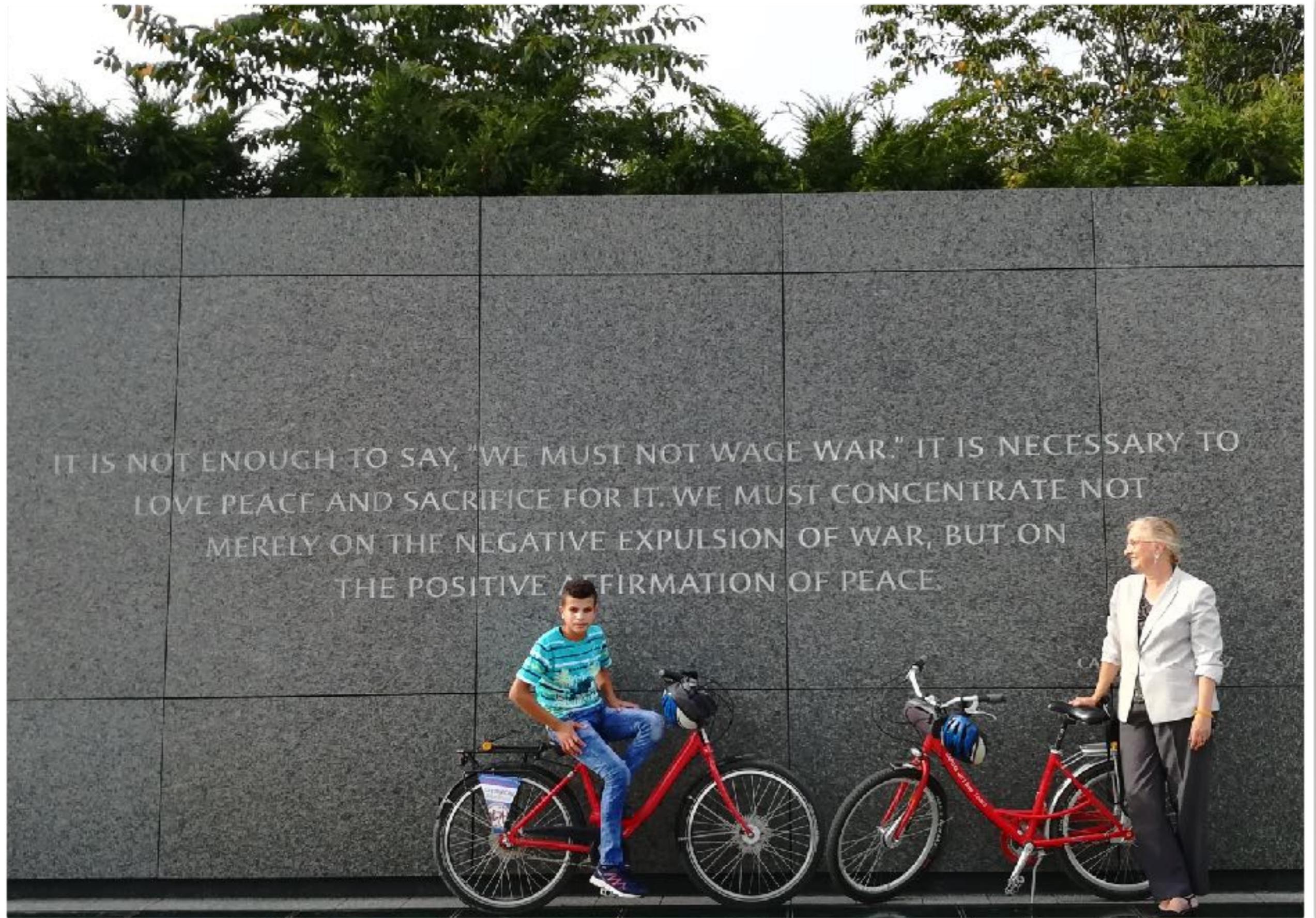
In 2017, due to Aysar's #ICareAboutPeace briefing at the U.S. Capitol, eight Senators joined Senator Bernie Sander and Senator Feinstein in signing a letter to Israel's Prime Minister. Nine Congresspeople signed Rep. Eshoo's letter to President Trump. In May, 2018, 74 members of Congress signed a public letter to keep Susiya standing — numbers like these have never happened before.



In 2017, more senior level officials met us at the State Department than ever before. In addition to Aysar from Susiya, our delegation included Alon Cohen Lifshitz from Bimkom and Rabbi Arik Ascherman from Torat Tzedek.



Congresswoman Eshoo's senior staff met Aysar and follow-up up with a letter to the President, signed by nine others



At the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial



Will you join us?