Dear Friends,

What a year it has been! In 2019, Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam’s Oasis Art Gallery has hosted 53 Palestinian and Jewish artists from Israel who took part in 8 exhibitions including Refugees, Barriers to Peace, 50 years of Occupation, Non-Violence Action, Fragrance of the South (Bedouin artists) and is looking ahead to Sculpture Tells (coming soon). More than one hundred artists from both sides took part in the Gallery’s Artists hosting Artists projects, more than one thousand(!) international artists have lent support and encouragement to the programs and hundreds of visitors make their way to each exhibit.

The Spiritual Center’s new Community Cinema Project has attracted dozens of newcomers from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem who come to see and have conversation about films dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or social issues affecting Israeli society. Every one of the 10 films shown was followed by a conversation with the film’s director. The 2020 season will have the support of the Regional Council and the Israeli Academy of Film and Television. 2020 will continue, as last year, to see several book launches and will add “Interfaith Encounters” project in collaboration with Rabbis for Human Rights.

The Executive Director of Shalom/Achshav (Peace Now) is a graduate of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam’s School for Peace, and the graduates of the Change Agents courses continue to move into leadership roles in their organizations. Bar-Ilan University is the most recent University to make available the School for Peace courses, and the Primary School has been named an outstanding school in the Jerusalem district and a National Education Award finalist.

There continues to be a substantial waiting list for community membership, and this past year there were 10,000 international and domestic (Israeli) visitors to the village! Join us in celebrating Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam: a hope, a living laboratory, a community and a powerful multiplier of ideas that work. Make your contribution toward sustaining the work and move peace-building toward the tipping point! Your support keeps peace-building alive.

Joan Waller and Gordon Webster, AFNSWAS Co-Presidents
2019 began with a call to action and the community’s overwhelming response. The
decision of the United States government to withdraw all funding from projects engaging
with Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza resulted in the School for Peace’s loss of funding
for a program for Mental Health Change Agents. Because you care about transforming this
conflict, we were able to send the ‘missing’ $150,000 needed to enable the Mental Health Change
Agents Professionals course to finish strong giving its graduates the tools they need to make,
knowing that their work matters.

Meanwhile, interest in the transformative experi-
ence that is Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam continues
to rise. A new segment of the village is under
construction which will accommodate some—
but not all— of the many families who wish to live
and raise families in a place where peace is not a
buzzword but a lived reality.

The arts always play a critical role in fostering a
sense of shared humanity and creating connections
between people—even those who may never meet
in person. The Spiritual Center’s Community Cinema
project, which pairs film screenings with directorial
discussions, has drawn in film buffs from all over the
region. The Oasis Art Gallery continues to prompt
difficult and necessary conversations with powerful exhibits like November’s Hajar series on
violence against women.

The Primary School is experiencing another year of growth. The
community is developing a network of bilingual/multicultural schools –
each modeled on the Primary School -which will be able to use the
Primary School’s new bilingual, binational and multicultural curriculum,
developed over the past three years and highlighting their innovative
approach to bilingual and multicultural learning. It is now being
published in Arabic, Hebrew, and English. The school’s increasing
numbers of applicants provides a challenge for accommodating
the increasingly complex transportation needs of those admitted.
The school is also exploring, at the request of alumni and parents, a
gradual expansion into a regional middle and high school, eventually
requiring the creation of new buildings. The growth in bilingual
schools and the increasing numbers of applicants provide powerful
evidence of the Primary School’s long-term impact!

Visitors to the Gallery take in the mu’allaqat exhibition.
Some Primary School graduates sustain what they've been learning through the Nadi, the village's youth club. Under the guidance of the Director Lihi Joffe, the Nadi has been expanding its reach to include activities that promote dialogue and growth—most recently the theatre program, which is run by actress and lifelong village resident Yasmin Bar Shalom Agmon. Yasmin, who grew up in the village, was thrilled to be able to give back to the community that raised her, and expand upon NSWAS’s activities. The theatre group has put on one play for the community and is currently rehearsing another with plans to perform not only in the village but in surrounding towns!

In a time of shifting dynamics and uncertain futures, Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam’s core mission remains unchanged: that Arabs and Jews can live side by side, creating communities of peace and mutual respect. In the words of Sama Daoud, who grew up in the village:

“It’s like a marriage. Sometimes you should give up things so the other will be okay, to balance the relationship. Both sides, Palestinians and Jews, don’t want to give up on anything, and they are not open to try. At Neve Shalom/Wahat-Salam, we are willing to share so that we both can gain a future of peace.”

YOUR SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL TO NSWAS

The programs and the people they serve, from school-children to professionals, are all committed to transforming the conflict. Your support makes their work possible. Your support inspires hope, provides real-time evidence and models a future where both peoples thrive. Together, we can make peace possible.
Planned Giving
Will your legacy continue your commitment to the work of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam? A bequest or a planned gift to AFNSWAS keeps your commitment alive.

Together We are Making Peace a Reality
Supporting the projects of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, strengthening a shared society between Palestinians and Jews through education, engagement and activism.

The American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam
229 N. Central Ave Ste. 401 Glendale, CA 91203-3541
Phone: (818) 662-8883 Email: afnswas@oasisofpeace.org
Donate: www.oasisofpeace.org/donate

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