



WI'AM- Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center

January 2008 Newsletter

Another year is over. Here in Palestine the bringing of the New Year brings about mixed emotions. First we lament. We are still not free, many have died at the hands of oppression, and the occupation still reigns over us impacting every facet of our life. Yet, we rejoice. We are still here, able to keep the fight to freedom going. Here at Wi'am we have successfully implemented several programs and resolved many community conflicts, and therefore, again, we rejoice. Thirdly we look to the future with hope. Although it seems bleak and peace talks are continuing to linger, we look to the future with hope that peace will reign in this blood-drenched land. We hope that this coming year will see a more conscience and aware society, that conflict will find its peaceful solution, and children and women will find safety in our center. From us to you

HAPPY BEATED NEW YEAR!

Current Programs



Women: Our women's program "Women's Empowerment" is still operating both in Bethlehem and in the villages surrounding. This project combines vocational and civil education and training with counseling as a way to empower women to become active decision makers in their homes and communities. Some women have even been able to sell some of their creations to local merchants.



Christmas Smile: On December 22 we had our annual Christmas Smile celebration. The children and women were able to sing, dance, and participate in theatre for the entertainment of over 800 children and their parents from the community. At the end of the program each child in attendance was able to receive a bag of chocolate and a fleece blanket.



Youth: The youth continue to participate in various discussion groups and workshops. This fall we were able send youth to Paris to participate in a modern dance conference, where youth from around the world were able to join together learn choreography to Martin Luther King's speech put to song, "I Have a Dream". This is part of the Euromed program that the Wi'am youth is part of. The youth continue to strive to create a conscience citizenry in Palestine.



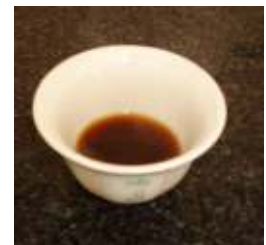
Operation 1325

Conference: In December our Women's Department was able to help organize a conference in Jericho in cooperation with five Swedish organizations on the UN Resolution 1325, regarding women's security. This conference was a huge success and focused the dissemination of the resolution.

Sulha: Our mediators have been very busy this season. The conflict within Bethlehem is beginning the trend of escalating in both severity and issues that turn into conflict. Our mediators continue to work around the clock providing service to the community.

Citizen Diplomacy: This program continues to strive to invite internationals to the Holy Land and the area to see the reality as it is and to talk to all parties involved; to provide the internationals with first hand knowledge. For us we are interested in helping them hear the Palestinian story as a form of advocacy. This fall we were able to host many different groups, and were able to take the groups to Hebron, the Dead Sea, Ramallah and many more places. Their friendly smiles and attentive ears made hosting all of these groups a pure joy! Also our Director was able to take part in various speaking engagements in Holland, Japan, Canada, and Italy.

Children: Our children continue to meet every Friday for educational and recreational activities. The last three months they have been diligently rehearsing and preparing for the Christmas Smile Project.



In Addition

The Future:

•We look to the future with hope. We are currently researching on how to increase male participation in our gender equality initiatives.

•We are busy preparing for a training program that we will provide for the Dar Al-Kalima School

•The youth are getting ready to embark on a new project focused on the tourist sights in the West Bank. This program will educate youth on the political, historical, and religious importance of the sights and also help shape the youth's identity.

•Eight youth are busy preparing for a cultural exchange to Italy through the Euro Med program.

"Stability and peace in our land will not come from the barrel of a gun, because peace without justice is an impossibility."

-Desmond Tutu

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Special Thanks:

We want to continue to thank all of our volunteers which help make our services a success. We also want to thank you. Your support through your conscience thoughts, prayers, and financial support are appreciated and needed. Thanks again for all your love and support.

For more information on all our programs please see our website: <http://www.alastah.org/>

Current Needs

1. Social Worker and Counselor for our Counseling Unit
2. Administrative Assistant
3. Computers
4. Furniture for our Citizen Diplomacy housing and office
5. Enhancement of our resource center either through financial support or the donation of books and material
6. Air Conditioning/Central heating for the offices and Citizen Diplomacy
7. Scholarship funds for university students