

"With Hope,  
Anything is Possible"

In this issue...

2008 SUMMARY

WINTER CAMP

ENGLISH

FRENCH

BLOGS

CREATIVE ARTS

SOCIAL JUSTICE

FIRST AID

MUSIC



**Contact Us:**

**E:** [projecthope@projecthope.ps](mailto:projecthope@projecthope.ps)

**W:** [www.projecthope.ps](http://www.projecthope.ps)

**February 22 "Bridge to  
Palestine" Fundraiser in  
Toronto, Canada**

**Join us for an Evening of  
Dance, Poetry & Music**

**Time:** Sunday, February 22nd  
@ 7pm

**Location:** Lula Lounge  
1585 Dundas Street West,  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

To purchase tickets email  
[mona@projecthope.ps](mailto:mona@projecthope.ps) or call +1  
416 879 8939 or buy online:

**Buy Now**

**Donate to Project Hope**

**Donate online:**



**or send cheque or money  
order to:**

Project Hope

## February 2009 Update & 2008 Summary

**Dear Project,**

The tragedy in Gaza that brought us into this new-year and took us farther away from peace. With it came many reactions. Although most were ones of frustration, pain, sadness and despair, it must not go unnoticed that the people called upon their resilience and ability to imagine a better future to get through this tragedy and the difficulties that lie ahead in the coming year.

In the spirit of hope against all odds, Project Hope continued its busy schedule, expanding on its activities and introducing new ones. Project Hope touched the lives of more children, teenagers and adults this year than ever before while continuing to focus on the disadvantaged



youth of Nablus, giving them new skills and improving their mental health. It is uplifting for any of Project Hope's volunteers or staff to see the progression of their students and to share the hope that they keep for the future, despite the hardships and oppression they face everyday.

Project Hope has a goal to reach more children and youth by creating relationships with more centers and began working with United Nations schools. However, if Project Hope is to continue expanding its programs and touching more lives, it will depend completely on the support we can earn. If you are interested in learning more about Project Hope's many programs and ways to support them, contact us at [projecthope@projecthope.ps](mailto:projecthope@projecthope.ps). Further contact information is provided at the end of this newsletter.

In this February 2009 edition of Project Hope's newsletter you will be provided with an account of our activities over the past few months and an overall summary for 2008 that we are proud to share with you.

Thank you for your continued interest and support!

### A Palestinian Child's Life in His Own Words

Through a project done in collaboration with "[You Move Me](#)," members of the Project Hope team interviewed a student from the Social Justice Workshops to create an article translated into English which will be shared with teachers in junior high schools across the United States to share with their students. Here is a glimpse at *Hassan's* story:

<http://www.youmoveme.org/Hassan.pdf>

110 Cumberland St,  
Suite 237  
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5  
Canada

*(please make payable to  
Humanitarian Opportunities for  
Peace & Education)*

**Bank Information:**

HSB Toronto  
(Yorkville Branch)  
150 Bloor St W  
Suite M100  
Toronto, ON, M5S 2Y5 Canada  
**\$CAD Account #:** 362-041806-  
080  
**\$USD Account #:** 362-041806-  
270  
Transit # 10362, F# 016

For a **tax receipt in Canada**,  
make the cheque out to NECEF  
with Project Hope in the cheque's  
memo line.

**Zatoun (Canada/USA)**



[Buy Zatoun's Palestinian Olive Oil  
and Soap in Canada and the  
USA!](#)

**Zaytoun (UK)**



[Buy Zaytoun's Palestinian Olive  
Oil and Soap in the UK!](#)

**CPFQ Palestinian Child  
Sponsorship Program**



[Make a Difference in a Palestinian  
Child's Life](#)

