Thank you!
St. Augustine's
Dear supporters,

When the US military officially withdrew from Iraq at the end of 2011, almost 9 years of war and occupation symbolically ended. But it’s not over for the millions of Iraqis who still lack access to clean water and reliable electricity, are living as refugees, or dealing with trauma-related disorders. Americans, too, need a way to heal and move forward.

Instead of focusing on what has been lost, we choose to look toward the future— how can American and Iraqi civilians partner to help rebuild Iraq and rebuild lives torn apart by war?

The withdrawal of (most) US military troops from Iraq brings new opportunities to build peace—and a greater imperative to work toward reconciliation.

In 2011, the Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project (IARP) completed a 7-city tour of Navigating the Aftermath, our arts and film campaign creating a shared space for Iraqi and American voices to speak about the war and its consequences. IARP staff person Luke Wilcox spent 5 weeks in Iraq in June and July (none of which was inside the Green Zone or on a military base) with IARP’s partner organization, the Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT). In August, IARP launched a new website, video, and resources for Water for Peace, our program that has brought clean water to more than 30,000 students in Iraq and 71 schools. In October and November, 8 physicians and a journalist from Minneapolis’ Sister City of Najaf visited hospitals and medical facilities in Minnesota, learning and building relationships with American colleagues and friends. These were a few highlights of a busy year.

This is a time of great need, but also opportunity. We remember every day that our work supporting reconciliation is not possible without you, our supporters, and we appreciate your involvement. We look forward to working with you in the future to ensure that Iraqis and Americans have the opportunity to work together as partners toward healing and peace.

Sincerely,

Kathy McKay
Executive Director
Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project

Sami Rasouli
Director
Muslim Peacemaker Teams
Our Philosophy

WHAT IS IT?

The Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project creates bridges of communication, understanding and support between Americans and Iraqis that lead to tangible acts for rebuilding a country devastated by years of war, sanctions, and more war.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

IARP realizes its mission and vision through four program areas: Arts, Sister City cultural exchanges, Water for Peace, and support for our partner agency in Iraq, the Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT). IARP uses visual arts to share the cultures and ideas of the peoples of Iraq and America – especially residents of the Sister Cities of Najaf, Iraq (where MPT is based) and Minneapolis (where IARP is based). IARP facilitates the sharing of expertise and builds friendship among Iraqi and American professionals, particularly in the medical, commercial, civil and cultural sectors. Partnering with MPT, IARP provides opportunities for Americans to directly support the basic needs of Iraqis through water, sanitation, and healthcare projects.

HOW DID IARP START?

IARP began in 2004 when Iraqi-American and 25-year Minneapolis resident Sami Rasouli returned to his home in Najaf, Iraq, to reconnect with his family and society. There, Sami founded the Muslim Peacemaker Teams, an organization supporting human rights and civil society in Iraq. Colleagues and friends of Mr. Rasouli started IARP in Minneapolis in the same year, and IARP was incorporated as a non-profit organization in Minnesota in July of 2007.

Based in the Sister Cities of Minneapolis and Najaf, IARP and MPT work together to reconcile and rebuild lives destroyed by war: refugees, veterans and families of veterans, Iraqis with little access to clean water or electricity, those physically injured by the war, Iraqi professionals and artists, children in both countries, and others affected by the war.

Websites:
http://reconciliationproject.org
http://waterforpeaceproject.org
http://navigatingtheaftermath.org

Our Mission

The Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project (IARP) promotes reconciliation between the people of the United States and Iraq in response to the devastation affecting Iraqi families, society, and culture. IARP recognizes the common humanity of the people of Iraq and the people of the United States.
Thank You
St. Joseph's Church
First Generations Kinder Garden in Najaf
Water for Peace is a program of IARP and MPT that partners American groups with Iraqi schools and hospitals to provide water sanitation systems for Iraqis without access to clean water. Through Water for Peace, IARP supports relationships between Americans and Iraqis. Water for Peace also provides health education to Iraqis on avoiding water-borne diseases and is carried out in conjunction with broader education on peace and nonviolence.

