Creativity for Peace began with a vision. In 2003, during the second intifada, Rachel Kaufman invited a small group of young Israeli and Palestinian women to her beautiful land outside of Santa Fe to seek respite from violence and war and to get to know one another.

This gathering was the first Creativity for Peace summer camp. Trained dialogue facilitators and art therapists guided these young women through art projects, team-building exercises, and deep, often painful, dialogue in pursuit of the idea that an enemy is a person whose story you have not yet heard.

Twenty three-week camp sessions have taken place since that first summer. Initially, camp was followed by informal gatherings back home. Since 2013, a structured post-camp program has encouraged young women to be leaders and peacemakers through academic-style learning and hands-on practice.

Young Leaders who complete this two-year training are offered further opportunities to hone their skills. Some young women return to camp to assist in the experience for incoming young campers and some volunteer to do public speaking throughout the United States and abroad, spreading the word about our work. As of 2018, more than 300 young women have continued to make the dream a reality – creating lifelong friendships, putting their leadership skills to work in their homes and communities, encouraging compassion for the other and not only speaking for but also living lives that reflect their respect for equality and justice for all.

Creativity for Peace has taught inclusivity in the political arena through the USAID-funded “Women Building a Politics of Peace,” led dialogue workshops for Arab and Jewish teens, offered academic scholarships for worthy Young Leaders, and developed programs for American teens that encourage interaction with and learning from their Palestinian and Israeli peers. Young Leaders have shared their life stories with thousands of people in high schools, universities, faith communities and other venues in the United States and Middle East.
Vision
We envision a time when our young women will lead the people to achieve peace; when the occupation ends and justice and human rights prevail in Israel and Palestine.

Mission
Creativity for Peace trains young Palestinian and Israeli women to partner as leaders by transforming anger and prejudice to mutual respect, facilitating an understanding of the other and inspiring action to promote equality, peace and justice for all.

Statement of Philosophy
At Creativity for Peace, we believe that peace cannot be realized through force. We define peace not only as an absence of violence but also as the affirmative democratic and ongoing process of creating a culture in which all people’s rights are respected equally.

We acknowledge that we operate in a reality of occupation, in which the balance of power between two peoples is not equal. Individuals involved with our work hold many different ideas about political solutions but share a commitment to non-violence and the conviction that peace is possible.

We reject cynicism, hopelessness, victim mentality and other self-defeating positions that serve as barriers to action. We have faith in the integrity and power of each individual and her potential to make change as well as the collective responsibility to work towards social justice and an end to the conflict.

Women’s perspectives, experience and voices are currently under-represented in the peace process. Following resolution 1325 of the United Nations we dedicate our work to women, believing that they will lead the change.

THEREFORE, in our organization, we will:
- Respect the dignity of every human being and the right of all to live in peace;
- Listen with compassion to all points of view;
- Empower our young women to lead;
- Strive for the Courage to speak and act on behalf of peace, equality and justice for all.
**GOAL 1: Continue to provide and enrich the camp experience as a foundational entry into the leadership and peacemaking process.**

**Objective 1:** Continue to improve our recruitment strategies to attract young women who want to engage in a lifelong process of leadership and peacemaking and who reflect the diversity of the population. This includes adapting our recruiting efforts to changing political environments as, for example, recruitment of West Bank women in light of the growing anti-normalization movement.

**Objective 2:** Consider creative ways to better select and prepare young women before they come to camp.

**Objective 3:** Continue to refine the process for “de-briefing” both campers and staff (US, Palestinian and Israeli) after each camp and record the “lessons learned” so that we continuously review and improve the camp experience.

**Objective 4:** Periodically reexamine the camp experience to address questions such as age of the campers, location of camp and length of the camp experience.

**GOAL 2: Continue to evaluate and improve all post-camp projects and activities.**

**Objective 1:** Identify barriers to full participation in post-camp activities (ACT training and other trainings and gatherings) and develop strategies to address them with the goal of facilitating the full participation of campers when they return home.

**Objective 2:** Develop a methodology for routinely evaluating and redesigning the two-year Young Leader curriculum to meet the changing needs of the young women and the geopolitical climate in which they are living.

**Objective 3:** Develop an array of opportunities for young women who have completed the two-year Young leader training (ACT) to pursue additional opportunities to continue to develop and use their leadership skills, e.g. training in group facilitation, scholarships for peace-related studies, internships with Creativity for Peace, mentorships and jobs, volunteer and/or internships with other organizations.

**Objective 4:** Provide a professional, adult mentor to each Young Leader who expresses a desire for one.

**Objective 5:** Seek ways to involve parents (particularly mothers) of our young women.

**Objective 6:** Continue to evaluate the impact of camp and the two-year leadership program on participants’ attitudes, empowerment and skills and use the results to improve these and other programs.
GOAL 3: Build trust between the Israeli and Palestinian communities through our work and through the leadership examples set by the young women who participate in our program.

Objective 1: Create opportunities for young women to share their stories and acknowledge the narrative of the other with audiences in Israel, Palestine, the U.S. and elsewhere.

Objective 2: Explore strategic relationships with related organizations for assistance with recruitment, connection among participants and other activities to advance our strategic goals.

Objective 3: Increase international awareness of Creativity for Peace and of the viability of peace through wide dissemination of information about our work.

Objective 4: Encourage and expand the involvement of American young people in our work.

Objective 5: Raise public consciousness that peace is an attainable goal.

GOAL 4: Continue to build and maintain an effective, sustainable organization.

Objective 1: Develop a more robust infrastructure in Israel and Palestine in order to deepen the ability of the organization to support our young women.

Objective 2: Prioritize staffing needs.

Objective 3: Ensure that all critical operational protocols and curricula are memorialized in writing.

Objective 4: Develop and implement a more formal evaluation system for the Executive Director.

Objective 5: Formalize an exit interview process for personnel/staff and share the results with the Board.

Objective 6: Clarify expectations regarding communication between the Executive Director and the Board.

Objective 7: Develop meaningful, on-going training for Board members and staff.

Objective 8: Hold a yearly Board retreat to include a compassionate listening workshop.

Objective 9: Periodically review the composition of the Board, including expectations of Board members.
Objective 10: Involve more young people from Palestine, Israel and the United States in our work, e.g. serving as Young Leaders, Peace Ambassadors, sitting on the Board and/or on an Advisory Board.

Objective 11: Attract the financial support needed for the accomplishment of priorities from diverse sources.

Objective 12: Produce annual budgets that are congruent with strategic goals and objectives.

Objective 13: Examine the potential for underwriting from businesses located in Israel/Palestine.

GOAL 5
Ensure a successful transition of the organization over the next two years.

Objective 1: Develop clear expectations and procedures (by current Executive Director, Board and others) for the orientation of a new Executive Director.

Objective 2: Clarify the roles of the Board and its leadership to support a successful transition.

Objective 3: Ensure staff stability during the transition.

Objective 4: Clarify the overlapping nature of the current Executive Director with the new Executive Director during the transition.

30 January 2019