

Project Hope Newsletter



June 2009 Newsletter

Dear Project,

Greetings!

There is a spring tradition in the Arab countries called 'Shem Annaseem' (literally smell the breeze) during which families and friends take to the mountains and the countryside to picnic and take in the fresh air of spring in early May. This tradition was stopped in Palestine first by the armed conflict in the area and later by numerous Israeli settlements that limit Palestinian access to the countryside. Despite this, the spring here is still filled with greenery, flowers, kids flying kites and restlessness to get out of school to play. In accordance, Project Hope has introduced more creative arts activities to their programs to match the target children's 'spring fever'.

In the past 3 months, Project Hope also worked on fundraising and promoting awareness abroad through meetings and media. The Director and Executive Director made a tour of Canada and the US doing informational sessions and fund raising events. Recently, the Director traveled to Belgium and the Netherlands also for fundraising and promotion events. Locally, Russia Today news station did a piece on Project Hope aired in Arabic on local channels.

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Contact Us

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Beats for Palestine

http://www.rtarabic.com/news_all_features/28806/?video=1

English as a Second Language



Although the spring months are characterized by numerous testing periods and preparation for the upcoming Tawjihi examination (a comprehensive exam given for the students in their final year of highschool), Project Hope ran many English classes for children and adults in a number of different

centers. English conversation classes were continued in UN schools in the refugee camps and the city of Nablus as supplementary to their curriculum English classes. These were held either before or after school to accommodate the students' heavy homework load. In addition, basic English classes were given in a number of women's and neighborhood centers for housewives interested in improving their language skills. In another capacity, Project Hope provided English classes for beginner, intermediate and advanced students in the classrooms in its office. These classes ran on an intensive schedule and a large number of students were awarded certificates of completion in the past three months.

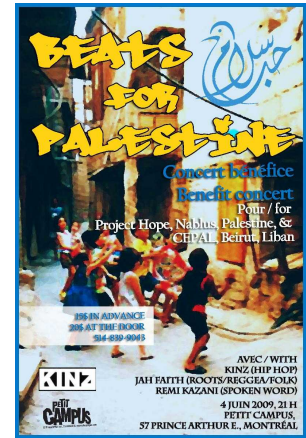
French as a Second Language



The French as a Second Language program has continued this spring and expanded to include more creative activities in their classes. The large majority of classes are given for children in the refugee camps and the old city of Nablus. However during

this period, a class was given for a group of women in Balata camp who were interested in learning French. A French theater course that was created in September 2008 and facilitated by international French volunteers will conclude with a performance by the theater students in Old Askar refugee camp for the opening of a neighborhood center's theater. It will be attended by the students' family, friends and neighbors as well as the Project Hope team and the Consul General of France. In the same center, an international volunteer screened a French cartoon film every two weeks with subtitles in Arabic. This volunteer is in the process of creating a documentary about the lives of the French students in their refugee camps. It will include interviews with the students, shots of their neighborhood and camps and visits to their families. The French Program staff and volunteers have worked hard in the late spring months to keep up the regular classes while the number of international teachers is low.

Bridge to the World



Join us for a Benefit Concert in Montreal, Canada, at the Petite Campus (57 Prince Arthur East) on Thursday June 4th at 9pm. Acts include Kinz (Hip Hop), Jahfaith (Roots/Reggae/Folk) and spoken word by Remi Kazani. Proceeds will go toward Project Hope and [CEPAL](#), for their ongoing work with Palestinians in the Middle East.

Donate



or send cheque or money order to:

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

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Bridge to the World is Project Hope's flagship program, combining elements of language learning, and computer and Internet learning, with the creative arts. While continuing with its English and French classes, we have significantly increased

the number of students learning to create their own blogs. A new initiative began in February with two French blog groups to partner with a group of Spanish children also learning French as a second language. This partnership provided the students with a direct connection to the world abroad with students who are at the same level in French. This initiative will be continued and expanded to include the English blog groups as well.

In addition to the facilitation of the regular classes, Project Hope staff is in the process of conducting a research study in cooperation with the Community Service Center in Nablus and a professor from Oxford University's Refugee Studies Center. This study will provide insight into how Project Hope's programs personally affect individual students and will be modified to serve as a tool of evaluation for the future. The study began in February with meetings with the participating students, their parents, local social worker students and Project Hope staff and volunteers. All participants were enthusiastic about the Bridge to the World program as well as the individual attention that this study will provide each student.