**Near East Cultural and  
Educational Foundation of  
Canada (NECEF)**

## 2008 Summary of Activities

- **English classes** for 4 417 placements (an average of 368 students per month).
- **French classes** for 1 206 placements (an average of 100 students per month).
- **Bridge to the World** saw 228 students participate in the 3-month long Internet and Blog classes.
- **Social justice workshops** for 250 students in 6 different intensive summer workshops or regular eight-week courses.
- **Medical workshops** for 716 adults in 29 different workshops in Nablus, refugee camps and villages.
- **Art Classes:** four major multi-month projects in art and art therapy for 589 students in the Nablus and Tulkarem districts, including refugee camps and villages.
- Two major **mural projects** completed by two international volunteers including the walls of Assirk Assaghir Center in Nablus and the outer wall of the UNRWA Girls' School in Old Askar Refugee camp.
- **Photography workshops** for 122 students enrolled in 2 three-month courses in Balata, Old Askar and New Askar Refugee Camps.
- **Drama Classes** for 504 students in five different drama and drama therapy courses.

- Many different **sports classes** were given in 2008 for a total of 352 students. The classes were in volleyball, acrobatics, yoga, dance, fitness/stretching and aerobics.

- A **kids party** was held in July in Nablus' open-air theater in cooperation with the

French Cultural Center and Assirk Assaghir. There were dance and circus performances as well as face painting and other kids activities. More than 40 performers participated and more than 1 000 children and adults attended.

- **Summer Camps** were given in three different locations for 200 children during their vacation from school.

- **Partners:** projects with 56 different community organizations and 9 schools.

- 82+ **international volunteers** from 16 different countries.

- 35+ **Palestinian volunteers** throughout the year.

- **Arabic classes** for the International volunteers.

- Two different **courses in Leadership and Advertising** were given at An-Najah University in Nablus and other centers.

- A Project Hope staff member gave a one-month **course in Robotics and Electronics** for teenagers at a center in Nablus.

- A program called '**Digital Storytelling**' was conducted by a British volunteer for 34 students.

- **Music workshops** in Nablus and refugee camps to teach children and youth basic skills with select instruments.

- **Spanish classes** for 10 students in June/July.

## Winter Camp

During the winter break from school between semesters in January 2009, Project Hope facilitated 'Winter Camps' in conjunction with three different centers in the Old and New

Askar refugee camps as well as in Nablus. Six days per week for a period of two weeks, the 'Winter Camp' included courses in photography, music, drama, and 'Cycle of Life,' a course in Environmental education. There was also time every day for activities such as painting, movies, playing games and dancing.





NECEF is a registered Canadian charity which has been working with Project Hope since our inception



## Did You Know?

The famous 10th Century Palestinian geographer Al Muqadasi wrote that Nablus and its surroundings were abundant in olive trees and the Souk was so lively that the city was nicknamed "the little Damascus."

Living up to this nickname, the unique Nabulsi dialect of Arabic is most alike to that of Syria; more similar even than to those of the surrounding villages and cities in Palestine. Nablus is one of the few Palestinian cities that sustained elite classes, fostering the development of a culture of "high cuisine", such as that of Damascus.

Another common feature of Nablus and Damascus is the old city for which each is famous. A courtyard that links together many different houses of one family characterizes the old city homes in both. In a similar architectural style were constructed the Hammams (Turkish Baths) of both cities. Although not currently as popular as they once were, these baths, which doubled as meeting places, still symbolize the cultural link between Nablus and Damascus.

For more information about Nablus, its culture and its history, visit Project Hope's new website: [www.nabluguide.com](http://www.nabluguide.com)

Each Thursday the children from all three centers come together with the Project Hope team for a picnic at a local park which included games, face painting and snacks. These activities provided children with a safe, productive place to learn and have fun during the vacation in which they would otherwise be spending inside, possibly in front of the television, stuck in their city surrounded by checkpoints. There were 120 children and 11 international volunteers involved in the camp.

## English as a Global Language

Education in man-made emergency situations can be life saving and life-sustaining. For children and adolescents, it sustains life by offering structure, stability and hope for the future.

