



Project Hope September 2008 Update

Greetings!

"Ahlan wa sahan!" is the traditional Nabulsi greeting. It translates approximately as "Hello and Welcome!" It is the traditional greeting that Nabulsi give to their guests and visitors. It is not uncommon to have your host say pepper your first conversation with this greeting, even well after the conversation is underway.

With the spirit of traditional Palestinian hospitality we would like to say "Ahlan wa sahan" to all of our supporters and for our Muslim friends a special "Ramadan Kareem" on this the holiest month of the Islamic calendar.

Project Hope has emerged from yet another busy summer, having accomplished a successful summer schedule that saw us reach out to more children. We are fast becoming one of the most recognizable and established aid organizations in Nablus, one of the worst affected regions of the conflict.

To give you an idea of the value of our work and the challenges we face, we encourage you to view this online interview with our Programs Officer Ms. Tharwa Abu-Zeina.

<http://www.archive.org/details/TharwaTV>

Detailed in our newsletter below is information about what we did during the summer. We would also like to announce the commencement of our Internet Technology classes whereby we teach

Contact Us

Visit our website at www.projecthope.ps

or Email us at projecthope@projecthope.ps



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French. Here is a link to the encore Blogs:

<http://projecthope.ps/projecthope/wb/>

Thank you for your continued interest and support!

The Project Hope Team
Humanitarian Opportunities for Peace and Education
www.projecthope.ps

Youth Summer Camps



Summer camps are a highly popular way of keeping children occupied during the hot Palestinian summer months where there is little to do amidst conflict and poverty. Most families cannot afford trips abroad and numerous checkpoints make it very difficult to travel.

Project Hope provided ten volunteers for summer camps organized by the *Dar al-Fonon* center in Old Askar Refugee Camp and a further five French volunteers for a summer camp in the *Multipurpose Resource Center* in the Old City.

The volunteers spent a total of 25 days as camp counselors, leading camp activities such as sports, crafts, games, songs, plays and mural painting. These centers provided the children with a safe and productive environment during the summer months.

Photography

[Mural](#)

[Kids' Party](#)

Donate



Project Hope is a grassroots, community-led organization. It is the successful fusion of ordinary individuals with different professional skills meeting together from around the world with a common goal, guided and organized under local Palestinian leadership.

Project Hope is working in some of the most contested and impoverished areas of the West Bank. The children and youth it works with have been severely mal-affected by these conditions.

It is through the support of ordinary individuals such as yourselves and of grassroots organizations that makes our work possible. Please consider donating to us this month and making a difference, because "With Hope Anything is Possible."

Palestinian Fair Trade

We highly encourage you to visit the websites of two of our stalwart supporters and to buy Palestinian Fair Trade products from them.

In Canada Zatoun has supported Project Hope since 2004 by providing funding for our programs from the profits of its sales in Canada:

<http://www.zatoun.com>

In the United Kingdom Zaytoun has likewise supported Project Hope through the purchase of Palestinian olive oil soap from Project Hope ("Soap for Hope"), with the profits going towards our programs:

<http://www.zaytoun.org>

Ramadan in Palestine



Photography classes continued into the summer months. These followed the completion of a photography course at the *As-Safeer Center* in the New Askar Refugee Camp and the *Happy Childhood Club* in Balata Refugee Camp. The culmination of this project was a photo exhibition by the children in both refugee camps in July 2008.

Blogs & Epals



In our last update we mentioned the launch of our "Bridge to the World" program, part of whose goal is to connect Nablus youth to the outside world. The program focuses on teaching English and French, and then connecting these youth to the outside world through a combination of new language skills with new skills in Internet Technology, creating their own Blogs.

Students were selected from English and French for the chance to be the part of a course called "How to Create a Blog." Currently there are 8 groups of students learning how to create Blogs, 4 groups of English and 4 of French. The students are introduced to the Blogs theme and are taught skills in how to create their own Blogs on the Internet. They are taught how to add topics and photos to their Blogs.

Samples of the Blogs are found at:
<http://projecthope.ps/projecthope/wb/>

Part of the goal of this program is to put these youth in touch with their peers around the world through Epal (online email) exchanges

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic Calendar, is the month of fasting and religious introspection. Traditionally most activities wind down this month as people abstain from food and drink during the hours between sunrise and sunset. Ramadan is a time of celebration in the Muslim world. Even in Palestine, where times of celebration seem hard to come by, you will find people in a good mood and experience a festive cheer that we often see during Christmas in the West.

The day begins early with most families waking at around 3 am to the sound of the call to prayer, which alerts them to start preparing their morning meals. Breakfast will consist of a variety of foodstuffs including olive oil, herbs such as zaatar, cheese, yoghurt and bread, as well as plenty of water to see them through the day. Then another call to prayer will announce that it is time to stop eating and prepare for the morning prayer of "fajr."

Even non-practicing Muslims tend to use the month of Ramadan to engage in some time of worship and reflection. Those who have jobs will find the pace at work more relaxed, as in the Project Hope office where all activities have wound down for this period. Employees leave work earlier than usual and then prepare for the evening meal - the fast breaking know as "iftar" - which is at sunset. During Ramadan there are many additions to the Palestinian menu including "tamar" which is a date juice. At night families will visit the mosque for the evening meal "taraweeh" prayers and try to sleep early in order to wake up for night prayer vigils and the morning meal.

The month of Ramadan culminates in the festival of Eid which is a three day festival at the end of the month. Eid sees people visiting family and friends, exchanging gifts and enjoying all kinds of sweets and cakes that are made especially for the religious holiday.