Social Justice Workshops



The Social Justice program is meant to empower Palestinian youth by learning about issues related to social justice and human rights. The beginning of 2009 saw a new initiative within the Social Justice program to give workshops for refugee students involved in their school governments. The curriculum for these classes combined human rights education with leadership and communication activities to give the students skills to aid them in the management of their student government. Another new initiative within the program was a photography class that concluded a 3-month course in Human Rights in New Askar refugee camp. The instructor combined basic photography instruction with discussions of how photography can be used as a tool to challenge human rights abuses and social injustices.

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Did you Know?

Nablus was included in the Hejaz Railway that connected Istanbul to Medina, in Saudi Arabia. Completed in 1908, the Hejaz was constructed to link the capital of the Ottoman Empire with the seat of the Islamic Caliphate and to facilitate Muslims' pilgrimage from the Levant to Mecca. The North-South railway included a branch line that ran East-West from Haifa to Amman, including the city of Nablus. Later, Palestine Railways was constructed during the British Mandate connecting Egypt and Lebanon to main population centers in Palestine. Currently there are no functioning railways in Palestine, although one of the Project Hope staff remembers walking along the old tracks as a child. They have since been removed to form a road connecting two Israeli settlements.



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

Murals/Art



Two international volunteers facilitated a mural project with students from the UN Nablus Girls School. They worked together to transfer the students' artwork to the walls of the school. The students did the majority of the drawing and painting

and the international and local volunteers supervised. The mural was created under the theme 'What is home to you?' and the students painted a bird in each panel to connect the scenes. An opening ceremony was held to celebrate the students work. The international facilitators were very proud of the students; their art skills, the way they interacted with each other in the spirit of team work and their maturity and creativity throughout the whole process.

An Icelandic volunteer facilitated an art class in April in which students created paper butterflies and then transferred them to a large paper to decorate one of the walls of their classrooms. This activity was carried out in UN Girls Schools in Balata and Nablus. To see photos of these activities, visit Project Hope's Flickr account:

www.flickr.com/photos/projecthope

In the spring months Project Hope has also provided a number of other creative arts and activity classes, including: Digital Storytelling, Yoga, Aerobics, Gymnastics, Sports Therapy, Drawing and Painting, Graphic Novels and dancing for children and adults.

Announcements



Project Hope's Activities Coordinator, Hiba, and a local volunteer, Tamer, returned from their six-month stay in Edinburgh, Scotland where they were hosted under the European Voluntary Service program through the University of Edinburgh "[Community Link](#)" program. They had a rewarding experience working with [Stepping Stones](#), a community based project offering a weekly programme of arts, educational and social activities, and an art therapy service. People who come to Stepping Stones are coping with severe and/or enduring mental health problems.

The final months of their stay were spent organizing and preparing for the Palestinian Cultural Festival which took place over 3 days and included discussion panels, music, food, films, theater and dance.

We are also pleased to announce that our first "Bridge to Palestine" fundraiser was a success in Toronto on February 22nd, with well over

ZAYTOUN

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Make a Difference in a Palestinian Child's Life



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

Description of Pictures

Header - Girls drawing butterflies in an English class

English - an American volunteer teaching English at the Project Hope office

French - a French language play from the French class

Bridge to the World - Blog classes at the Project Hope office

Social Justice - a Social Justice Workshop in the Balata Refugee Camp

Murals/Art - a Canadian volunteer helps her students paint a mural on the walls of their UN school in Nablus

Announcements - fliers for the Palestinian Cultural Festival in Edinburgh,

200 guests attending what turned out to be an excellent spectacle of Arabic and Middle Eastern music and culture. Meanwhile, a former Project Hope volunteer attending Penn State University organized an excellent pair of well-attended awareness events and fundraiser called "Beyond the Wall: Celebrating the Children of Palestine," for which Zatoun and Project Hope were primary guests along with Remi Kazani, the editor of [Poets for Palestine](#).

The coordinator of Project Hope's Social Justice and Human Rights Workshops Program, Hassan, was invited to participate in the 2009 International Human Rights Training Program hosted by Equitas - International Centre for Human Rights Education in Montreal, Canada. Hassan will participate in 3 weeks of intensive human rights training where he will be able to share his experiences as well as gain more knowledge of the field and more skills for teaching human rights.

During the spring months Project Hope hosted many international student groups in Nablus, providing them with an informational session about Project Hope's classes and activities as well as a tour of the Old City.

Thanks for Your Support,

The Project Hope Team!

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