Learning English opens doors and provides the students with opportunities otherwise unavailable to them.



Project Hope's English program provides an anchor for many other programs and special activities implemented in 2008. In 2008, Project Hope taught English to an average of 368 students per month. Although the focus is on children and youth, classes were organized for adults. These high numbers were kept up through thousands of volunteer hours and time put in by Project Hope staff. Much of the program is and will increasingly be conducted through the Bridge to the World program.

## French as a Second Language

Just as English is an important skill for children and adolescents in Palestine, French classes are also in demand because fluency facilitates

employability with the numerous French NGOs working here while there is a genuine interest in the French culture. Programs taught in French give students the chance to establish social relations with French speakers while increasing students' awareness of other cultures. French education has normally been preserved for the elite, despite the advantages fluency accrues.

Project Hope has worked hard to make French available to all levels of society by working in the more disadvantaged locations such as the refugee camps and the Old City of Nablus. In 2008, Project Hope served on average over 100 students per month and once again had support for this program for part of the year from the French Consulate, then as a part of Bridge to the World. As French is not in as high of demand as English, the numbers of students in Project Hope's French program are lower. However the French students are committed to their classes and motivated to learn. Most of the students are at the beginner level, but we also have long-term students who have progressed to the intermediate level.



Image Deleted



## 'The Holidays' in Nablus

In December and November the people of Nablus celebrated multiple holidays for Muslims and Christians. The New Year according to the Muslim calendar (Hijri) occurred this year only one day after the Gregorian New Year in January.

December began with the Muslim holiday, Eid Al-Adha, which celebrates the end of the Hajj (Pilgrimage) to Mecca. The pilgrimage is comprised of a number of responsibilities, which culminate with the ascent of the Arafat Mountain to supplicate oneself to God. On this religiously significant day, those not on their pilgrimage fast from sunrise to sunset. The next day all pilgrims and many others in their own cities sacrifice a sheep and give a portion of it to the poor. Over the next three days, in the spirit of charity, families visit each other, bringing sweets, presents and money for their relatives.

December ended with the Christmas holiday, which is celebrated on the 25th of December by Nablus' Catholic and Anglican population and on January 7th by the Orthodox Christians in the area. Many Project Hope volunteers attended the 4th Baroque Music Concert in the Good Shepard Anglican Church in western Nablus. The event was hosted by the French Culture Center and ended with Christmas carols in the entryway.



Scottish volunteer painted a mural on the wall of UNRWA Girls' School in Old Askar Camp. The mural was a combination of her students' artwork.

## Bridge to the World

In May of 2008 Project Hope launched a new program called 'Bridge to the World' that takes ESL and FSL classes to a new level by introducing new Internet classes focused on Blog-making. The goal of combining language instruction with Internet classes is to give the students new skills while also giving them a chance to communicate with their peers in other countries. To overcome the physical and economic barriers that have prevented Palestinian children from interacting with those outside, this program is a way for students to reach out and connect with people they would otherwise be unable to know.



Under this program young Palestinians were taught how to create their own Blogs where they can document their daily lives, write stories and share their experiences online. When students from other countries, such as Japan and Canada, read our children's Blogs, they can make comments and begin a dialogue. Through this aspect of the program, students are able to participate in a cultural exchange and gain new perspectives about their situation and the outside world. It also gives them a way to educate others about what Palestine is really like, as opposed to what they learn about the region through the media.

The Bridge to the World program is specifically designed to draw on a child's resilience and encourage them with a positive outlook for the future. Combining exercises that activate children's imaginations with important skills building exercises, children truly benefit from this new program and, with support for the continuation of this program, more children will enjoy these benefits in the future.

You can read the students' Blogs at:

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

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

## Creative Arts Classes

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 drama, art and music.

