



Seasons OF HOPE

*Empowering
Young People As
Leaders of Change*

2018

ANNUAL REPORT

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OUR MISSION

Empowering young Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans to raise their voices as leaders of change.

HOPE BEGINS Here



Completing our 16th Summer Program in Chicago and our 5th Summer Program in San Diego, Hands of Peace has empowered over 600 alumni to raise their voices as leaders of change. Not all of these young leaders are working in conflict resolution, but they are all using the experiences that shaped them during their time with Hands of Peace. The foundation that is created during dialogue follows them throughout their lives – in their careers, their personal outlooks and their journeys into adulthood and beyond.

As a community, we first see the Summer Program and the connections that develop during those magical 19 days in July, but it is as important to look at all of the work that surrounds the core program.

Just as impactful is the preparation leading up to the Summer Program, as well as the follow up and mentoring and alumni workshops afterwards. The humanizing of the “other,” the deep and often challenging conversations that need to continue, the sense of identity that is developed — all of that begins during those 19 days.

Throughout this 2018 Annual Report, you will meet alumni who have been forever changed by their experiences with Hands of Peace. Hands of Peace was formed in the Chicago area in the aftermath of 9/11 — bringing together Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities to support dialogue between Israeli, Palestinian and American youth. Now, we work with communities of all faiths as well as secular organizations and individuals in the United States and the Middle East to advance freedom, equality, and justice for all, and to offer continuing learning and service opportunities for all of our alumni.

As an example, based on feedback from older alumni, in 2018 we started a series of skills training workshops with EcoPeace Middle East. EcoPeace focuses on environmental diplomacy, working to bring attention to natural resources that are shared by Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian villages. The EcoPeace program was designed as a “collective impact” project for older alumni from Hands of Peace to receive training on environmental diplomacy and develop their own small group projects to benefit their communities.

For American Alumni, there are multiple opportunities to get involved, including the new American Alumni Seminars that happen simultaneously in Chicago and San Diego, bringing together youth from prior summers for engagement, community projects, and connection. San Diego is piloting the new “Raising Youth Voices” program, an opportunity to participate in a facilitation training course developed to equip teens with the skills to organize and lead peer-to-peer dialogues. You are making it possible to continually develop new programming to keep our alumni engaged and involved.



With your support, Hands of Peace alumni are changing community conversations. They are stepping up to pursue peace where they live. They are creating HOPE!

