



Hello,

Months ago, as we planned Hands of Peace Benefit Week, we were thrilled to gather story after story from young alumni about their Hands of Peace journey. But the outbreak of violence in the Middle East drew our urgent attention. Humanizing “the other” is at the core of our work with young Americans, Israelis, and Palestinians. No conflict - in our homes, our communities, or between peoples and nations - can end until we see each other in all our pain and glory as human beings.

Gratitude

This is the work that your support makes possible. Through the generosity of sponsors and donors, and matching gifts from our Board, our friends in Naples, Florida, and two anonymous donors in San Diego, the Hands of Peace community raised \$150,000 through the Benefit to meet the growing needs of our 670 alumni.

Standing in Solidarity

We will have the opportunity to share alumni stories later. Instead, by cancelling the Benefit, we were able to focus on supporting our alumni. And, hopefully, help you gain a deeper understanding of the dire situation they face. These are the young people you’ve met, hosted, and supported over the years. What they need now is to know that we see and hear them in what is a terrifying and devastating time.

Your Support Matters

Your financial and moral support lift our alumni. We’ve heard back from many - including those who were eager to reconnect during the Benefit - that they deeply appreciate the messages of individual care and concern coming from the Hands of Peace community.

Alumni Actions

Some of the alumni are using their Hands of Peace experience to lead. They are participating in marches and protests. They are sharing their stories on social media. They are calling for others to join them in addressing the imbalance of power, equality and freedom between Israelis and Palestinians. Some are sharing their goal of ending the occupation, offering a path out of the cycle of

violence. They are reaching out to each other to check-in, listen, and hold each other up as they continue the courageous work of peacebuilding.

Our alumni are also feeling grief at the loss of life, fear of attacks based on their identity or location, anger at their political leadership, and doubt about their ability to create change. We are hosting uninational conversations for alumni to share what they are seeing and feeling and to discuss what actions they can take. In the coming weeks, we plan to hold cross-delegation meetings, to offer a space for alumni to reconnect with others from their program year whom they know and trust.

Looking at the Future

We all have work ahead, with an unwavering commitment to the belief that the future depends on the leadership, education and actions of the next generation. If this conflict has taught us anything, it is that peace cannot be separated from justice. We are working with you and our alumni to create positive peace that goes beyond the absence of violence to build constructive attitudes and systems that foster equality, freedom and justice, with security and safety for all.

Learn More

Join me and panelists Aziz Abu Sarah and Gershon Baskin on Sunday, May 23 at 1:00 pm CT/11 am PT to learn more about what's happening in Israel/Palestine and what happens next.

[Register here for login information](#). Hands of Peace is here to serve as your hub for intercultural exchange and education. Action begins with knowledge.

Peace, Salaam, Shalom,



Hands of Peace
Executive Director

P.S. Thank you to the hundreds of people who walked for peace during Benefit Week! [See photos here](#).

Donate to Empower Youth