Today, over 7 million Iraqis still lack access to clean water. Iraq’s water situation is rated the 5th worst in the world. The reasons go back decades: the Iraq-Iran War of the 1980s, sanctions in the 1990s, and the most recent U.S.-led war and occupation have all contributed to the destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure. Clean water is scarce because of drought, destroyed pipelines and purification plants, illegal tapping into national pipes, and the river dams of neighboring countries. Many of the water treatment facilities were looted after the American invasion in 2003, and those that remain are often not functional because of a lack of access to chlorine or other needed materials.

Water-borne diseases such as diarrhea remain big killers of children under 5 in Iraq. Hundreds of elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools in the area of Najaf, Kufa, Al-Manadhera, Al-Hriyah and Al-Abbasiyat in Najaf Province still lack access to clean water. IARP and MPT operate mainly in the province of Najaf (the city of Najaf, where MPT is based, is a Sister City with Minneapolis, where IARP is based), which has a population of 1.2 million and lies 100 miles south of Baghdad. The main water system in Najaf is gradually being restored, but much of the water is contaminated with bacteria from sewage. Currently, school children and others are forced to drink this contaminated water.

In a Water for Peace project, American groups organize a campaign to educate, advocate, and fundraise for a clean water system for a school or hospital in Iraq. In Iraq, MPT helps Iraqis also organize to educate and advocate for clean water. Americans and Iraqis have the opportunity to communicate directly with each other through letters, emails, photos, and video.

So far, individuals, school and civic groups have raised and contributed funds for water sanitation systems to be installed in a large teaching hospital in Najaf and in 71 schools, which together serve over 30,000 students.

Water for Peace is a way for Americans and Iraqis to work together to build trust and partnership in place of conflict and fear. Americans engage positively with others around the world and stand in solidarity with Iraqis. They learn about Iraq, clean water, peace-building, and nonviolence, as well as how to organize and advocate for their project. Iraqis contribute to the rebuilding of their country in cooperation with American citizens and advocate for government action to improve water infrastructure. They work with the MPT to participate in nonviolent peace-building.

Through the new 2011 Water for Peace website (waterforpeaceproject.org), American individuals and groups can register to start a Water for Peace project.

In Water for Peace, “water” becomes a vessel for Iraqis and Americans to work together toward a brighter, more peaceful future. Thank you to all Water for Peace donors and participants!

"Despite war's destruction, there are positives in Iraq today. We are organizing nonviolently for better government, universal access to basic services such as clean water, and peace. In the traditions of both Islam and Iraq, there exist strong currents of human rights and civil society. We want to drink eight cups a day like they tell you to in America, believing we are benefiting our health rather than fearing illness. Through Water for Peace, you have the opportunity to make a difference in our lives and join a process of Reconciliation.”

-Sami Rasouli, Director, Muslim Peacemaker Teams
Thank you!
St. Thomas University
Imam Redha Elementary
Najaf, Iraq
**WATER FOR PEACE**

**University of St. Thomas Students and Imam Redha Elementary School for Girls**

*Coordinated by Brent Lehman, University of St. Thomas student*

“I started out at the beginning of February by brainstorming with my fellow club coordinators about the scope and directions this project could take, what might be involved, ways to fundraise, etc. We acted quickly for some of our ideas that were time sensitive and about 2 weeks into planning and brainstorming, we sent out emails to like-minded people, clubs, and departments.”

The initial e-mail included: a description, a call to participation, timeline of the project, facts/current realities in Iraq, incentives (it would fulfill the club service requirement), how to participate, additional project aspects (writing letters, other events), and some fundraiser ideas to get people excited.

“With the responses, we put together a planning meeting. I followed up with as many groups as possible and tried to get people involved in the conversation.”