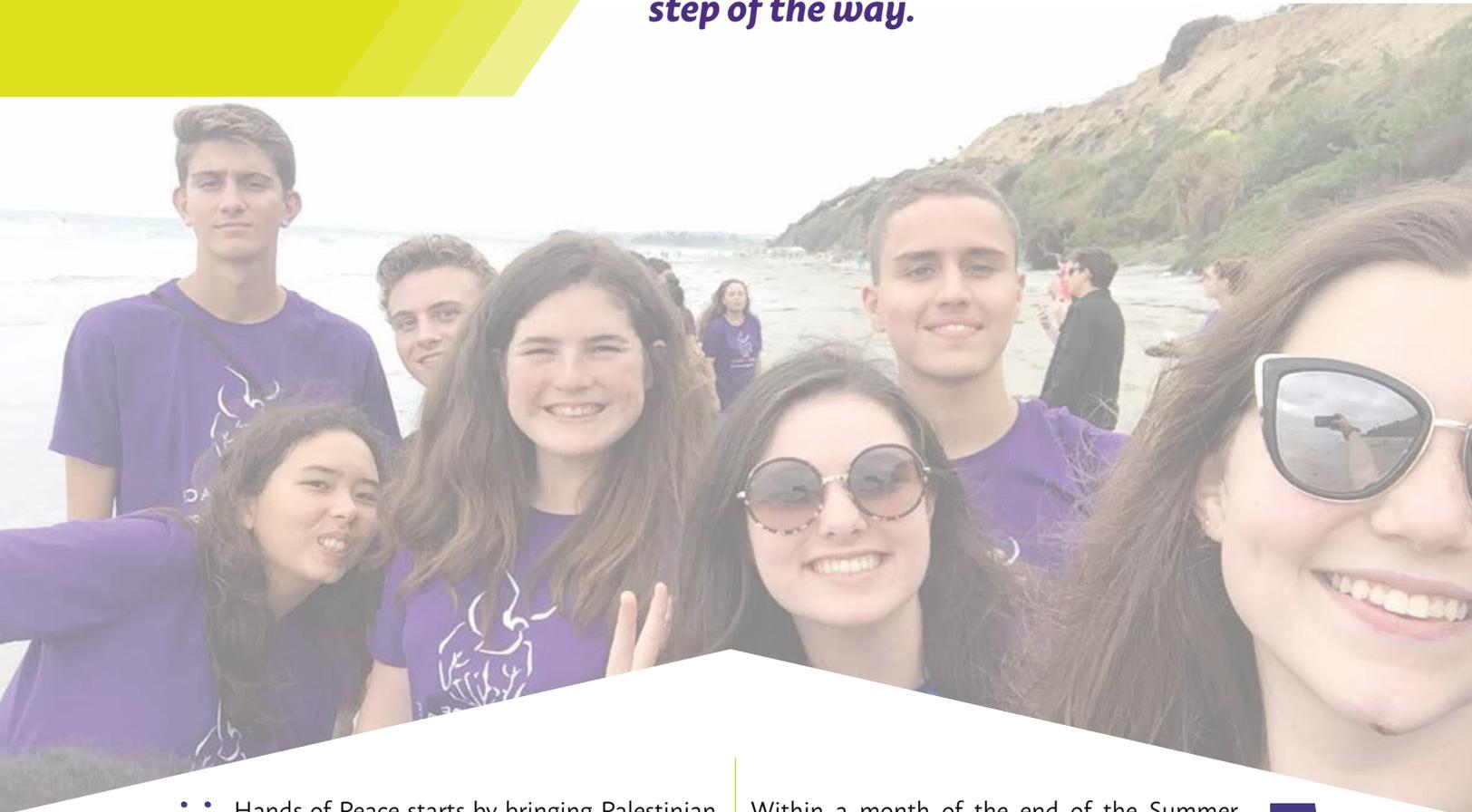


Peace, Shalom, Salaam,

**Rick Rosenfeld,
Executive Director**

HOPE GROWS Step by Step

Hands of Peace offers a 6-Phase process that takes participants from their entry into the Summer Program through adulthood, with the programming supporting them every step of the way.



PHASE 1:

Hands of Peace starts by bringing Palestinian, Israeli and American youth together for 19 days of dialogue, trust building activities, and leadership development. Participants move outside of their comfort zone and are transformed by opportunities to meet “the other” for the first time. Summer Programs take place simultaneously in San Diego and Chicago, with almost 100 youth challenged each year in daily structured dialogue sessions to explore the conflict, gain exposure to each others’ narratives, share personal stories, and begin the journey towards peace, equality, freedom and justice.

“Hands of Peace gave me the opportunity to see people the way they wanted to be seen. Hearing what it’s like to go through checkpoints or waking up in the middle of the night to rocket sirens gave me a glimpse into what it is like to live in the conflict. Instead of seeing my peers as their preconceived stereotypes, I was able to understand them through their own stories and experiences. I was also better able to understand myself.”

— PARKER, American, Hand 2018

“Hands of Peace taught me that I have a voice and it must be heard.”

— ZENA, Palestinian

Within a month of the end of the Summer Program, participants come together to begin Phase 2, discussing the issues of re-entering their daily lives with their newly formed perspectives. How do they share this experience with family, friends, schools, and communities? This is particularly challenging for the Israeli and Palestinian alumni, who return home to the conflict and see the reality on the ground with a new lens.

PHASE 2:

“After going through the program, I realized the stark difference between debating and discussing. I learned how enriched one can become if we are willing to actively listen and openly communicate with each other. Ever since Hands of Peace, my conversations finally have substance, and are not merely wasted arguments.”

— NABAA, American, Hand 2017/XL 2018



“The bonds created here are authentic and challenge you.”

— DIMA, Palestinian Citizen of Israel

PHASE 3:

Returning to the Summer Program for a second year, Phase 3 offers the opportunity for a committed group of participants to continue developing their leadership skills, this time as mentors and role models for the first-year participants. Being what is called an XL (Extraordinary Leader) gives them the chance to deepen dialogue skills, develop media and speaking skills, and learn how to turn dialogue into action.