One of these projects was in Drama Therapy in which the students are encouraged to discover and work with their emotions and thoughts through the medium of drama and movement. The drama therapy teacher, who has a degree in the field, conducted activities that promoted self-confidence, self-expression and creativity as a positive way to deal with many negative feelings that exist in children when living and maturing in a conflict environment. These classes are especially important, as children need to learn a constructive, not destructive, way of dealing with their emotions of sadness and frustration arising from



their situation.

Another exciting program was conducted by a British volunteer who worked with a local Palestinian volunteer on a month-long intensive course in Digital Storytelling. During the course the children made their own 'Digital Story' on the computer. They each wrote a story and then recorded their voices telling their story, which was dubbed over a slideshow of pictures of their choice. The course culminated with an exhibition on December 17th at Naher Al-Oaja Center in Balata Refugee Camp. The instructor will take the 'Digital Stories' back to the UK with her to depict about the life in Nablus.

In addition to these programs, Project Hope volunteers also provided classes in volleyball, aerobics, and a number of art classes in painting, drawing and crafts.

## Description of Pictures

**Introduction** - The winning soccer team at the weekly picnic of the Winter Camp in which children from all different areas of Nablus gather for fun and games.

**Winter Camp** - A volunteer painted faces for the children at their weekly picnic during the Winter Camp.

**English** - Girls from an English class.

**French** - (1) French students raise their hands to answer a question in a class in Balata Camp, and (2) Students in Old Askar Camp rehearse for a French play, which they performed for their friends and family in December 2008.

**Bridge to the World** - Students work on their Blogs in Project Hope Office.

**Creative Arts** - Art Therapy classes at Dar Al Fonon in Old Askar Camp.

**Social Justice** - Picture from a social justice class.

**First Aid & Healthy Living** - Picture from a class from the program.

**Music** - An American volunteer teaches a drums class in New Askar Camp.

**Did you know?** - A view of Al Manarah Square in the Old City of Nablus.

## Social Justice Workshops

Project Hope continued with its Social Justice and Human Rights workshops in 2008. The goal of these workshops is to educate the students about their rights as children, citizens and human beings in a place where social justice is not always present. These workshops provide an open environment where Palestinian youth can discuss their many different views in each workshop. The program uses Amnesty International's Human Rights Guide for its curriculum.



## First Aid and Healthy Living

In November and December more than 700 adults at various centers in Nablus' Old City, Al-Far'a Refugee Camp, and more than 20 villages near Nablus were given Basic First Aid and Healthy Living Initiatives workshops. This included teaching CPR and the Recovery Position, checking blood pressure and blood sugar levels of anyone who wanted it and giving them appropriate medical advice. Two professional medical nurses from New York, a doctor from South Africa and an experienced French volunteer led the project with two Project Hope translators who have experience as paramedics.



In addition, a large donation of medicine was brought by the nurses and given to the municipality of Nablus for distribution.

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

## Music

Project Hope has staged a number of music activities over the years. They ranged recently from small activities such as a teaching kids how to play drums, a small guitar class for 5 students in February/March 2008 and at the beginning of 2009 guitar and piano lessons at the Nablus Culture Center.



A new music activity that began in November and December 2008 saw an Australian volunteer give classes in electronic music. He gave classes to the Blog students of Bridge to the World so that they could compose their own music to put in their Blogs. He also gave a class to Project Hope's local volunteers so that they may continue the program. Previous to his arrival in Nablus, this volunteer began a program on Facebook for people to donate laptops to give to Project Hope. He is working with Project Hope staff to find a way to send them to Nablus.

**Humanitarian Opportunities for Peace and Education is registered in the province of Ontario as a non-profit organization under the corporation number 1607819**

[Forward email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to projecthope@projecthope.ps by [projecthope@projecthope.ps](mailto:projecthope@projecthope.ps) | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Humanitarian Opportunities for Peace and Education | 110 Cumberland St, Suite 237 | Toronto | Ontario | M5R 3V5 | Canada