

UK Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum (FBFF)

Newsletter 27

October 2012



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the October issue of the FBFF newsletter. This edition contains thoughts and feedback from some of our supporters as well as messages from Palestinian Ali Abu Awwad, one of the members of Leading Leaders for Peace, and Israeli Robi Damelin.

We hope that our Muslim friends had a meaningful Ramadan and an enjoyable Eid and our Jewish friends a happy new year.

We report on a new, creative fundraising initiative from one of our supporters and hope that others will follow her lead. We visit interfaith groups around the UK, showing one of the forum's films, giving talks and facilitating discussions about the work of the bereaved Palestinian and Israeli families working for peace and reconciliation. We are happy to accept bookings so do let us know if you are interested in a visit.

We are preparing for a November visit of two of our speakers. We are organising a series of film screenings of the new documentary *Two-Sided Story* in different parts of the country and will supply more details of times, dates and venues in the next edition of the newsletter.

Diane Taylor

FBFF Manager

NARRATIVE PROJECT GETS THUMBS-UP



A still from the film *Two-Sided Story*

The PCFF's Narrative Project has been given the thumbs-up after an evaluation by independent Israeli and Palestinian assessors.

The project involved Israelis and Palestinians working together on a programme which included talks on the national-historic narrative of both sides to the conflict; field trips to sites of collective memory and pain; facilitated dialogue and sharing of personal stories.

The 11 groups typically met four times for weekend workshops, in addition to several meetings before and after the weekends, in order to establish relationships, build trust and promote in-depth work. Discussions were facilitated by an Israeli-Palestinian team from the PCFF.

A total of 314 Palestinians and Israelis from a variety of different backgrounds took part in the programme between October 2010 and June 2012.

According to the assessors the participants developed the ability and willingness to hear and be

heard, along with the ability to conduct debates on difficult issues while respecting contradictory opinions.

The project increased participants' belief in the possibility of dialogue and reconciliation and motivated them to seek active involvement in peace-building.

Palestinian participants expressed their appreciation of the chance to talk freely and directly to people from the other side, to state their case. Many valued the opportunity to meet as human beings, to experience their own humanity and to tell their story.

Many Israeli participants appreciated the opportunity to conduct dialogue in the midst of conflict, to deal genuinely with issues, and to share points of difficulty,

Seventy-one per cent from both sides reported that participation in the programme improved their level of trust and empathy for the other side.

INTERFAITH MEETINGS BOOSTING SUPPORT

Diane Taylor, our Manager, has been delighted to accept invitations from various interfaith groups to visit and raise awareness about the frontline work of Israelis and Palestinians bereaved by the conflict who work together for peace and reconciliation, as well as to talk about the work of FBFF in the UK.

Diane has recently visited Hastings, Winchester, and Bradford-on-Avon. Next on her list is Shropshire.

Everyone has been wonderfully welcoming and group members have kindly made donations to the work of the forum.

Usually she shows a short film followed by a talk about the work of the forum and then the meeting is opened up for questions and discussion.

If any other interfaith groups are interested in hosting a meeting, please get in touch: email info@familiesforum.co.uk

SUPPORTER'S POEM FOR PEACE

A Canadian supporter, Bob Hicks, has written the following poem about peace.

'I know that art can help to deliver an important message because it can bring out that which cannot be seen or felt or expressed easily and it can encourage and help people to look a little closer at the subject put before them. Art and artists can help awaken us to new perspectives to see things we might not otherwise see,' he says.

the peace messenger says	to satisfy the worlds hunger for peace
there is as much hunger for peace in this world	we must feed ourselves with good judgment,
as there is for bread.	
war starves us all.	we must feed our governments with good advice,
there is as much love in the home of your enemy	and we must feed all others with tolerance, goodwill, compassion and respect.
as there is in your own.	
love unites us all.	we must make our voices more powerful
there is as much need for understanding	than the most powerful weapon on earth.
in this world as there is for forgiveness.	
reconciliation can save us all.	we must and we can make peace now!

◆ Here is a link to a blog from Lisa, another supporter. Her blog is linked to the PCFF website. Thank you for highlighting these important issues of peace and reconciliation, Lisa.

www.birdsontheblog.co.uk/shalom-and-salaam-getting-on-the-peace-train/

NEW DOCUMENTARY AT JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

We're in the process of confirming an exciting programme of events for the visit of Parents Circle Families Forum members Robi Damelin and Mazen Faraj from 17th-25th November. Here are some dates for your diary.

Don't miss a new documentary featuring forum member Robi Damelin called *One Day After Peace*. It traces the personal journey of South African-born Robi, and looks at whether the peace and reconciliation process in South Africa at the end of Apartheid could be applied to the Israeli/Palestinian situation.