“I used this training for several activities, ranging in scope but focused around leveraging my experiences to effect meaningful change in a community. I joined a gun violence prevention group called Team Enough, focusing on community-based initiatives to reduce violence, promote national cooperation, and create a local dialogue on the issue.” — JAKE, American Hand 2017/XL 2018

PHASE 4:

Connecting alumni together for workshops and continuing dialogue is Phase 4 of the Hands of Peace cycle. The three Hands of Peace Regional Managers in the Middle East bring together Israelis and Palestinians in the region to ensure that face-to-face discussions continue, overcoming challenges of working across the Green Line. Middle East alumni come together for three overnight seminars per year in Israel or the West Bank. American alumni connect in two-day seminars that provide the opportunity for all alumni to continue to work towards peace, equality, freedom and justice.

“I have worked on translating the skills that Hands of Peace taught me into my community. This new lens is one of breaking down the mindset of “other-ing” and surpasses sympathy and makes leaps toward empathy. — ELIZA, American Hand 2018

For American alumni, Phase 5 revolves around college campus partnerships with other leading youth organizations, so alumni can continue to engage with conflict resolution, leadership development and community service. For our alumni in the Middle East, the years that follow high school represent a transition period when it is difficult to remain in touch across delegations. During this phase, Hands of Peace creates opportunities for alumni to focus on uni-national projects.

“For me Phase 5 meant continuing down the path that Hands of Peace started me on, and deepening my relationship with the region by studying abroad in Beer Sheva, Israel. I spent the year immersing myself in Hebrew and Arabic and rooting myself in the community by volunteering at a local bilingual Hebrew-Arabic school. Seeing the deep divisions across the country and the wide-ranging impact of the conflict on people’s lives strengthened my belief in the life-changing work that Hands of Peace does.”— RYAN, American Hand 2012/XL 2013



Hands of Peace encourages older alumni to stay connected and involved as they work both within and across societies to build a more inclusive, just and peaceful society. As alumni move into careers, Hands of Peace stays with them and is often credited as being a crucial moment in their lives, where they begin to identify as “life before Hands of Peace and life after.”

PHASE 5:

PHASE 6:





ZINAT

NOAM

HOPE Thrives

Noam:

“With my own two hands, I could make a real change.”

A 2011 Hands of Peace participant, Jewish-Israeli **NOAM PREMINGER** was always very involved in politics and curious about the conflict.

Noam was born and raised in a small village in the north of Israel, in an area that has a 50% Arab population. The closest Arab village is one mile from his home. Six miles to the south is the Green Line, beyond which live 2.5 million Palestinians. Six miles to the east is the border with Jordan. Despite this, until he was 15 and came to Hands of Peace, Noam did not know any Arabs.

Even though they live very close, an infinite number of virtual and physical barriers separate them. They live in different villages, go to different schools and mostly work separately. They speak different languages. Almost the only time they meet is in the markets. He never hated his neighbors, but they were complete strangers.

At Hands of Peace, for the first time, Noam heard stories firsthand from people living in different circumstances. Stories from Israelis who were living with missiles from Gaza. And stories from Palestinians who were living under occupation and suffering every day the lack of freedom. For him, it was impossible to stay indifferent when the people suffering were his new Israeli and Palestinian friends.

Noam served his military duty on a Navy ship. Communication tools he learned through Hands of Peace were often the key to approaching his colleagues. He gained the trust of his shipmates and his commanders, so he had more influence than he ever thought possible.

The peak of his service was getting the opportunity to be in charge of education for the entire ship. He planned a 4-day trip to Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Jerusalem for the entire crew — 60 soldiers, including officers and commanders — to learn about Israeli society, its conflicts and the people doing good in it. They talked about inequality, the LGBT community, African refugees, and activism. They met different people who have dedicated their lives to making the world better. And for Noam, seeing some of his friends caring about serious conflicts in their society for the first time was incredible. As he says, **“With my own two hands, I could make a real change.”**

Noam sees Hands of Peace alumni becoming a great power. **“They are the most diverse, educated and dedicated group of young people I know,”** he says. He is constantly seeking opportunities to reach over the barriers to his Palestinian partners and act together, with full confidence that he will always have a hand reaching out from the other side. Noam knows that **“Hands of Peace will make a difference by bringing people together, by facing the harsh reality and being an island of sanity, by changing one person at a time.”**

ZINAT KABBANI, MD, a 2009 Hands of Peace participant who is now a doctor, believes that Hands of Peace was a starting point for the last 10 years of her life, and taught her how to connect with others in a place of conflict and crisis.