**Advertised project timeline (the actual time line began earlier and ended later)**

- Kick-off March 17th, 2010: Panel discussion and reflection on the Iraq War (7th Anniversary of the Iraq war)
- Closing April 22nd, 2010: Closing Ceremony (EARTH DAY)

**Events:**

- University of St. Thomas Sunday Mass collection (donation from Campus Ministry)
- Tabling at an Iraq War demonstration and discussion - provided info, displayed clean and dirty water glasses, and collected donations.
- “Empty Bowl” event – local potters donated handmade pottery and local bakeries and the school’s dining service donated soup. Volunteer students sold the bowls and soup and proceeds went to the project.
- Bike race/ride – “allycat–style” race with donated prizes and a river ride
- The Music Department collected donations at choir concerts. (Special thanks go to Dr. Vanessa Cornett-Murtada and Dr. Angela Broeker).
- A student made muffins for the Music Department and accepted donations.
- A student raised $100 by allowing donors to cut off her dreadlocks at the price of $5 per lock.

**“St. Thomas community helps bring clean drinking water to students in Iraq”**


Students for Justice and Peace at the University of St. Thomas, in collaboration with other student groups and departments, raised more than $1,400 last spring to pay for a water-filtration system that is now used by the 300 students at the Imam Redha Elementary School for Girls in Najaf, Iraq.

The money was used to buy a medium-sized water purifier that produces 100 gallons of clean water per day.

This effort is part of the Minneapolis-based Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project’s (IARP) Water for Peace program. Sami Rasouli, director of the Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT), orchestrated the arrangement of Najaf as Minneapolis’ sister city and started the Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project. In fall 2009, he spoke to a group of St. Thomas students, including Students for Justice and Peace (SJP).

As one of SJP’s new project facilitators, student Brent Lehman took on Rasouli’s challenge to connect St. Thomas and the globally conscious members of SJP to a broader community. The group showed interest in the water-filtration project and looked for ways to involve other students at St. Thomas.

Campus organizations were asked to participate in a month of fundraising that began with a panel discussion (marking the seventh anniversary of the war in Iraq) and ended on Earth Day…”
Iraqi Art Project

The Iraqi Art Project brings Iraqi and American art and culture together in dialogue. The program has presented visual art, film, book art, and theater at more than 45 galleries and public spaces in Minnesota, and has featured Iraqi refugees, Iraqi citizens, refugees in Minnesota, Iraq war veterans, peace activists, and women artists.

In the summer of 2010, the Iraqi Art Project presented *The Art of Conflict*, a juried visual art exhibit that brought together 15 pieces by American artists and 15 pieces by Iraqi artists in dialogue on the war. The show brought two artists from Iraq to Minneapolis for conversations with local artists. It also included programming with refugee agencies and a documentary about Iraqi refugees. In 2011, a follow-up exhibit called *Navigating the Aftermath* toured seven Minnesotan cities, including Minneapolis. *Navigating the Aftermath* focused on the effects of the Iraq War, told from multiple perspectives. It featured Iraqi and Minnesotan visual artists, Minnesota filmmaker Nathan Fisher, Minnesota playwright Kim Schultz, and panel discussions with veterans, Iraqis in Minnesota, peace activists, professors, and former US State Department officers. The tour has an online hub at http://navigatingtheaftermath.org.

One example of 2011 programming was a series of events at the First Unitarian Society in Minneapolis, which displayed 20 framed pieces in their gallery in the fall of 2011 and hosted lectures and a film screening. Another example was a collaboration with the Maple Grove Art Center to present Iraqi art there in the month of May.

THE UNRETURNED

IARP featured the acclaimed documentary film, *The Unreturned*, throughout the year. Directed and produced by Minneapolis native Nathan Fisher, the film portrays the lives of five displaced Iraqis from diverse ethnicities and religions.

“Deepened my awareness of the long-term personal devastation war causes on a society and its peoples.”

