For NSWAS, 2021 has been a year of challenges met and bold steps forward. In this newsletter, you will read about some of the great successes across departments in the last few months and plans for the year to come. Your support makes all of this possible. From the care and speed with which the American Friends and NSWAS community worked together to deliver urgent medical aid in Gaza over the summer, to the rebuilding and subsequent growth of the School for Peace, to the Primary School’s return to in-person bilingual, multicultural instruction, your donations have made a powerful difference. As you consider your year-end giving, we hope you will include AFNSWAS. For the third year in a row, the AFNSWAS was named a 4-star Charity by Charity Navigator. Based on transparency, allocation of funds, and measurable impact, we are proud of this prestigious designation and hope it gives you confidence in your investment into the remarkable work happening every day at the Oasis of Peace.

All of us on the board and at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam wish you and your families a holiday season full of healing and opportunity. We invite you to join the American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam in the life-giving work to build sustainable peace for our children and our children’s children.

With gratitude and hope for the year ahead,
Joan C. Waller, Co-President
A Strong Foundation for Expansion

The Fall semester is nearly over, and Primary School students are grateful to be back at their beloved school. Under the leadership of principal Neama Abo Dalu, teachers and students continue working with the HOTAM (Education, Culture, and Tradition) curriculum, setting the standard for bilingual, culturally inclusive education in Israel. In addition to instruction in Arabic and in Hebrew, students took part in activities and trips to further develop their understanding and appreciation for a spectrum of cultural traditions.

Nezar, a Primary School 5th grader says, “Finally, we can meet up with our friends at school. For two years I missed my friends, the playground, and the outdoor activities. No more zooming for me! I can pick up olives all day and be with my class friends and my teachers. Everyone has zoom but now we have each other again.”

Highlights of the Fall semester

Ethiopian Jewish Holiday

1st-grade student Dor and his family visited his classroom to teach the class about the Ethiopian Jewish holiday Sigd. Students also handled and learned about Ethiopian artistic tools and their traditional clothing.

The Hekton Competition

A large group of 5th and 6th-grade students participated in the Hekton Competition in Mateh Yehuda. The students presented ideas to help inspire Jewish students to learn Arabic, enhance the relationship between students and the environment, and make school a more interesting and enjoyable place for students.

Olive Harvest

Because of its great importance in Palestinian culture, time was set aside for an olive-harvest field trip. Students learned about the process of making olive oil and its cultural significance. 6th-grade students had the special job of helping younger classmates stay with the group on the walk to Latrun Monastery for the trip.
PS students watched videos of Tibetan monks making sand mandalas as part of a “Citizens of the World” program, e-touring cities all over the world. Making their own mandalas and learning about their spiritual meaning was a favorite activity.

1st and 2nd graders display their mandalas.

Specialized trainings and Arabic instruction for the teachers continues, with more collaborations with other bilingual schools and teachers planned for 2022. In the coming years, the school looks to expand into the high school grades, providing an increasing number of regional youth with a full multicultural educational experience that will prepare them to be ambassadors of conflict-transformation, mutual respect, and peace-building throughout their lives. Making this dream a reality will require hiring and training additional teachers, as well as scholarship funds for students in need. We hope you will consider a gift in support of this well-planned and nationally significant model.

Art with Impact

In the next month, the Peace Art Gallery will host a 16-day event to raise awareness about gender-based violence, showcasing Palestinian and Jewish artists who grapple with this important issue. The next show, “Global Climate Scream” will run into the new year. The struggle for equality and the changing climate are inextricably linked as students and artists see the harm climate change is causing across cultures and for individuals, and envision improved systems and more sustainable models of living for the future. This exhibition will display the work of Arab and Jewish Israeli artists engaging with that reality. In addition to January’s closing event for the show, the Gallery will be host two events spotlighting two Tel Aviv artists, in collaboration with the Tel Aviv Museum of Art Youth Section.
The NADI Gets Creative

The NADI Youth Group will welcome a new coordinator in 2022. She comes to the post with years of experience teaching and making art and theater. The children are very excited to create their own artwork and get on stage! Resuming during summer 2022 is the Summer Camp for Palestinian Youth from the West Bank and refugee camps, treasured by attenders, counselors and parents alike.

