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Hello Friend,

Today, International Day of Peace, is my first day as Executive Director at Hands of Peace. Every Sept. 21, people around the world celebrate Peace Day as a day to cease hostilities, recognize peacebuilders, remember those lost to conflict, and reset our intentions to shape peace together.

Celebrating Alumni

One of my first goals as Executive Director is to get to know the Hands of Peace family, beginning with the alumni who have made a commitment to advocate for freedom, equality, and justice in their communities and in the world. To our alumni, you have made a courageous choice, often in the face of resistance from your community and even sometimes close friends and family. You have wrestled with the past so you can imagine a better future. Today, we celebrate you and everyone who has helped you on this journey.

Solidarity with our Community

Each of our alumni has a story, and we want to help them mold that narrative going forward into one of powerful personal agency within a thriving network of peacebuilders. The alumni are supported by Hands of Peace staff, host families, volunteers, supporters, and interfaith partners. As we face common challenges such as coronavirus, climate change, and violence, we have an opportunity to come together to empower these young leaders.

Below are some of those stories of the ways in which alumni are learning, serving, and creating change. They are building positive peace, which is much more than the absence of conflict. We'll be sharing more stories throughout the year, along with new ways we can develop youth leaders as we Reimagine Hands of Peace.

Hope for the Future

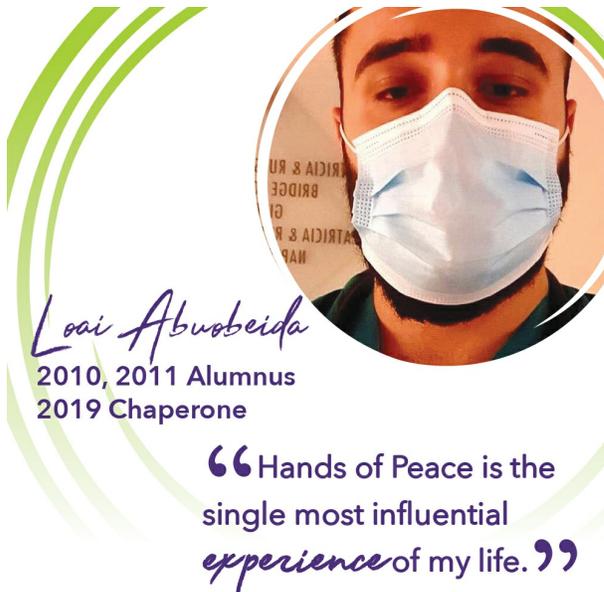
None of us know what the coming year will bring before the next Peace Day. As we plan 2021 Summer Programs in Chicago and San Diego, we will also be designing ways to deliver our curriculum virtually to adjust to realities on the ground. Either way, Hands of Peace is standing in solidarity with our youth. As alumnus Uri Shani sings in the Hands of Peace song (make sure to listen to his performance below), "We are people, from different nations. Together we can fill the world with hope."

With peace and gratitude,



Scott Rasmussen
Executive Director
Hands of Peace

Support Youth Peacebuilders - First \$10,000 will be matched!



Loai graduated from Kasr Al-Ainy Medical School and is serving his first-year internship during the pandemic at a hospital in Jerusalem. His experience in Hands of Peace bolstered the courage and resilience he demonstrates every day. It was his sister, also an alumna and a doctor, who encouraged him to take part in the program.

Even as he was completing his medical studies, Loai made time to return to Hands of

Peace as a chaperone for the Palestinian delegation so he could help younger Hands get the most from their experience.

Stav participated in the first Summer Program in Chicago almost 20 years ago. Stav's passion for the environment motivated her to create

Plastics Free Israel, a grassroots organization that promotes a zero-waste economy and more public action. A microplastics researcher, Stav lives in London, creating solutions for better air quality with Clean Air Villages. Stav, who holds dual American and Israeli citizenship and speaks four languages fluently, is also pursuing a Master of Science degree in Climate Change at King's College.



Stav Friedman
2003 Alumna

“I learned to *listen* to others. We should never assume we know how someone feels and what they've had to endure in life.”

Become a Peace Partner

Hands of Peace is a grassroots organization that receives little government and corporate funding. Recurring monthly gifts provide predictable income for the Hands of Peace program and cut fundraising costs, plus you don't need to think about renewing your support each year.

Peace Partners



“We are proud to share our home with our amazing participants and it is our *great joy* to love them individually for who they are and their courage to come explore and meet the other side.”

The Reese family's first experience as a Hands of Peace host family was in 2014. The Gaza War began just after the arrival of the Summer Program participants. Says Kathy Reese, "We had no idea how important sharing our home and providing a safe nurturing environment would be for our participant and their family back home."

The Reese family has joyfully hosted nine "daughters" from the Middle East. And when Kathy joined the Hands of Peace Board, they decided to become sustaining monthly donors to support the transformative experience her family had seen up close.

Engaged Global Citizens

Courageous youth are answering our call to become engaged global citizens. You can answer that call today with a donation. Join other sustaining Peace Partners, like the Reese Family, with a [monthly gift](#), [make a one-time gift](#), or request a gift from a Donor-Advised fund.

Give today -- **the first \$10,000 will be matched**. Go to handsofpeace.org/peaceday or contact Diana Kutlow at dkutlow@handsofpeace.org, (760) 492-1623 if you would like more information about bequests, making Hands of Peace your life insurance or IRA beneficiary, or other types of planned giving.

Hands of Peace is a 501(c)3 exempt organization, EIN #59-3806403.

CELEBRATE PEACE DAY WITH THE HANDS OF PEACE SONG



Celebrate International Peace Day and sing along with alumnus Uri Shani - music written by Tracy Friend, with lyrics written and rewritten by Hands of Peace participants over the years.

Hands of Peace | (224) 406-5045 | info@handsofpeace.org | www.handsofpeace.org

Connect with Hands of Peace