-Feedback from IARP's *Navigating the Aftermath* tour.
years into an ongoing war in Iraq: American and Iraqi
is explore the effects of the Iraq War to chart a course
and healing and reconciliation.

we do we go from here? What needs to be remembered?
can we let go of? And how do we move forward?
are we? And how do we exist?
From February to October in 2011, IARP toured Minnesota with the Navigating the Aftermath tour. Through art, Navigating created a shared space for unfiltered Iraqi and American voices to speak about the war on Iraq and its consequences. Each stop—Minneapolis, Bemidji, Winona, Mankato, Ely, St. Cloud, and Duluth—included a visual art exhibit of Iraqi and American artists; screening of the film, The Unreturned, and discussion with the film’s director; and other arts programming, such as artist talks.

The exhibit featured established and emerging Iraqi and American artists in dialogue. The traveling exhibit sought to support beginnings of healing and reconciliation in Minnesotan communities.

Although most people went into the exhibit with some knowledge of the conflict, the intimate look into the effect the war has had on the lives of both Iraqis and Americans changed the perceptions of many. Viewers evaluated the exhibit positively:

- “Very moving and powerful.”
- “Beautiful, heartbreaking art work. Always a reminder that art of all kinds captures and expresses the human condition and experience like nothing else does.”
- “I Wouldn’t Wish War on my Worst Enemy - the thoughts expressed are so meaningful.”
- “Deepened my awareness of the long-term personal devastation war causes on a society and its peoples.”
- “It’s good to see how creative and resilient Iraq’s artists are.”
- “I hadn’t seen the Iraqis in this light before.”
- “Thank you for taking on this program. We need similar events to gain the kind of felt understanding art provides.”
- “What a collection of tragic stories shared and based on “both sides” of the Iraq war. Powerful!”
- “The subject matter of both the exhibit and the film was relevant and had an immediacy that captured the audience.”
- “The interactive SPEAK table was extraordinary, giving people an opportunity to share their own comments & experiences.”
- “I would rate the art programming 10 out of 10. Complex issues were delivered in the art exhibit and film in a very open, yet nonintrusive way.”
- “It was a great experience.”
- “A 10! I thought it was very thought provoking and engaging, and eye opening! In a very un-shaded way – the truth was shared by way of interviews and artwork.”

“The interactive SPEAK table was extraordinary, giving people an opportunity to share their own comments & experiences.”

- Feedback from the Navigating the Aftermath tour.
In 2009, Minneapolis residents worked with the city council to approve a “Sister City” relationship with Najaf, Iraq. A sister city relationship is about building peaceful relationships between the people of two cities. President Eisenhower launched the idea in 1956 when he called for massive exchanges between Americans and people of other nations.

Since 2009, IARP and volunteers have hosted seven delegations from Najaf for professional training and friendship-building, sent unarmed “citizen diplomats” to Najaf, and helped provide clean water to more than 30,000 students and hospital patients in the Najaf area. Projects and partnerships have developed between academics, businesspeople, artists, and ordinary citizens in the two cities. Meet Minneapolis: Official Convention Center + Visitors Bureau has helped with several of the delegations.

One of the most important of the Sister City projects is IARP’s Water for Peace program. As Luke Wilcox, IARP staff member, told the Star Tribune in an article in August, 2011: “It’s a basic need...A lot of people can identify with it, especially here in Minnesota. It’s the Land of 10,000 Lakes and Minneapolis is the City of Lakes. Plus, it’s a critical health issue.” Today more than 7 million Iraqis lack access to clean water, and lack of clean water contributes to the deaths of young children from such conditions as typhoid and dysentery.

In the fall of 2011, medical delegations from Najaf visited Minnesota to build relations with healthcare professionals, universities and hospitals. The Dean of the College of Nursing at the University of Kufa near Najaf visited the Nursing College at the University of Minnesota for meetings, learning, and relationship-building. Local volunteers hosted a later group of physicians in their homes and provided transportation, interpretation, and other services as the delegations visited local hospitals and medical facilities.