During Hands of Peace, Zinat Kabbani started to explore how she wanted to define herself. **“For the Palestinian Citizens of Israel, we were stuck in the middle. Seeing other people having an easier time explaining their identity — I am a Palestinian, he is an Israeli — made it more difficult.”** As Zinat says, **“I live in Israel, but I am Palestinian.”**

During the summer of Hands of Peace, Zinat learned that it is possible to sit across from someone who is different, who thinks and believes differently, and not only ask hard questions, but hear hard questions as well. **“It provides the space to do that,”** Zinat found, **“and to push me outside of my comfort zone.”**

Zinat talks about feeling caught in the middle and the need to make one side understand the other, because she lived with both sides. Sometimes she couldn't speak about what she wanted or needed but was trying to make both sides understand each other. She felt responsible to listen to both.

Although she feels different, she also carried certain expectations, a feeling that things should be done a certain way — **“what you think, how you think, what you say and how it's said.”** There are expectations coming from all directions. The Israeli community that she lives in and interacts with on a daily basis has expectations of her as a citizen of the country, while Palestinians expect her, as a Palestinian who still lives on Palestinian land, to not accept interacting with Jewish Israelis. For Zinat, it is even harder because her mother is from Jerusalem and part of her mother's family lives in the West Bank. There are complications from all sides.

Zinat:

“Being part of Hands of Peace and getting to sit down and talk about these issues and trigger these emotions and complications helped me do this.”

10 years after Hands of Peace, she can look back on her journey, and realize that it wouldn't have been possible to search for her identity this way if it weren't for Hands of Peace. **“I look at my patients and they are from different backgrounds, different identities, different religions, speak different languages, some that I don't even understand,”** she explains, **“but then for me they're not different at all, they're all my patients and to help them go through whatever they're dealing with right now is my responsibility.”**

And it is this feeling that was worth all the times I was afraid to reach out, and to finally be able to connect with people around me without canceling anyone's identity, my own or the other.”

MOHAMMED ATIRA is an engineering graduate from An-Najah National University in Nablus. He participated in Hands of Peace in 2011 and again in 2012 as an XL. In 2017, Mohammed returned to Chicago as the Palestinian chaperone to spread the knowledge and the experience that he gained during his Hands of Peace years to the next generation.

Raised in Nablus, one of the West Bank's major cities, Mohammed says he did not know much about the conflict or politics in general. He was raised in a big well-known politically-involved family — some of his extended family were in prison and some were killed due to the conflict. But he chose a different path — a non-violent path. After his Hands of Peace Summer Program, he was more courageous and learned how to find his own voice.

While Mohammed had changed, he realized that the reality at home had not. He still had to go through checkpoints. The separation wall was still there. At night, he still heard Israeli soldiers on the streets of his hometown.

During the first alumni seminar, Mohammed had a chance to share his feelings with other alumni. He felt that he was responsible to change the situation from the Palestinian side, and it was his job to engage in conversations with others about Hands of Peace.

“It is not only about ‘peace,’ he says. ‘If we could achieve peace, it will be a major success. If not, then we can still try to make a difference in this world.”

Mohammed:

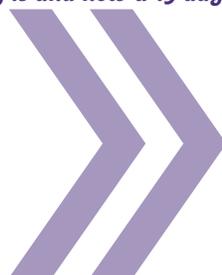
If we also could not, then we can make some difference in some people's life and open up their minds. If we also could not, then we can change ourselves.”

The next year, Mohammed returned to Chicago as an XL. He was more mature and ready to be a role model to the first-year participants. He saw the XLs as an important connection between the participants and the chaperones, helping the younger participants adjust to the program and giving a hand to the chaperones whenever needed. This was the beginning of his desire to be a mediator.

When the program ended again, Mohammed felt that his work with Hands of Peace was done, but he realized he was wrong. He discovered that the work had not even started yet! He believes that Hands of Peace is more than a one-message program.

Toward that goal, Mohammed is always present at alumni seminars and, in 2017, returned to Chicago as a chaperone. This time, he had to be the one who was giving the answers instead of asking the questions, the one supporting participants if they had a break down instead of being that participant.

Mohammed knows how challenging that is but, on the last day, when Mohammed sees the participants crying, holding hands from the bus and running behind the bus just to say a last time farewell, he says **“it reaffirms for me how impactful Hands of Peace truly is and how a 19 day program can change someone!”**



MAOR

MOHAMMED

MAOR YEHIEL started his journey with Hands of Peace 12 years ago in Chicago and has continued his engagement throughout the years. In 2018, he returned to Chicago as the Jewish-Israeli Summer Program chaperone.