Pictures

For more pictures of Project Hope's activities we encourage you to check-in periodically with our Flickr Blog:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/projecthope/>

Announcements

have a group of pupils who would like to take part in this exchange, feel free to contact us for further details.

English Classes



Canadian volunteer teaching English in Nablus' Old City

Our aim is to not only teach English but to make the process of learning fun. Our classes have a variety of themes that cover conversation, listening, reading and writing.

During the summer holidays, classes are particularly popular for students wanting to use the spare time to improve their English Language skills. To meet this demand classes are intensified at the various locations Project Hope works at throughout Nablus. International volunteers have helped instruct in these languages in Nablus' four refugee camps (Al-Ein, Balata, Old Askar, New Askar), Nablus' Old City and the village of Beit-Dajan.

The Project Hope English Program has been growing to meet increased demand and with the availability of English-speaking volunteers. Typically a class is taught by a Native or Fluent-foreigner with a Palestinian assistant, often studying in An Najah University's English Department. In July and August of this year we placed 627 students in English classes.

French Classes



Project Hope has many announcements to make. First of all, it welcomed five new members to its Nablus Team. Ms. Tharwa Abu-Zeina took over as the Programs Officer, Mr. Maroof Rabba' as the Volunteers Officer, Ms. Maissa Khwaireh as the French Coordinator, Ms. Wala Shahrori as the Webmaster, and Ms. Lisa Arnold to assist with the heavy load of English administration and reports.

We were also able to briefly employ Mr. Bashar Dredi, a longtime volunteer French instructor, as a co-coordinator of the French program prior to his departure to France in September to further his education. We also lost Mr. Mahmoud Masri, who will concentrate full-time on *As-Sirk As-Saghir*. However, we are not losing him completely as he is one of the earliest members of the Project Hope Team, we work frequently with the circus and he will soon be married to Ms. Lisa Arnold!

We offer our congratulations to Mahmoud and Lisa, wish the best of luck to Bashar, as well as to the many volunteers we have had the pleasure of working with over the summer months.

Social Justice Workshops



International volunteers participated in these Palestinian run workshops, bringing different perspectives from the United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States. These workshops cover a variety of themes in social justice and human rights. The program is funded by the Canadian human rights organization [Rights and Democracy](#).

Parallel to our popular English program, the French program intensified over the summer. We managed to place 146 students in French classes in this period. Classes were offered in 10 different community centers in and around Nablus.

One of the centers Project Hope works with is the *Local Committee for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled* in Balata Refugee Camp. In this center we have 7 students registered as beginners. The kinds of topics students at this center are studying include basic introductions such as name, age and location, followed by basic vocabulary such as numbers, fruit and vegetables, and basic verbs.

At other centers we offer classes for beginners and intermediate students who look at advanced grammar then go on to practice their skills by writing a short play or film scene before performing in front of an audience.

First Aid & Healthy Living



In July and August more than 50 women at various women's centers in Beit Dajan village and Al Far'a Refugee Camp participated in First-Aid courses taught by instructors from Project Hope. In line with the curriculum being developed for this program, the women learned vital first aid techniques, from dealing with everyday injuries through to life-saving skills such as CPR and the recovery position. One medical nursing student from Iceland and

two trained paramedics led the classes with the assistance of local Palestinian translators from Project Hope.

We continue to look for financial support and a regular stream of appropriately trained medical volunteers to make this a permanent program. Please contact if you are interested in supporting the program for either of these needs.

Art

Every month Project Hope carries out a variety of creative arts activities, often ideas proposed by Palestinian and International volunteers. The past few months were full of activities including painting, murals and drawing.

This included a pilot art therapy project with *American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA)*. The goal of this project is to provide children with new skills to express their emotions and ideas through art. This allows them to transform potentially traumatic experiences into a creative and enriching activity ... and to have a lot of fun in the meantime.



Murals



Project Hope's most recent mural was at the , *Sirk As-Saghir* circus school in Nablus. The mural was designed to decorate the group's new facility in Nablus' city center .



Another volunteer also helped in creating a mural in the Old Askar Refugee Camp. That activity was part of the *Dar al-Fonon* summer camp.

Murals are not just a fun activity but a means by which Palestinians in Nablus can create something of permanence and beauty, improving their environment with something they can take pride in.

Kids' Party

One of the activities Project Hope most enjoys is collaborating with different partner organizations in and around Nablus to stage large kids' parties. This summer in collaboration with the *French Cultural Center* and *As-Sirk As-Saghir*, we helped organize an event for 1500 children and their parents at the historic Roman amphitheater in Nablus. *AS-Sirk As-Saghir* did a circus performance while *Aqaleel*, a Dabkah dance group (a type of traditional Palestinian dance), joined a Project Hope international volunteer in a dance performance.





Thanks for you Support!!

How to Donate

There are several ways to donate to Project Hope. The easiest is by donating online through Paypal by credit card projecthope@mail.com or by clicking on the Paypal link at the top of this email.

Another is by sending a cheque or money order to Project Hope's mailing address in Toronto. Tax receipts can be issued to support this work in Canada and the United States by doing the following.

Canada - Making your cheque out to NECEF with Project Hope in the memo
 United States - Making your check out to WAI with Project Hope in the memo

Remember, every donation makes a difference, no matter how much.

Project Hope - Humanitarian Opportunities for Peace and Education - www.projecthope.ps

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