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We remember Nancy de Laski for her warmth, intelligence, and generosity.

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“This camp changed me from the inside and now I feel I can change people.”

— Henna, Palestinian from the West Bank, 2009 camper
Creativity for Peace’s 2009 summer camp brought together the largest group ever hosted in a single session – 20 girls – who arrived with fear, hatred, grief, and hope for peace.

Participants came from Sderot and nearby kibbutzim and moshavim, Nazareth, East Jerusalem, Matan, the upper Galilee, and Wadi Ara area in Israel, as well as Jenin, Nablus, and Tulkarem in the West Bank of Palestine.

The recent war in Gaza was the focus of many dialogues filled with heated arguments on both sides. In the end, these strong young women realized the value of speaking from the heart and listening without judgment.

One of the most moving activities was the creation of a memorial garden in honor of all those who have lost their lives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially Bessan Abuelaish, our first Palestinian camper in 2003, who was killed by the Israeli army in Gaza on January 16.

Young leaders facilitated a circle with 25 young women from Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Campers shopped, swam, and went to the movies. They cooked with Chef Johnny Vee and danced African style with Elise Gent and drummers. Their self-confidence grew as they stilt-walked with the Wise Fool circus ensemble and walked on the high ropes at the Santa Fe Mountain Center.

“I feel like I’ve been given a huge gift,” one camper said, “which will accompany me for the rest of my life.”
Special thanks to the following who hosted fundraising events this year: Gloria and Sam Hocking (Dallas), Cheryl Vichness (Baltimore), Toby and Ed Woll (Boston), Karen Meyers and Pat and Luis Stelzner (Albuquerque), Sandra Stubblefield (Las Cruces), Alan Wagman (Silver City), Carol Reichman-Cook, Peter Cook, Mikki and Morris Futernick (Vail), Michele Lowe and Isadora Porte (New York), Nancy Dickenson, Emily Swantner, Bobbie Ferrell, and Ginny Barsky (Santa Fe).

Our appreciation to the People’s Peace Fund of Israel and the West Bank and to the generous hosts and donors of the Cesaria fundraiser in Israel for their support.

If you are interested in hosting an event in your community, please contact Dottie Indyke at dottie@creativityforpeace.com.

Our People

Board of Directors
Creativity for Peace welcomes new director Lamia Faruki, an Albuquerque Realtor. A Palestinian-American, Lamia has a degree in management from Arizona State University, speaks French and Arabic, and serves on the Professional Standards Committee at the Greater Albuquerque Association of Realtors.

Staff
Welcome to Muna Tannous, our Palestinian coordinator from Ramallah. Muna holds a post-graduate diploma in bilingual education and teaches English to adults in the West Bank. Also welcome to our new volunteer coordinator, Patricia Stephens. Pat succeeds Libby Pattishall, who continues to serve on our Board. She brings 20 years of experience designing and implementing a multicultural curriculum for her daycare business in New Jersey.

Farewell to Valerie Carpenter, our camp art director since 2005, who has moved to Denver. Her replacement is Chrissy Schmitt, an art therapist who has worked with our program since 2006. Welcome to new Palestinian house mother, Itaf Awad. Itaf managed the mayor’s office in Daburia, Israel for 26 years and served as its consultant on women’s affairs. She replaces long-time staffer Samia Zeidan.

Scholarships
Congratulations to our latest scholarship recipients.
Baraa Darawshe, a 2006 camper and senior young leader from Arraba Village in Israel, is studying medicine at the Technion in Haifa, Israel. Khaloud Salamin, a 2008 camper from Tulkarem in the West Bank, has received a four-year scholarship to study hospital management at Al Najah University in Nablus. This scholarship is made possible by the Arthur B. Schultz Foundation.

Volunteers
Seventy volunteers provided 23 lunches and dinners this summer, provided transportation, and even did some 40 loads of laundry! Volunteers are working year-round in our Peacework craft sessions, creating hand-decorated items for campers. This is an ongoing committee; everyone, regardless of artistic talent, is invited.
To volunteer, contact Pat Stephens at pat@creativityforpeace.com.

Mission
We nurture understanding and leadership in Palestinian and Israeli adolescent girls and women so that they aspire to and take on significant roles in their families, communities, and countries that advance peaceful coexistence.
Our programs include summer camp, camper gatherings in the Middle East, young leader training, and academic scholarships.
Middle East Programs

When the devastating war broke out in Gaza, Creativity for Peace hastily convened a meeting in Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, Israel, to which 41 former campers attended. There was never a more crucial time for young women to practice the communication skills learned at camp. The meeting offered a way for the girls to grieve together and to support each other’s dreams of peace. “This is the only place I can express my true feelings,” one girl said.

During the year camper meetings were held in Jerusalem, Akko, and Haifa. The annual holiday reunion will take place in January 2010 in Nazareth, when girls will present poetry and songs in memory of Bessan Abuelaish for an audience of friends and families.

The young leader training program grew to 30, nearly a quarter of all eligible girls. For the first time young leaders traveled outside the conflict zone, to Cyprus, for a week-long training with facilitator Ann Bradney. Young leaders began a “home group” pilot project in Ramallah and in Nazareth, where campers from the immediate geographic area came together to speak their own language, share struggles and triumphs, and practice leadership skills in their own communities.

“\n
“This camp is all about touching your deepest feelings and finding the strength to heal the wounds our societies created in us.”

— Bar, Jewish Israeli, 2009 camper

Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish Brings Message Of Peace And Forgiveness

Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, well-known Palestinian physician, associate professor at the Dala Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto, 2010 Nobel Peace Prize nominee, and the father of three campers, came to Santa Fe to spread his message of peace and forgiveness.

Dr. Abuelaish lost three daughters and a niece when the Israeli army shelled his Gaza home in January. Another daughter, a niece and two brothers were severely injured in the attack. He is creating a foundation to foster women and girls’ leadership development through programs in education and health in the Middle East.

On Tuesday evening, October 27, Dr. Abuelaish spoke to a sold-out crowd of nearly 400 people at the James A. Little Theater about the death of his wife and daughters, his rejection of hatred and bitterness, and his belief in the need for creativity, compassion, and humanity in the struggle for peace between Palestine and Israel. The night before, 75 people attended a private reception at the home of John and Brenda Midyette to meet Dr. Abuelaish and support Creativity for Peace.

Special thanks to Dr. Abuelaish and Rita Karakas, CEO of The Abuelaish Foundation; event sponsors B. Wyckliffe and Libby S. Pattishall Endowment Fund at the Santa Fe Community Foundation, Sue Barnum, McCune Charitable Foundation, Belinda Ruffel, Jane Clayton Oakes, and Joyce and Mohammed Salhoot; and to the many in-kind business contributors and volunteers who made these events possible.
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