In the summer of 2011, Luke traveled unarmed to Najaf, carrying with him a letter of friendship from Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak to the people of Najaf and the governor of Najaf Province. Luke was hosted by Sami Rasouli, the director of IARP’s partner organization in Najaf, the Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT). Luke spent five weeks in the city helping teach English classes and visiting local families.

Sister City efforts can seem small-scale, but they offer an alternative to the narrative of American domination and superiority that our country’s foreign policy often presents. In fact, it is in part because they are small-scale that “city” and “citizen” diplomacy can see past the rhetoric and positioning of nation-based international relations, and connect individual people.

The relationship between America and Iraq, and America and the world, depends not only on our nation’s actions but also on the actions of our nation’s communities. The Minneapolis-Najaf sister city relationship is a model of alternative diplomacy with a peace-building impact that would make President Eisenhower proud.

“I am so honored to gain your friendship. Meeting with you made a great difference in my life and thoughts. Thanks for all that you did for us. Hope to see you soon in Najaf.”

-Dr. Azar Maluki, delegate from Najaf to Sister City Minneapolis.
I
You
We
Iraqi dentist Mahdi Al-Faraon believes Americans can learn three things from his countrymen and women: “Be patient, survive and never lose hope.”

Hosted by IARP and volunteers, Al-Faraon and eight others visited Minnesota from October 16 to November 3 to build relations between health-care professionals, universities and medical organizations. The doctors met with the University of Minnesota, HealthPartners/Regions Hospital, the Mayo Clinic, Shriners Hospital for Children, Gillette Healthcare, Hennepin County Medical Center, Winkley Orthotics and Prosthetics, Congressman Keith Ellison, Mayor RT Rybak, Meet Minneapolis, Pilgrim Lutheran Church, St. Joan of Arc Church, and other organizations.

One of the delegates, Dr. Ali Rashid, said, “Iraqi doctors are eager to learn, but we don’t have the opportunity to learn. Thank you for this exceptional trip. It was amazing in all of its activities. We visited many hospitals, including United, Shriners, Regions, and Mayo. They were very informative and interesting, and as a radiologist I was able to visit the radiological departments in these hospitals.”

Another delegate, Maan Kareem, is the director of three prosthetics and orthotics centers in Iraq. Kareem came to the US with a mission: find a supplier to provide high-quality raw materials for assembling and fitting prostheses at an affordable cost. Working with IARP board member Al Nettles, Twin Cities-based Winkley Orthotics and Prosthetics put Kareem in touch with its supplier, American Prosthetic Components. Nettles facilitated a letter of understanding between APC and Kareem, which establishes Kareem as the exclusive distributor of APC’s raw materials in Iraq.

Since Minneapolis and Najaf became Sister Cities in 2009, IARP and MPT have organized delegations of professionals, artists, academics, and others, with the goal of building friendship and beneficial exchange between the two cities.

IARP would like to thank the many volunteers who opened their homes to our guests, facilitated medical visits, made a donation, or helped in other ways.

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-Dr. Ali Rashid, delegate from Najaf to Sister City Minneapolis.
IARPs, I have learned from “As a volunteer with the IARP, I have learned from teachers that Iraq and Afghanistan are rarely talked about.”- Jess Winter, IARP staff person.

Standing in front of 40 religious leaders and academics in Najaf, Iraq this summer, I wondered how they would react to my presentation—and presence—at their gathering. I was an unarmed, Christian American spending five weeks in Iraq with the Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT). That night I was presenting at a “cultural council,” a group that gathers periodically to discuss cultural (and often political) issues. My topic was the relationship between Iraqis and Americans and the possibility of “reconciliation.”

During the five weeks I spent in Iraq in June and July of 2011, I lived at the home of my friend and colleague, Sami Rasouli, in Najaf, a city about two hours south of Baghdad. My country still occupied theirs, but the people I met were welcoming and warm. Most told me they were eager to see the end of the American occupation, and also eager to build partnerships and friendships with American civilians.