Maor's first real encounter with the conflict was March 5th, 2003. The Haifa Bus 37 suicide bombing had just occurred and, as he was watching the evening news, he saw that his best friend's sister was killed in the attack. He was 14 years old.

Coming from a politically-conservative family, over the years he overheard conversations. **“I understood that people were afraid, and fingers were pointed towards ‘the only guilty side,’”** he says. Coming to Hands of Peace a few years later, he was sure he was going to show everyone how much the Jewish Israelis were suffering and how this whole thing was the other side's fault.

During the dialogue in the Summer Program, Maor heard information that he had never heard before, but he couldn't argue.

He began to break down socially-constructed barriers that he was taught from the time he was born. But he also understood that, no matter what, everyone sees the conflict differently. And it isn't a competition of who suffers more. **“A woman suffering, crying over her lost son is equal on both sides,”** Maor says. **“The tears are real, the broken heart and lack of desire to keep on with your life is there and its mutual for them. And nothing is going to change if both sides keep blaming each other”**

Wanting to change the world, he came back from Hands of Peace realizing how much he had changed. Hands of Peace gave him confidence, taught him how to be a better listener and to read between the lines of emotion to what people really care about. But most importantly, he wasn't afraid to express his opinions — even if he was the only person in the room who believed in them.

*“I learned that knowledge is power, power is a responsibility, and **once you know you cannot ignore.”***

One of the strongest and most significant moments for Maor in the Summer Program was when he was asked to pick a Palestinian partner, look into each other's eyes and feel each other's heartbeat. **“I stood in front of a Palestinian, staring, embarrassed, and wondering what's so special about feeling the heartbeat,”** Maor remembers. **“What is so different?”**

And that's when he realized — it's not different. It's the same. He realized that power lies in the willingness and ability to listen and connect with the other side. **“Hands of Peace gave me the power to believe that the real choice is to either be ‘pro solution’ or against it. And I choose a solution!”**

These alumni were featured speakers during our 2019 Benefits. To read full transcripts of their speeches, visit www.handsofpeace.org/2019-speakers

Maor:



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Thank you for believing in the leadership of the next generation.

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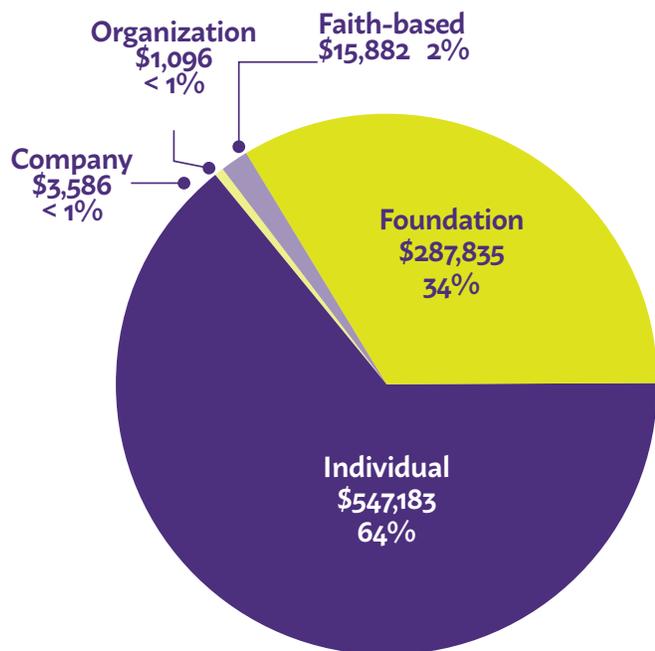
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“Though it was hard, we were able to **truly see one another.**”

— OFRI, Jewish Israeli

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Peace Legacy Circle members have made a commitment to building peace into the future through planned giving. And the Circle is growing!

For more information go to handsofpeace.org/planned-giving.

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* Donors that have also generously contributed In Kind Donations

All cash donations can be viewed on our website. This report lists cash donations \$500 and over that were received 10/1/17 - 9/30/18. Donations received after that will be reflected in our 2019 annual report.

We value all of our donors. Please contact us if you would like to be recognized differently.