The film will premiere at the Jewish Film Festival on **Sunday, 18th 2.00pm** at 10.00am at the Everyman Cinema, Hampstead. For more information and to book tickets please visit the Jewish Film Festival website:

<http://ukjewishfilm.org/festival-2012>

We will also be screening *Two-Sided Story* at an event at Regents College on **Tuesday, 20th November** at 6.30pm. Let us know if you would like more information about this event: www.regents.ac.uk/contact/how_to_find_us.aspx

Two-Sided Story will be screened again on **Thursday 22nd November** at University College London, hosted by the Islamic Society. Contact us for more information.

UK RABBIS URGED TO PREACH RECONCILIATION

In the run-up to the Jewish High Holydays, Robi Damelin, PCFF's foreign representative, appealed to rabbis in the UK to incorporate a message of peace and reconciliation into their sermons.

The forum's long-term vision was to have a framework for reconciliation in place when political agreements were reached, Robi told them. The forum aimed to imbue both sides with a sense of empathy rather than revenge.

'Through our activities and outreach, we reaffirm the sanctity of life and the need to safeguard human dignity and freedom,' she said.

Please support our work by signing a standing order (last page). Or click here to make an on-line donation:



PEACE CAMPAIGNERS PUSH LEADERS TO GIVE A LEAD

A group of Palestinian and Israeli peace campaigners have written an open letter to the Palestinian President and the Israeli Prime Minister demanding that they show leadership in finding a solution to the intractable Middle East conflict. The group, who call themselves Leading Leaders for Peace, say:

We, Palestinians and Israelis, are both writing this to you with the strongest and most sincere request that you meet, sit together and talk with your Palestinian/Israeli counterpart until you reach a solution to the conflict here.

We believe that a solution to the conflict is a strategic, economic, moral, and vital to the defense, survival, and humanity of both people.

We strongly believe that we, Israelis and Palestinians, can become a model for the rest of the world and become a bridge between the Middle East and the West. The human race shares and faces many common challenges and the time has come that you lead us to a more responsible, moral, cultural and secure future.

Our joint movement calls you to sit together for direct negotiations to bring about a solution. We do not minimise your responsibility to determine the details of the agreement in a way that will serve your people.

We would like to make clear that we will fully uphold and direct your efforts to work toward a better future that will serve our joint interests.

We act out of support and not out of protest. Until a solution is achieved we aim to continue and help you and every other elected leader in this effort.

Our actions are completely non-violent and we seek to avoid inflated situations of friction and violence.

Our support does not represent any new initiative for a solution to the conflict.

We may not have the answers, but we know they exist. We turn to you, as our leaders, to find the path to a better future for both sides.

With our deepest sincerity and wishes,

*Leading Leaders
for Peace*

GAIN FREEDOM AND FLEXIBILITY – WHILE SUPPORTING FBFF

FBFF supporter Orna Dale Eliashiv has come up with a novel idea to help raise funds for us. Orna is a teacher of Feldenkrais method and is offering to donate to FBFF the proceeds of any classes and individual sessions she teaches to people who contact her through the newsletter. Her usual fee is £55 for individual sessions (or £40 for four classes, each attended by three to six people). She is inviting people to make a donation of as much as they can afford – but a minimum of £20.

We are delighted that Orna has come up with this idea to support FBFF and hope her action will inspire others to donate time, skills or service to raise funds for us.

‘I really believe in the work of



this organisation – rather than fighting against the person on the other side this charity emphasises the positive and stresses the importance of both sides communicating with each other,’ said Orna.

If you would like to take up Orna’s kind offer, you can contact her at orna.london@yahoo.co.uk

◆ The Feldenkrais method opens pathways to flexibility, ease of movement and bodily freedom. It encourages fuller and freer mobility which helps to establish healthy posture and deportment. Real gains can be made in posture and long-lasting relief from chronic back pain, RSI and muscular tension.

The method also improves the ability to rest and relax and promote a sense of well-being. It is designed to be a pleasant and positive experience, suitable for all. It can help with rehabilitation following injury, surgery or with developmental difficulties.

UK Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum (FBFF)

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Patrons: The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams • The Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks • Juliet Stevenson
Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg • Dr Amineh Hoti • Karen Armstrong • Huw Irranca-Davies MP
Imam Dr Usama Hasan • Lord Janner of Braunstone QC • Rabbi Lionel Blue

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UK Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum (FBFF)

Standing Order Form

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Branch address:

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Please pay to NatWest Bank, Finchley Central Branch, 48 Ballards Lane, London N3 2GZ

the sum of £

for the credit of Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum, Sort Code: 60-08-20, Account No: 60029757

commencing on and monthly/annually thereafter until further notice.

Please debit my account in the name of

Sort Code: Account No:

Signature: Date:

When you have completed this form, please send this part to your bank.



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If you are a UK tax payer, we can recover the tax on your donation if you sign this Gift Aid declaration:

I have today signed a Standing Order to my bank to pay £ every month/year to FBFF.

I wish this and any future donations to this charity to be treated as Gift Aid donations.

Name: Address:

Signature: Date:

Only sign this Gift Aid declaration if you pay UK income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax recoverable by the UK Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum.

**Please send the bottom part of this form to:
Hon Treasurer, FBFF, 5 Temple Close, Cyprus Road, London N3 3SB.**