While in Iraq, not once did I enter the Green Zone or the massive American military bases. Invited by Sami, I helped teach English classes in Najaf and visited the homes of many people in Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad, and Basra—artists, businessmen, farmers, the owner of a small internet cafe, university professors, and others. All welcomed me with big smiles.

Recently, MPT began hosting Americans to live and work in Iraq as an alternative model of peaceful coexistence. The project is small compared to the scope of the Iraq War, but it affirms our shared desire for peace and our common humanity, despite the war.

While the American military is now officially out of Iraq, the war is not really over for Iraqis. Not for the millions who still lack reliable access to clean water and electricity, are living as refugees, or dealing with trauma-related disorders. Yet the Iraqis who welcomed me displayed an amazing capacity to forgive and focus on a shared future. What about Americans? Will we forget about our war and its consequences, or will we work for reconciliation, helping to rebuild Iraq and a shared future?

By Luke Wilcox, Development and Communications Director

In college, I took my first current events class. It was then that I realized how utterly uninformed I was. I learned the proper definition of genocide while learning about human rights in Bosnia. I learned about the Declaration of Human Rights. We watched Bush campaign ads, along with Will Ferrell’s parodies. That was when my political views were shaped.

Reading the article “Teaching Beyond the Test, Make Room Again for Current Events,” I was reminded of my secondary education and everything it lacked. Journalist Michael Winerip profiles an AP American History class in Farmington, Connecticut. In the class, the teacher intertwines current events into the curriculum, focusing on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The seniors in the class note that they grew up with the two wars going on, but never followed them. The teacher, Chris Doyle, replies to the lack of interest by saying, “These wars will be the defining experience of their generation. And they learn nothing about them in school.” To correct this, Doyle went as far as finding Iraq war veterans to talk to his class about their tour of duty. During the class students’ own beliefs were challenged, causing them to think about different viewpoints other than their own.

As a volunteer with the IARP, I have learned from teachers that Iraq and Afghanistan are rarely talked about. During a presentation in May, 2011 to educators in St. Paul, MN, teachers voiced their concern about how to approach such topics of death and war when so many people are affected, both at home and abroad. As a nonprofit organization, the IARP is trying to fix that and better equip teachers, faculty, support staff and the community on how to address war and teach alternatives to war.

It is natural to look at war with human eyes by setting aside statistics and giving a human voice to all involved. Now more than ever we need to advocate for mutual understanding and diplomacy. Our education system is the natural place to facilitate this. If we do not educate our children on current events and teach them how to read news critically, they will be unable to understand the world they are inheriting.

By Jess Winter, IARP Volunteer

In eleventh grade, Mr. Jeperson, my social studies teacher, turned off the news. It was mid-afternoon. My classmates and I had watched the news in every other class, except social studies. It was September 11 and current events were crucial, but did not talk about the significance of what happened. The invasion of Iraq was never discussed.

In college, I took my first current events class. It was then that I realized how utterly uninformed I was. I learned the proper definition of genocide while learning about human rights in Bosnia. I learned about the Declaration of Human Rights. We watched Bush campaign ads, along with Will Ferrell’s parodies. That was when my political views were shaped.

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### 2011 Financials

Iraqi American Reconciliation Project  
January 1-December 31, 2011

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Income</th>
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**INCOME LESS EXPENSE**  
7,282 (2,203) (2,132) (3,493) 1,345 799
The Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project remembers Tim Carlson, late founding board member of IARP. Tim helped found IARP’s Water for Peace and Letters for Peace programs, and was a constant source of ideas and creative energy. We are so grateful for Tim’s friendship and his work for reconciliation with the people of Iraq. He remains an inspiration in our shared work for peace.
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www.waterforpeaceproject.org
www.navigatingtheaftermath.org