Growing Peace and Fostering Communication

Children, parents, and grandparents of the village started a community vegetable garden in October. The garden, an initiative of the municipal committee, is located on public land, almost at the center of the village, next to the soccer field. Just as the community will benefit from this new growth, it will also be strengthened by the new practice of quarterly town meetings to discuss expanding the Village and to talk through feelings about current events with outside meeting coordinators selected by the School for Peace. After a sustained effort by municipal chair Rita Boulous and others, the necessary permits for planned new neighborhoods have been secured, and 42 new families can start to build their homes in the Oasis of Peace. This is wonderful news for the growing community!

May His Memory Be Blessed

We were deeply saddened to learn of the death of one of the Village’s oldest friends and a frequent visitor to the school and the community, Fr. Paul Saouma of the Trappist Abbey of Latroun. He was not just a founding friend of the Oasis of Peace, but a man of peace, sowing the seeds of love between all the peoples of the Holy Land and offering support in their time of need. We will remember him for his energy, his warmth, and his laughter.
Building Collaborative Alumni Networks

The Binational Educators’ Forum at the School for Peace took a hard look at the separate Jewish and Arab educational systems in Israel and investigated how this split system has contributed to the current conflict in the mixed cities, to prejudices and preconceived notions about the opposite group. This vital event included the Primary School teachers alongside educators from across the country and was an outgrowth of both the HOTAM teacher training and the Mixed Cities course offered by the SFP. This is precisely the kind of active change-making through collaborative work that the SFP wants to further encourage by strengthening alumni networks.

SFP Director Dr. Roi Silberberg says: “This group is the forerunner of what I envision to be a core of SFP graduates who will take their dedication and group initiatives to the next level, becoming influencers in education and public opinion and creating change within our shared society.”

Rebuilding the physical facilities of the SFP continues, and the completion of the new buildings will do more than just provide ample space for the encounter programs and trainings for which the SFP is world-renowned. The new facilities will also create a physical center for the established and growing alumni networks which allow graduates of the SFP to put what they’ve learned into practice in their local communities and cities. The SFP recently put out a call for alumni grant proposals to improve Jewish-Arab relations and will mentor and support selected projects. Your support allows the SFP to continue to offer expanded trainings, build alumni networks, and make concrete change that improves lives far beyond the Village’s borders.

Advocating for Change

Samah Salaime, Director of the NSWAS Department of Communication and Development, met with US congress representatives and J Street members. Samah and other civil society representatives spoke of the importance of American involvement in advancing peace efforts. She also presented the educational institutions of NSWAS, with particular focus on the activities of the School for Peace.
Oasis of Peace
American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam
229 North Central Ave Ste. 401
Glendale, CA 91203-3541

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Binational Educators' Forum
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Advocating for Change
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Year End 2021 Newsletter
For NSWAS, 2021 has been a year
full of healing and opportunity. We invite you to join the
Oasis of Peace.

Joan C. Waller, Co-President

The new CARES act allows for cash contributions to qualified charities such as AFNSWAS to be deducted up to 100% of your adjusted gross income for the 2021 calendar year. The new CARES act allows all taxpayers to take a charitable deduction of up to $300, even if you do not itemize.

Make peace a lasting part of your legacy. For more information, contact The American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam by emailing afnswas@oasisofpeace.org or calling (818) 662-8883.

THE OPTIONS INCLUDE:
- Bequests
- Outright Gifts
- Life Insurance Policies
- IRAs and Retirement Plans
- Trusts
- Life Estates

Planned giving is a powerful way to express your enduring commitment to peace while at the same time achieving both personal and financial security. Planned gifts offer substantial tax savings to donors, especially on appreciated properties and securities, and can reduce income tax and avoid capital gains tax.

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