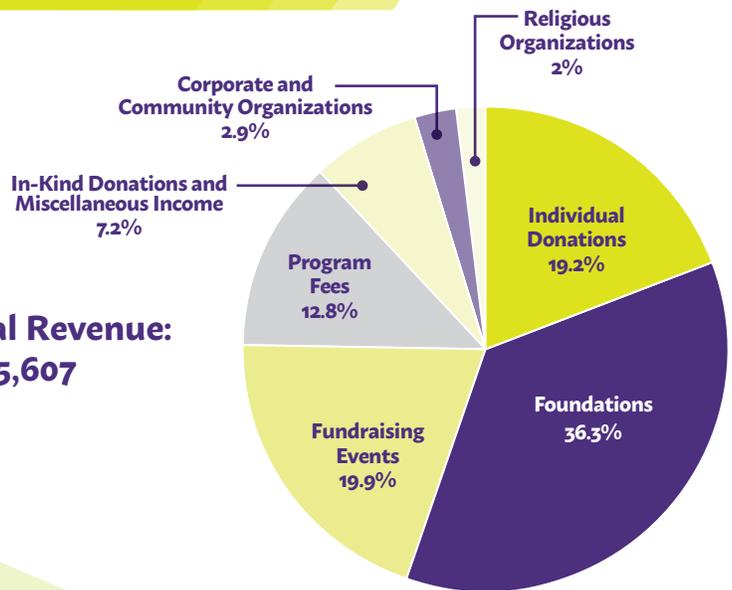


INCREASING HOPE: Financial Highlights

REVENUES

Individual Donations.....	\$189,039
Foundations.....	\$357,496
Fundraising Events.....	\$195,903
Program Fees.....	\$126,270
In-Kind Donations and Miscellaneous Income.....	\$71,225
Corporate and Community Organizations.....	\$28,981
Religious Organizations.....	\$16,693

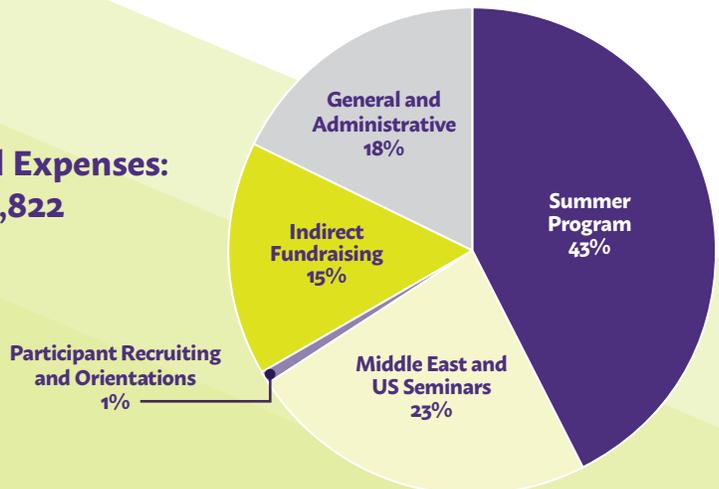
**Total Revenue:
\$985,607**



EXPENSES

Summer Program.....	\$423,004
Middle East and US Seminars.....	\$232,161
Participant Recruiting and Orientations.....	\$9,444
Indirect Fundraising.....	\$154,235
General and Administrative.....	\$173,978

**Total Expenses:
\$992,822**





“Hands of Peace will **change the world** because we want to change the world” — HOTHIFA, Palestinian



IMPACT RESEARCH:

After the Summer Program, research shows **statistically significant positive shifts** in attitudes and beliefs by Palestinians and Israelis

Belief

Belief in right of the other group to live in peace and security

Dialogue

Willingness to converse with those holding strong opposing views

Action

Plan to take concrete action to build peace between Israelis and Palestinians





THE JOURNEY Continues:

SHARE information about the Summer Program with teens you know who might be interested in learning more about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, peacebuilding and leadership.

HOST a Summer Program participant or facilitator from the Middle East in your home for three weeks and form relationships that last a lifetime.

LEARN more about conflict resolution, justice, human rights and peacebuilding by attending HOPEducation community events.

VOLUNTEER on a Hands of Peace committee to find host families, provide meals, design community education programs or create inspiring fundraising events. Meet wonderful people working to make peace possible.

TRAVEL to Israel/Palestine on a Multi-Narrative Tour to learn more through firsthand experience, discussions with Hands of Peace alumni and visits to historic sites.

SPONSOR a Summer Program participant or alumni seminar, underwrite events or fund new initiatives. By donating or making a planned gift to Hands of Peace, you are building a path to peace.



**HANDS OF
PEACE**

1000 Elm Street • Glenview, IL 60025
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